

Entertainment Outlook

LOOKING INTO THE LIBRARY



Enchanted Canopy

By B.R. CORNWELL.
Halton Hills Public Libraries
The Enchanted Canopy, secrets from the rainforest roof by Andrew W. Mitchell.
They've been called the lungs of Planet Earth and together with the plant life of our oceans are largely responsible for the production of oxygen on which our lives depend. Tragically, these seemingly vast and inexhaustible green preserves are being destroyed with appalling speed, before we have more than a glimmer of their nature or importance.
Mitchell's book, studded with stunningly beautiful photographs of the world's rainforests and their inhabitants lifts a corner of the curtain of ignorance that hangs over these rich and fascinating ecosystems. He recounts with relish the high adventure of modern scientists who have devised spiderwebs of aerial walkways to enable them to study the upper reaches of the towering trees where many of the animals live and die without ever descending to the forest floor.
The construction of these tree-top camps is a new and exacting art, utilizing the combined skills of botanists, engineers, alpinists and cavers. Despite the assistance of modern high technology the rainforest has its own means of resistance. After selecting the starting point for their construction "Michael Christy, a sergeant in the Royal Engineers, prepared to ascend the first trunk using metal tree-

climbing bolts and a sledgehammer. "Placing the metal spike against the tree he gave it a sharp blow and the tip sank through the bark and into the wood. He gave it a second blow and nothing happened. A third, and the bolt merely bent out of shape but refused to go in. The tree was evidently not called a hardwood for nothing... Metal spikes driven into (such trees) with considerable force may be slowly squeezed out again over a period of weeks."
The author goes on to illuminate the complex interactions of the rainforest world casually announcing the discovery of new species - apparently a common experience for those now working in this field. He writes so evocatively of the multitude of marvels that it is hard to select one or two examples for a brief review. In the vein of hard-headed self-interest I'll end with the following quote:
"Most tropical plants have yet to be screened and most that have been are those near to the ground. Countless natural pesticides wait to be discovered along with an equally remarkable range of pharmaceuticals which plants have kindly tested for us over millions of years. Already some fifty per cent of the drugs we use are developed from natural derivatives. Cancer is one of the most feared diseases still on the increase, yet cures have been discovered by screening rainforest plants. As these forests diminish their storehouse of products of benefit to us is going with them."

By Robert DiMatteo

In Movie Theaters

SHE'S HAVING A BABY (PG-13)
Writer-director-producer John Hughes, having plumbed the purported depths of teenage angst in movies like "Sixteen Candles" and "Ferris Bueller's Day Off," now attempts to bring a pair of nubile young characters into the adult world. The resulting movie is virtually a throwback to the romantic comedies of the '50s and '60s - a picture about facing up to the responsibilities of marriage and parenthood without a whiff of thematic freshness. But at least the picture isn't all slick sermonizing. Stylistically, it represents some of Hughes' most playful work.

The protagonists are nervous newlyweds Kristy (Elizabeth McGovern) and Jake Briggs (Kevin Bacon), two cute yuppies who settle uneasily into a cozy Chicago suburb, where the neighboring husbands gab about their power mowers and the wives gossip while dutifully serving refreshments on the lawn.

Like a lot of young men of his time, Jake suffers from a Peter Pan complex. Scared of adulthood, he nevertheless takes the plunge. Jake may long for a career as a writer, but he follows the more practical route, accepting a cushy job in advertising. Meanwhile, he is plagued by all manner of fantasies, including the recurring one of a dream nymphet who shows up tauntingly at the most inop-

portune times.
Several strenuous fantasy sequences, a few maturation lessons and one traumatic breech birth later, Jake comes to his senses. This being an ultra-romantic movie, he gets to have his career as a writer too. Kristy - about whom the movie has had only a secondary interest - gets a baby. So much for the film's sense of equality and liberation.

Kevin Bacon and Elizabeth McGovern are delightful together: They give the material more invention and warmth than it merits. And, as Jake's best buddy, a cad of a ladies' man, Alec Baldwin has the kind of charisma that movie stars are made of. **GRADE: ★★★**

THE SERPENT AND THE RAINBOW (R) Director Wes ("Nightmare on Elm Street") Craven's tale of mystical terror is based on a non-fiction book by Wade Davis, and it makes for a skillful, suggestive and gory thriller. Bill Pullman, who looks like a hip Jeff Daniels, stars as a Harvard anthropologist investigating a Haitian powder thought to be able to trans-



FILMETER

What's new in movies and video
Robert DiMatteo

form people into zombies (they only seem dead).

The movie makes a provocative connection - however politically specious - between the last days of Baby Doc Duvalier's dictatorship in

Haiti and the darker forces of voodoo. In the film, Tonton Macoute chief Dargent Petraud (Zakes Mokae at his most baleful) is the chief pusher of the pernicious powder.

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ASK DICK KLEINER

Is he Priscilla's own baby?

By Dick Kleiner

Dear Dick: On "Dallas," Jenna Wade, played by Priscilla Presley, has a baby. Is that child possibly Priscilla Presley's real life son? - Mrs. M.B.C., Westerly, R.I.

Dear Mrs. M.B.C.: No, it's not.
Dear Dick: I missed the Hallmark TV production of "The Secret Garden" with Gennle James. Will it ever be on again? Do Hallmark productions get repeated or video-taped? - S.K., Warsaw, Ind.

Dear S.K.: Unfortunately, although the Hallmark Hall of Fame offerings are among TV's finest, they are not put on cassette. The company is thinking of changing that policy, but that's the way it stands at the moment.

Dear Dick: I am 14 years old and a big fan of V.C. Andrews' novels. Two questions: Is she really dead? Also, I saw the movie based on her book, "Flowers in the Attic," and I was very disappointed. Why are all the movies based on novels so bad? The ending was totally just the opposite of the book. - M.M.J., Kalamazoo, Mich.

Dear M.M.J.: You have a lifetime ahead of you to try and figure the answer to the riddle of good novels and bad movies. It's generally true, however. I think the reason is the human urge to change things. Movie producers, directors and writers feel that they MUST make changes to justify their fat paychecks. About Ms. Andrews - she died of cancer on Dec.

19, 1986, in Virginia.

Dear Dick: My question is about the theme song on the premiere of "Growing Pains" this year. It was a song called "Swept Away." Who was the singer? - D.S., Saginaw, Mich.

Dear D.S.: That was Christopher Cross.

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