** Blue Velvet — David Lynch's weird tale of sexual perversion is interesting in its presentation of the darker side of life, but the humor flaws the film in its incongruity with the serious subject matter. At the Nickelsdoo and Harvard Square.

** Children of a Lesser God — A beautiful, moving love story between deaf pupil (Marlee Matlin) and teacher (William Hurt) with fabulous acting performances by the principals. At the Cheri and Harvard Square.

**** The Color of Money — Scorcese directs and Paul Newman and Tom Cruise star in this excellent sequel to the 1961 "Hustler." Cruise is a hustler pool shark being blackmailed by Newman but the film is less about pool than it is about deception and personal redemption. At the Charles, Circle Cinema, and Assembly Square.

** Crocodile Dundee — Paul Hogan is likable as the Australian from the Northern Territories and the scenes in the outback are gorgeous. However, the story bogs down once it moves to New York. At Cinema 57 and Assembly Square.

** Jumpin' Jack Flash — Whoopi Goldberg's talents are wasted in this silly tale of a computer operator who finds herself immersed in international espionage through her terminal. Her romantic involvement with an invisible spy is even less believable. At Pi Alley.

** Menage — Gerard Depardieu and Miou-Miou star in this bizarre French film chronicling a trio's journey of damnation into the underworld. This film refuses to be taken seriously and ultimately defies classification. At the Nickelsdoo.

**** The Mission — Jeremy Irons and Robert De Niro star in this film about the transfer of South American land between Spain and Portugal and its affect on a Jesuit mission above the Iguazu waterfall. Splendid location photography and excellent character acting. At the Cheri.

* The Name of the Rose — Umberto Eco's book about the importance and beauty of books is reduced to nothing more than a detective story set in a monastery in 1327. Sean Connery stars as the archbishop, William of Baskerville. At Harvard Square.

** Peggy Sue Got Married — Kathleen Turner and Nicolas Cage star in a Francis Ford Coppela film about what a woman wishes she had done when she was eighteen. At the Cheri and Assembly Square.

Clint Eastwood stars as Marine Gunny Sergeant Tom Highway in "Heartbreak Ridge," a controversial film about the involvement of Highway's platoon in Grenada. "Heartbreak Ridge" opens today at the Cheri, the Circle Cinema, and Assembly Square.

**** Rouge Baiser (Red Kiss) — Nadia is a young 15-year-old growing up in Paris whose idols are Scarlett O'Hara, Rita Hayworth, and Joseph Stalin. Meeting a photographer at a communist rally, she comes to grips with her leftist beliefs and with her own emotional awakening. At Coply Place.

Former slave trader Rodrigo Mendoza experiences a cathartic moment of spiritual conversion at the side of his confessor, in a scene from "The Mission." Robert De Niro and Jeremy Irons star in one of the best movies on the town.

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