

reel reviews

★ ★ **The Money Pit**
Oaks East Six

"Why would someone sell a \$1 million house for \$200,000?" wonders Walter. Good question, the answer, of course, is because the house is a money pit. Riddled with defects, it will swallow up every penny someone owns as he desperately tries to make it livable.

Unfortunately, Walter (Tom Hanks) and Anna (Shelly Long) never realize this. They buy their dream house, which seems like a bargain, and problems begin to multiply as quickly as religious nuts at the Plaza of the Americas: the house's frame is entirely rotted, the front door falls in, the taps spit out running sludge instead of running water, the stairwell collapses, etc., etc.

This is a cute idea and if *The Money Pit* was a half hour long, it would be a cute movie. Director Richard Benjamin could have piled one slapstick stunt on top of another, perhaps culminating with having the entire house collapsing or being destroyed in a mud slide.



But, movies tend to be quite a bit longer than half an hour. So, to keep our attention, they've devised a subplot about a possible affair between Anna and her ex-husband Max, an orchestra conductor who is self-centered and egotistical. Alexander Gudonov has the thankless role of trying to breathe life into this depressingly familiar character.

This storyline is completely devoid of tension or interest. Once Benjamin runs out of clever ways to have the floor fall through, *The Money Pit* has nothing to do but end. Hanks and Long struggle valiantly in their respective roles, but this comedy runs out of steam long before they do.

by Michael Giltz