

'Parting Shot'

Everybody says that Fred, an attractive but sober-minded young nurse, doesn't mind when patients die. "Don't believe everything you hear," she protests, because being close to the dying has only tightened her resolve to commit suicide.

In the nearby forest, she puts a rifle to her chin but when a noisy gaggle of kids on a school trip pass by and one of them starts screaming, she turns in anger and despair and shoots him. Almost inevitably, the wounded boy comes under her care at the hospital.

Writer and director Jeanne Waltz's intelligent examination of alienation in which the contrite nurse finds a way to reach

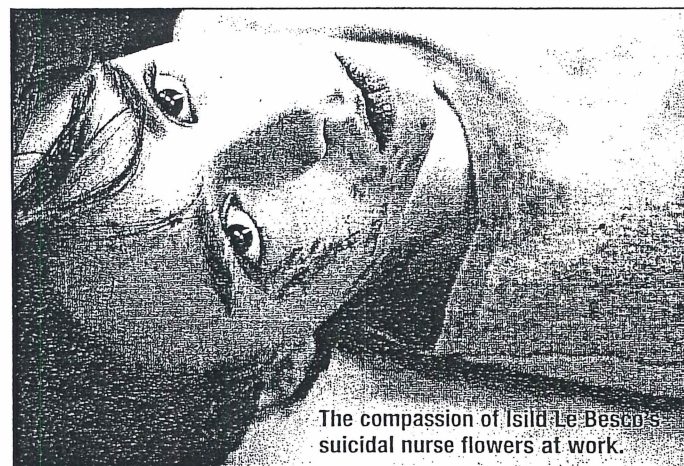
out to what proves a very troubled schoolboy should find a welcome among audiences seeking insightful drama.

Isild Le Besco, as Fred, and Steven de Almeida, as the boy, Marco, are convincing as the rebellious souls who have each developed a carapace to hide their need for love.

Fred argues with her father and with her boyfriend, and has idle sex with random partners. She understands, however, the healing power of a nurse's hands and at work her compassion flowers.

Marco is a child of divorce, caught in the bitterness of his parents' separation and angry at life in general. Waiting for surgery on the knee that was smashed by Fred's bullet, he's a nightmare for the other nurses and only his assailant has the patience to deal with him.

Each recognizes in the other a need for consolation and the prickliness that results from feeling unwanted. Gradually, Fred drops hints that might lead the



The compassion of Isild Le Besco's suicidal nurse flowers at work.

boy to figure out who had actually shot him, not knowing what his reaction will be. Waltz develops that tension with sharp editing that takes full advantage of the range of her two leads.

Set in a modern Swiss town that has a clockwork feel and is made claustrophobic by the surrounding forest, the tale is one of grasping for redemption and Waltz handles it with flare.

PARTING SHOT (PAS DOUCE)

Prince Film SA, Geneva; Bloody Mary Prods., Paris

Credits: Director and screenwriter: Jeanne Waltz; Producers: Didier Haudepin, Pierre-Alain Meier; Cinematographer: Helene Louvat; Production designer: Françoise Arnaud; Music: Cyril Ximenes; Costume designers: Catherine Schneider, Isabelle Blanc; Editor: Eric Renault. **Cast:** Fred: Isild Le Besco; Marco: Steven de Almeida; Mother of Marco: Lio; Father of Marco: Yves Verhoeven; Andre: Christophe Sermet; Renate: Estelle Bealem; Father of Fred: Philippe Vuilleumier; Friend of father: Christian Sinniger; Wounded drunk: Bernard Nissille; Rita: Jocelyne Desverchere.

No MPAA rating, running time 85 minutes.

