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A Warm December is a "black" film in that its protagonists, Sidney Poitier and Esther Anderson, are black and that Poitier directed it. But it's essentially a non-racial and non-ethnic movie, with a bit of *Roman Holiday* and a dab of *Love Story* to schmaltz up the highly literate Lawrence Roman script. It's the story of an American doctor on holiday in London, his encounter with a mystery girl, their romance and, with the solution of her mystery, their bittersweet parting.

It's a dashing, slick old-Hollywood romance—and the sort of movie that the popcorn-and-Kleenex crowd (count me in on rare occasions) can really wallow in. For added glamor, Miss Anderson, a remarkably beautiful woman, is the niece of an African ambassador, a bright gal busily negotiating the purchase of a hydro-electric plant for her country from the Russians and, for "ethnic" values, we not only see her in some stunning native dresses but also are fed some enchanting bits of African culture via her friendship with Poitier's young daughter. Too, we learn the very sad truths of sickle-cell anemia.

Militants may scoff at schmaltz (our heroine does not die at film's end, I hasten to note) or at the love-vs.-duty or I-want-to-live issues. But this is exactly what Poitier had in mind, to *my* mind, some years ago when he said he made *For Love of Ivy* so that his children could identify with characters in a middle-class movie. The maid and the gambler in that one weren't quite middle-class to anybody's mind. But the value of *A Warm December* is that its protagonists are black, products of a slick fiction though they may be, and romantic heroes and heroines to identify with who aren't pushing dope or pimping, who aren't out to kill whitey and who make us empathize and care. Isn't that what screen entertainment entails?