

'Miss Reardon' more than a little



Carl
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EIU's theatre department has come up with a couple of winners so far this season. Last month there was C.P. Blanchette's intelligent staging of *The Waltz of the Toreadors*, this past weekend a first-rate ensemble production of *And Miss Reardon Drinks A Little*.

Miss Reardon was Paul Zindel's first play following his Pulitzer Prize winning *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*. It was a tough act to follow. *Miss Reardon* opened on Broadway in February 1971 and ran for only 108 performances.

The action takes place in the apartment of two unmarried sisters whose mother has recently died. Both have been school-teachers and both now have problems. Anna recently caused a scandal by having an encounter — what kind is not specified, but presumably sexual — with a young boy at her school and now appears on the brink of insanity. Her sister Catherine drinks a good deal more than a little, a situation which probably isn't helped by Anne's behavior.

Enter a third sister, Ceil, who is married to an old boyfriend of Catherine. She comes with papers that would have Anna committed to a mental institution. All that's needed is Catherine's signature, but Catherine balks. At the end nothing is resolved. The papers still haven't been signed, and in the meantime the sisters' privacy has been briefly invaded by a nosy

...*And Miss Reardon
Drinks A Little*



neighbor who's a school guidance counselor and her blunt-talking husband.

It's a slender little play, certainly not on a par with *Gamma Rays*. But it does again display the author's gift for drawing strong female characters and for combining humor and anguish. And it was all beautifully captured in the EIU production.

Mel M. Slott, making his directing debut for Eastern, obtained exceptionally good performances from Jill M. Taylor as the bibulous, wisecracking Catherine and Lynn Mara as the poor demented Anna, who won't touch meat, eats only vegetables, and shrinks from fur and leather.

Ceil, the cold, insensitive, take-charge sister who has made it professionally as school superintendent, but is more than a little frustrated in her private life, was played with stern visage by Karen

Lynn Vogt.

But it was Denise Carnes and James G. Pierson who nearly stole the show as the intrusive downstairs couple. Carnes, who was a lovely Ghislaine in *The Waltz of the Toreadors*, has a decided knack for comedy.

C.P. Blanchette's set and Phyllis N. Roger's costumes were top notch, as usual.

All in all, a job well done.

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