

Films

Interiors Directed by Woody Allen Valley River Twin

Interiors. The title tells the whole story.

That's what Woody Allen's latest film is all about — people's insides. It's about people discussing, moaning, groaning, debating, analyzing and wondering about their own or their houses' interiors.

In fact, most of the characters in *Interiors* are so busy thinking about such things that they fail to enjoy life. Which is exactly the film's message.

It's an old point, but fortunately for Allen it's not *what* you say in a movie but *how* you say it that counts. Allen has taken this battered theme and turned out a polished, intense and intriguing look into the lives of an upper middle-class family.

Most of Allen's previous film characters have been neurotic and he follows true to form in *Interiors*. There's not much to guffaw about as we watch a family become consumed by themselves.

The primary instigator is Eve (Geraldine Page), an interior de-

corator and matriarch of the family. Eve is "sick" according to one of her daughters and that is not hard to grasp after Eve is shown nervously mumbling about "pale woods" and lampshades. She's on the edge and she's convinced her husband (E.G. Marshall) will return to her.

The major kink in her reconciliation fantasy is that hubbie has no intention of re-entering her off-white world.

They have three daughters — all of whom thrive on analyzing each other and themselves. Renata (Diane Keaton) is a successful writer married to an unsuccessful one. The second daughter is in the throes of "finding a creative outlet for my feelings" and reconciling her love/hate/guilt relationship with her mother and Renata. Rounding out his messed-up pack is Flynn — a trashy TV movie actress.

These people go round and round battling and picking and fighting until the audience is beginning to lose hope that Allen can save this film from the psychiatrist's couch.

And then Pearl (Maureen Stapleton) makes the scene. Pearl is

the reason Eve's husband never plans to go back to her. Pearl thrives on garish colors and admits to having a son who sells black-velvet art in Las Vegas. She blazes across the screen, and although she has no "good taste" and is called "an animal," Pearl breathes life into the film.

A flaw of *Interiors* is that the characters tend to be on the one dimensional side — all neurosis and no normal. They are not quite believable. Without adding that extra dimension Allen is chickening out and making his point more simplistic than realistic.

Along with his trend toward obviousness, Allen slaps the audience in the face with several over-dramatic pieces of symbolism.

What makes the movie work — despite flaws — is the framed quality of every shot the symmetry of the segments, the film's perfect timing, and convincing acting.

There's little to laugh about in *Interiors*. Although several scenes merit a chuckle or two, Allen is serious about this film. But it's not bleak, never boring, and shows a previously unexposed Woody Allen. **By Ann Treneman**

Books

One L: An Inside Account of the First Year at Harvard Law School By Scott Turow © 1978 G.P. Putnam's Sons \$8.95 hardback

In "The Godfather," Don Corleone encourages his son to go to law school by telling him that "a lawyer with his briefcase can steal more than a hundred men with guns." Most lawyers do not reason this way in choosing their profession. They are attracted by money, prestige, power and, in some cases, an urge to help the unfortunate and needy.

Law is one of the most desirable professions in America and hundreds of thousands of people consider entering it every year. Only about forty thousand actually enroll in law school. From the beginning they expect to suffer: for while the rewards will be great indeed, they will be paid for with hard work and anguish.

Scott Turow's superb book *One L* chronicles his first year at Harvard Law School, the most prestigious institution of its kind in

America. Law school's first year is notorious for its difficulty and sustained grading pressure. In using the events and tensions of the year as his plot, Turow produces high drama and gripping suspense — he has, in a sense, written a law school thriller.

The book's purpose is to recreate "what it feels like to go through it," and in this one must say it is entirely successful. By the end of the story one feels as if he has, in a mild and remote way, gone through the year personally. It is an unpleasant sensation. The competitive pressures are tremendous. The students are uniformly talented, and they all desperately pursue success.

To peer competition must be added the dreaded Socratic method, which effectively pits teacher against student. A law student is required to absorb and, more important, integrate a massive amount of material. The pressure does not abate until the last exam is over.

This description suggests that *One L* is simply slice of autobiography, a narrow story for limited audience. Actually it is more than that. Turow writes with infinite

sensitivity about the larger issues that law students must consider, like the distressing and frequent unfairness of the American legal system.

Often the most accomplished lawyers go to work for huge corporations, while throughout the nation there is an urgent need for socially-committed lawyers. The question arises: don't law students and lawyers have social obligations? Turow has no definite answers but his reasoning and ideas are worth considering.

Obviously *One L* is an important book for people who are considering or already in law school. Turow's account will guide some persons to the law and deter others from it, and it will serve as a guide through similar experiences.

But the book deserves a wider readership. Lawyers are the most powerful professionals in America. We are obliged to learn as much about them and their operations as we can to more fully understand our own lives. Turow's book illuminates the lawyer's initiation, a crucial stage in his development. It shines with honesty and usefulness. **By Edward Nelson**

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