

Perfectly zany, delightful



Anne Brodie

On Movies

PERFECT CRIME

Starring Guillermo Toledo and Monica Cervera
Directed by Alex de la Iglesia

This is a dark comedy set in Madrid's most exclusive department store, where staff is vying for the position of floor manager.

The jockeying is so fierce, allegiances form that would put Survivor players to shame. It's like lifting the roof from Holt Renfrew and watching all the little bees swarming, plotting and planning to climb the retail ladder.

Our hero Rafael (Mr. Toledo) is a middle class Beau Brummel, the king of snobs, the baron of the bourgeoisie, dressed way beyond his means while he conquers every beautiful salesgirl in the pace.

He shows them all the same time, hiding in the store till closing time, taking each for a cart ride through the exclusive halls, winning and dining them on store lobster and wine and, finally, finish-



Guillermo Toledo and Monica Cervera star in *Perfect Crime*, a dark comedy set in an exclusive department store.

ing in the mattress department.

Well Lourdes, the plain girl, the only one he avoids, has been secretly spying on him; she's madly infatuated and gazes at him as he hurries by her to the pretty girl standing behind her.

One day, Lourdes has her chance. She watches from the next cubicle as Raff fights with the other employee who was just named floor manager.

An unfortunate and tragic accident occurs that throws Raff and Lourdes into an insane cou-

pling that isn't healthy for either of them. On top of which, someone comes back as a green ghost to advise Raff how to deal with his situation.

This is a comedy and a light-hearted horror film. It's also a thriller inspired by Alfred Hitchcock's *Dial M for Murder*.

Certainly, this is one wonky and delightfully off-the-wall production that bears no resemblance to bloated, dumb American horror stories. It's so zany it shouldn't be missed.

Gere family drama odd, unsettling

Bee Season

Starring Richard Gere, Juliette Binoche, Max Minghella and Flora Cross
Directed by Scott McGehee and Dave Siegel

Bee Season is surely one of the oddest films to come along in a while.

It concerns the shattering of a family, coming to a climax as the young daughter wins a national spelling bee. It has nothing to do with honey, stings or swarms.

It has to do with Jewish mysticism, the mystical properties of words, a nervous breakdown and a tragic lack of communication in a seemingly normal family.

Bee Season is a peculiar animal, an art house film that will appeal to children and adults even as it leaves them scratching their heads.

Mr. Gere is Saul, a university professor, a religious scholar teaching Kabbalah to bored students.

Only his ten year old daughter Eliza (Ms Cross) takes him seriously.

He teaches her to mediate, and overcome earthly things.

He tells her words hold the key to the universe, the way some people believe numbers do, and can eventually lead a dedicated speller to the ear of God. Heady stuff for a child.

As father and daughter bond over ancient texts, Miriam, Eliza's mother, is having a meltdown right out in the



RICHARD GERE: Plays university professor in *Bee Season*.

open and he can't see her.

She can't get his attention; he is dominating and alienating his family with his unyielding elitist ideas.

Son Aaron takes Catholic communion and joins a Hindu ashram in his rebellious confusion.

Soon, something has to give. *Bee Season* is a beautifully made, beautifully acted gem of a film that is also intellectually and emotionally and unsettling.

—Anne Brodie

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