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\$1 beyond the greater New York metro

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FILM REVIEW

Real People With Real Problems in a Midwestern Place

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

There's a good little movie playing at the resurrected Thalia Theater. It has no dazzling special effects or big-name stars, but James Rosenow's "Crossing Fields" has memorable characters in provocative situations that revolve around marriage, infidelity, sexism, parent-child relationships and race.

Funny, sad and sexy, this engaging film is set among essentially decent people living modest, mainstream lives in a superficially placid, churchgoing Middle Western community. Its principal story contrasts the life of Carol (Reedy Gibbs), a

woman in her 40's in a solid if unexciting marriage, with that of her best friend, Jessica (Gwynyth Walsh), a storm-tossed woman who responds to her husband's affair by sleeping with, figuratively, half the men in town.

In addition to this story, Mr. Rosenow, a New York University film school graduate who is the writer, producer and director of this well-acted first feature, provides a generous helping of others.

While Carol's easygoing husband, Guy (J. K. Simmons) looks on, Carol is in conflict with their daughter, Denise (Meadow Sisto), who is fighting the idea of college and sneaking out of the house at night to pursue

CROSSING FIELDS

Written and directed by James Rosenow; director of photography, Dejan Georgevich; edited by Angelo Corrao; music by Walter Thompson; production designer, Kathleen Harding; produced by Mr. Rosenow and David Hannah. At The Thalia, 250 West 55th Street. Running time: 101 minutes. This film is not rated.

WITH: Reedy Gibbs (Carol), Gwynyth Walsh (Jessica), William James Jones (James), J. K. Simmons (Guy) and Meadow Sisto (Denise).

her career as a rock musician.

Into the lives of this family comes a boarder, James (William James Jones), a handsome, muscular and

altogether charming and level-headed young black man who is seeking work and knowledge of white society.

Many of the comfortable beliefs Carol has lived by are shaken by his presence and by Jessica's turmoil compounded by a former lover's threat to foreclose the mortgage on her family farm and the prospect of resuming her marriage.

Mr. Rosenow handles his material and his cast with skill. Moviegoers who look to shootouts, car crashes and explosions for stimulation are advised to avoid "Crossing Fields." Those who find stimulation in intelligent issues, realistic characters and lively storytelling are likely to find this film appealing.