By TODD DAVIS

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today to bury a movie comedy which is dying a quiet death in-the theater, with only a few laughs. That movie is known as Lovesick.

Lovesick stars Dudley Moore as a psychiatrist who falls in love with a patient, played by baby-faced Elizabeth McGovern. Breaking the sacred psychiatric code, Moore seeks advice from the ghost of Sigmund Freud.

Why must a movie comedy with so much going for it

For a movie comedy to be successful, it must follow two - and only two - rules. Rule Number One: Be funny. Rule Number Two: Obey all rules.

Lovesick tries to be a movie comedy, but trying alone is not funny and therefore breaks Rule Number One and therefore breaks Rule Number Two and therefore makes Lovesick a flop.

Lovesick could have been a comic contender. The movie was written and directed by Marshall Brickman, who wrote Annie Hall and Manhattan with Woody Allen. However, Brickman forgets one thing in Lovesick that made Annie Hall and Manhattan funny - Woody Allen. There are no guilty, crazed neurotic fears about the universe going condo in Lovesick.

The problem is that the characters act too sensibly about life to be funny.

Moore takes himself seriously as a psychiatrist, even when he's in his patient's bathroom. And he doesn't even look like a psychiatrist.

McGovern is a good actress. She proved it in Ragtime. McGovern can be romantic, but she is not and never will be a comedienne like Goldie Hawn or Diane Keaton. It doesn't work.

The supporting cast, on the other hand, is great. It's a pity they don't have funnier material to work with.

Alec Guiness plays Freud refreshingly as a simple doctor, not the superhero of modern analysts. Guiness dispenses bromides instead of psychiatric law, which lightens up a character usually accompanied by "The Vienna Waltz."

John Huston is another strong supporting cast member. Portraying Moore's psychiatric mentor, Huston is a practical, white-bearded sage who eats cookies and falls asleep in a rocking chair as he listens to Moore's

Wallace (My Dinner With Andre) Shawn, who bears a slight resemblance to Larry Fine of the Three Stooges, is the most outstanding cast member. Shawn is the only

wacky character in the movie - another psychiatrist who falls in love with McGovern. Unfortunately, Shawn's character dies in the first two minutes of the movie, leav-

ing 90 minutes of characters acting sensibly. Besides the acting, there is a hodgepodge of confusing effects which keeps Lovesick from being funny. Moore and McGovern take a romantic walk through Central Park at night, and nothing happens. The Warriors and the evening news prove that Central Park isn't that

Another annoying gimmick in the movie is the "Gee-Ireally-miss-that-girl" flashback. As Moore stares out into space in his office, the violins start to sing as images of every scene McGovern was in dissolve on the screen. Moore even sings "Embraceable You" when analyzing a patient. Unemotional? Yes. Wimpy? Yes. Romantic? No. Funny? Be serious.

Worst of all is a line of dialogue in a doorstep scene when Moore wonders whether he should live with McGovern. He is doubtful until she tries to be romantic and cute by saying, "Think of me as a hotel." Yeah.

Maybe the jokes in Lovesick are too understated or subtle to understand. If this is the case, Lovesick should have had subtitled punchlines.



Monday, March 14, 1983/The Daily Tar Heel/5

Dudley Moore and Elizabeth McGovern star in 'Lovesick' a romantic comedy about a psychiatrist and a playwright

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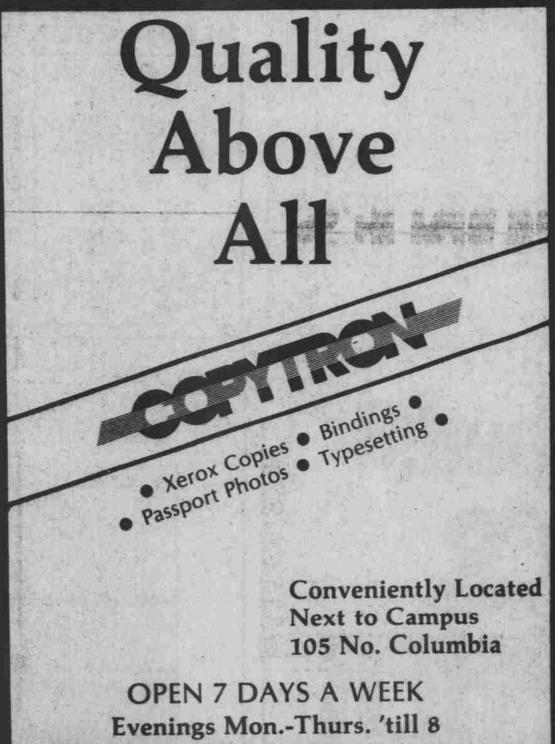


