

Reviews/Film

A Family and a Movie, Both in Need of Therapy

By JANET MASLIN

If ever an entire film deserved therapeutic attention, it is "Crooked Hearts," the story of the dysfunctional Warrens and their raft of unsolvable, uninteresting family problems.

Masking all this torment is a veneer of forced gaiety, since Edward Warren (Peter Coyote), the patriarch, traditionally welcomes each new family failure in ceremonial fashion.

As written and directed by Michael Bortman, who wrote a similarly strained screenplay for "The Good Mother," this film's excessive use of voice-overs and its flat, aimless dialogue turn literariness into a real liability.

Mr. Bortman has also directed the actors to wring every conceivable bit of angst and indecision out of the film's dilatory plot.

In its search for visual novelty, the film, which opens today at Loews

Blocked due to copyright. See full page image or microfilm.

MGM/Jack Roward

Peter Coyote

Directed and written by Michael Bortman, based on the novel by Robert Boswell; director of photography, Tak Fujimoto; edited by Richard Francis-Bruce; music by Mark Isham; production designer, David Brisbin; produced by Rick Stevenson, Dale Pollock and Gil Friesen; released by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures Inc. At Loews New York Twin, Second Avenue and 66th Street, Manhattan. Running time: 112 minutes. This film is rated R.

Charley..... Vincent D'Onofrio
Marriet..... Jennifer Jason Leigh
Tom..... Pete Berg
Edward..... Peter Coyote
Ask..... Noah Wyle
Jill..... Cindy Pickett
Cassie..... Juliette Lewis
Jenetta..... Marg Helgenberger

New York Twin, sets one scene beside the beluga whale tank at an aquarium (with Jennifer Jason Leigh as a Warren brother's date who's just crazy enough to join the family); there is also a bathtub scene in which the actors have their clothes on and an argument in a bakery that is underscored by the throwing of fresh croissants.

Tak Fujimoto's crisp cinematography and Mark Isham's lulling (though overused) music make the film look and sound better than might have been expected.

"Crooked Hearts" is rated R (Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian). It includes profanity, very brief nudity and sexual references.