

'Men and Angels' rich, complex, but packed with generalizations

By Colleen Holloran
Staff Reporter

"Men and Angels" by Mary Gordon. Random House. 239 Pages. \$16.95.

It's easy to have high hopes for a book when three interesting women

sumed by her love for her husband and children and her work cataloging the lifework of an unknown 19th-century artist.

Helene is a jealous scholar who is in love with Anne's husband, Michael. Laura is a twisted religious fanatic who becomes Anne's live-in babysitter.

The relationships between these characters, and later Jane, the artist's daughter-in-law, comprise the framework of the book. Anne reluctantly agrees to take Laura in; Michael is in London for the school year on a university faculty exchange program, and she needs in-home child care if she is to continue her assignment. Her reluctance stems partly from the fact that it was Helene who recommended Laura

and partly because she is unnerved by the seemingly spiritless 19-year-old.

Laura's problem is a bizarre one: She considers herself the chosen one of God. She is secretly bent on saving Anne from her earthly encumbrances, including her home, her children and her husband. She can lead Anne out of sin, and Anne will be so grateful she will love only Laura.

Parts of the book, especially when Anne is mentally debating whether or not to have an affair with her electrician, are terribly forced. Much of the dialogue is the same. Anne's friend declares, "When you're a mother, you think with your claws."

Generalization is not the same as insight. Gordon could have used less of the former and more of the latter.

Book Review

are introduced in the first six pages. The characters, Anne, Helene and Laura, are immediately distinct, three-dimensional, passionate people.

"Men and Angels" is about passion of all kinds — maternal, sexual, artistic and religious. Anne is the mother of two and an art historian, equally con-

Seeger, Guthrie mix works

SEEGER from Page 6

He sang "The Pickle Song" which goes like this:
*I don't want a pickle,
I just want to ride my motor sickle.
I don't want a tickle,
I just want to ride my motor sickle.
and I don't want to die,
I just want to ride my motor sickle.*

Then Guthrie commenced to telling a story about how he was riding down the road on his cycle at 150 miles per hour, pickin' his guitar and singing when that song occurred to him, and he

just kept talkin' because the song was so bad that he didn't want to get back to it, but the crowd was enjoying his story so he kept talkin' and Pete kept tappin' his toes and eventually he had to meander back to that awful verse and everyone laughed when he finally did.

Guthrie also sang "Key to the Highway," "Michael Row the Boat Ashore," Steve Goodman's "City of New Orleans," and he and Seeger closed with a sing-along version of "This Land Is My Land," his father's most famous song.

Seeger said he and Guthrie do about eight shows a year together. Although

their sounds and styles are different, he said, they have a chemistry that works well. Each tries to find songs that the other hasn't heard, so each performance is different.

The concert was unique for the relaxed atmosphere and loose structure. But Seeger and Guthrie's messages about love, peace and social justice were also rare commodities in these days when most music is dressed in commercial trappings.

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