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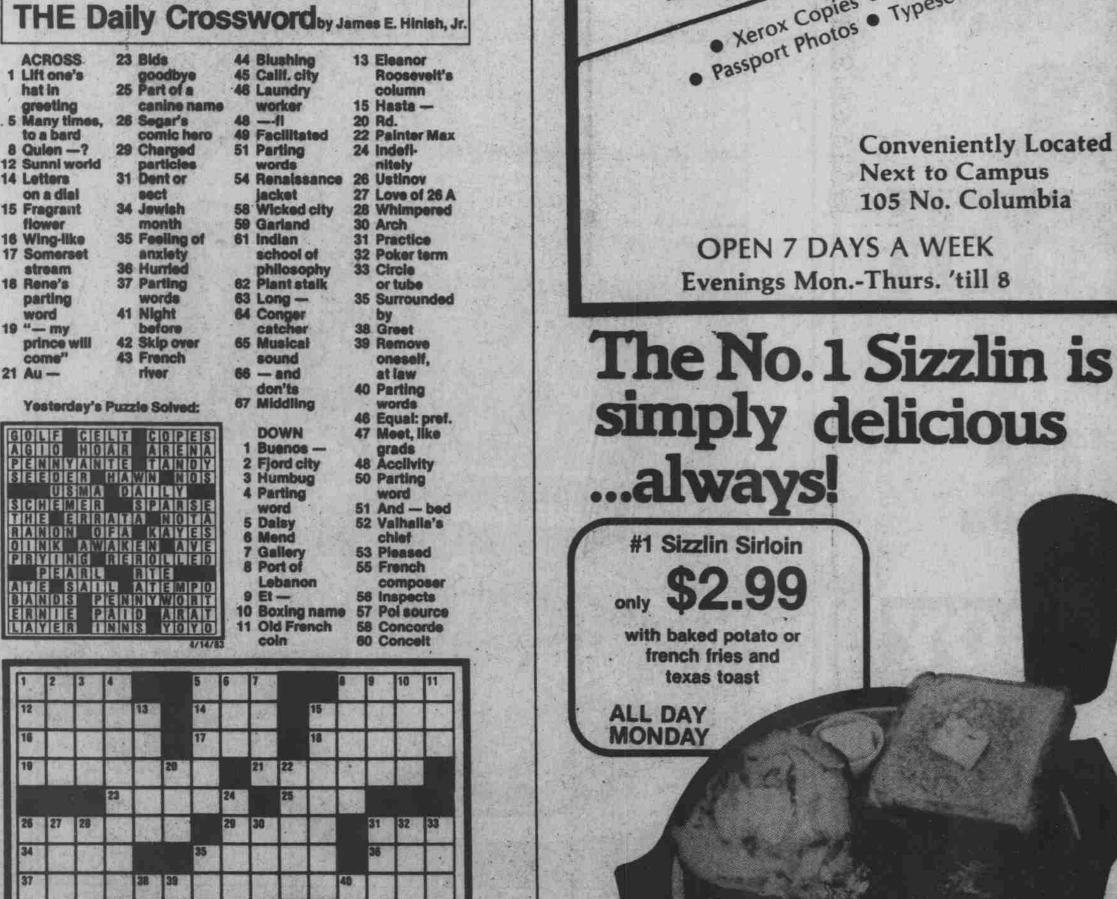
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