

In The Bedroom (15)

On 13th April, 9 members watched the independent drama In The Bedroom.

The film stars Tom Wilkinson as Matt Fowler, a practicing doctor, Sissy Spacek as Ruth Fowler, a choral music teacher, Nick Stahl as Frank, their only son, and Marisa Tomei as Natalie, a single mother with whom Frank has become involved.

Set in Maine, Tom is descended from a long line of lobster fishermen and both he and Frank still have pots that they tend, in support of the established lobstermen. When out on a trip with Natalie's eldest son, Matt describes why only two lobsters can be "in the bedroom" of a lobster pot, as any more will fight each other.

The steadily paced film, mainly devoid of incidental music (and the better for it), introduced the characters in scenes of family life. It is clear that Ruth has reservations about Frank's relationship with Natalie, and that she is desperate to convince Frank to return to university at the end of the summer.

Natalie's ex (but not yet divorced) husband Rich creates a scene at a Fowler family barbecue, which later leads to a scuffle between Rich and Frank in which Frank is injured. The decision to not report the incident to the police leads ultimately to the shocking death of Frank at Rich's hand.

What follows is the downward spiral of Ruth, post the funeral, with Matt being unable to express his feelings to support her. When Rich's bail hearing goes unexpectedly in his favour, and their solicitor (who is pretty useless) admits that the conviction will most likely be for manslaughter, Ruth continues to be despondent.

Friends of Matt's and Ruth's invite them away for a weekend to their log cabin. Around the dinner table, seeing pictures of

grandchildren it becomes painfully obvious that Ruth will never have any, causing some awkwardness.

The film builds with Matt looking for anything to help secure a murder conviction and tensions with Ruth boil over in a very difficult to watch, but brilliantly acted, argument when home truths are exchanged between them. Ruth admits to being unable to handle seeing Rich around the town, especially when he is with another woman.

Matt's desperation leads to a plan to deal with Rich at their friends' cabin, faking Rich skipping bail. In a very "American" response, Matt shoots Richard and his body is buried deep in the woods. The film ends with Matt and Sissy starting the next stage of their lives, but the question of whether they can deal with their actions hangs over them.

Members' reactions to the film varied from "brilliant" to "depressing". Everyone felt that the acting was superb, the cinematography and editing excellent, and that the bedroom analogy with the lobsters and Frank, Natalie and Rich, was well made.

Directed by Todd Field, the film was nominated for 5 Oscars, including Best Actor (Wilkinson), Best Actress (Spacek), Best Supporting Actress (Tomei) and Best Adapted Screenplay.