

Mother takes light view of issues

The Good Mother **
Famous Players Westmount

review by Sherry Beswetherick

To be a good mother; isn't that every mother's goal? And who has the right to decide whether or not your methods of child rearing are right or wrong? Your ex-husband? How about a court of law? I mean, your ex-husband and a court of law understand the aspirations you hold for yourself and your child; they can relate to your motives and values, right?

These are some of the questions that must have been going through Anna's (Diane Keaton) mind as she faced the courts and tried to convince them that she was a good mother. In this film, she is, indeed, a good mother.

Anna provides a rich, healthy environment for her daughter Molly (Asia Vieira). She encourages Molly to ask questions and focuses on self-awareness and dis-



Diane Keaton fights a child custody battle in *The Good Mother*.

covery.

It seems that their lives become complete when Anna meets Leo (Liam Neeson), a radical, off the wall, free spirited artist. The three lives intertwine and begin to grow together. Anna, Leo, and Molly manage to create a very natural, free, healthy environment for themselves.

All of this is suddenly shattered when Brian (James Naughton), Anna's jealous, stiff ex-husband, questions Anna and Leo's lifestyle and files a custody suit for Molly. Anna then struggles to maintain her sanity and keep together what few pieces of her harmonious world are left.

The Good Mother has the potential for a very strong story line. It deals with a couple of today's controversial issues: single parent-hood and sexual abuse of children. If you are a single parent, you will probably ask yourself whether or not you believe Anna's lifestyle is acceptable. If you say "yes", then you will side with Anna; you will feel for her, cry with her, and wonder what you would do if something like this ever happened to you. If you say "no", then Brian may not be as stiff and hard-nosed as I have depicted him to be.

The movie also has its wide range of emotions; the humorous moments, the devastating ones, the passion, sex, etc. But it lacks.....something. There seemed to be essential parts of the story missing; while other (especially the first 10 to 15 minutes) were just there for "filler" (the movie was short as it was; a mere 85 minutes).

Although issues dealt with in this movie are controversial, they really don't create much "heat". They may stir up a few questions in the viewers' minds, but they don't have a real impact on one's preconceived beliefs.

If you are looking for something light, entertaining, emotional, and not really gut-roaringly funny, then *The Good Mother* would probably suit your fancy.

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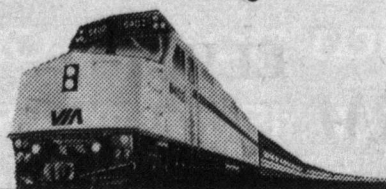
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