



'Pearl Diver' Shows at Sunrise Theater

BY DIANE WILTJER: SPECIAL TO THE PILOT

The film "Pearl Diver" begins Sunday at the Sunrise Theater in downtown Southern Pines. This is a family love story. It tells the poignant tale of two sisters, Hannah and Marian, whose lives are forever changed the night they witness their mother's murder. Since the tragedy, circumstances have prevented them from being able to talk about their grief and share their disturbing memories.

After a brief flashback to the night of the murder, the film begins 20 years later, long after Hannah has left the picturesque farmlands of Indiana for a career as a writer in Chicago. Marian has remained in the family home in the Mennonite community of Goshen, married a farmer, and is the mother of six-year-old Rebecca.

When a farm accident threatens Rebecca's future, events unfold that further test Hannah and Marian's tenuous relationship.

"When we were girls," says Hannah, "it was like we were a single spirit and two bodies after mom was killed, we saw two entirely different worlds."

Ultimately, the sisters are able to come to terms with what they saw and what they experienced the night of the murder. They are able to transcend their divergent beliefs and values and accept the unconditional love which binds them.

This intriguing movie was written and directed by Sidney King, an independent film maker. The symbolic action behind the title, "Pearl Diver," is woven through several scenes in the story. Each event demonstrates a gift or a sacrifice made in the name of love.

Two scenes give special meaning to the sisterly love shared by Hannah and Marian.

Since its debut in 2004, "Pearl Diver" has received awards in many categories, including "Best Narrative Feature" in the Winnipeg International Film Festival; "Best Cinematography" in the Woods Hole Film Festival, and "The Crystal Heart Award," at the Heartland Film Festival. Based in Indianapolis, this organization honors films "which explore the human journey by artistically expressing hope and respect for the positive values of life."

The story, the cast, the setting, the use of music, sound, and artful flashbacks all combine to make this a powerful film. It led one reviewer at the Woods Hole Film Festival to write, "'Pearl Diver' is one of those rare films where passion and skill combust on the screen to truly ignite the audience."

"Pearl Diver" runs Sunday, April 15, through Friday, April 20, at 7:30 p.m. The Sunday matinee is at 2:30 p.m. The film runs 97 minutes.

The film is unrated, but "Preview," an online family review site, gives this film a +4 (excellent) rating for entertainment value and a +3 (safe) rating for morality for older teens and adults.

The Sunrise Theater is located at 250 NW Broad Street in Southern Pines.