

## Chemistry of Matt Damon, Emily Blunt Drives 'The Adjustment Bureau'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on March 3, 2011 - 8:31pm

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Rating: **4.0/5.0**

CHICAGO – George Nolfi's "The Adjustment Bureau," starring Matt Damon and Emily Blunt, is a nearly-great movie, a rare piece that merges romance and science fiction into something that is at-times mesmerizing. A few hiccups in the screenwriting late in the film hold it back from its true potential but this is still worth a look for genre fans and even those usually uninterested in the genre.

The one thing that really matters about "The Adjustment Bureau" is that the chemistry between its two gorgeous leads is simply spectacular. From the very minute they lock eyes in one of the best romantic meeting scenes in movie history, the concept that they have been fated to find each other and that their love can overcome any obstacle is set in stone. It's essential for the success of the movie that follows that we not only believe that Blunt and Damon are in love but that their love is the kind that change the course of the future. Believe it not, there's not one moment in the film where that chemistry falters. And, for the romantics out there, this will soon become a cherished drama.



The Adjustment Bureau

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

Damon plays David Norris, a rising politician in New York who seems destined for the Senate and probably even higher but can't quite seem

to get it together. A last-minute scandal derails what appears to be a certain win as the movie opens and he’s preparing to give his concession speech when he runs into a dancer named Elise (Blunt) in the men’s room. She’s hiding out because she just crashed a wedding and security is after her. The two banter brilliantly for a little bit and even kiss but she runs off, likely to never be seen again.

While these opening scenes are happening, we see men in trenchcoats and hats watching the action, often from rooftops, as if they have something to do with it. Months later, after David’s concession speech, inspired by Elise of course, has made him into an even bigger political rock star, one of the mysterious men (Anthony Mackie) is ordered to make David spill his coffee. It seems he’s not supposed to get on a bus that morning and make it to work. When his “watcher” falls asleep and misses his mark, David not only runs into Elise again on the bus but gets to work to find everyone frozen and being “recalibrated.” Like when Neo met Morpheus, the walls are down.



The Adjustment Bureau

*Photo credit: Universal Pictures*

The men in hats, led by John Slattery of “Mad Men,” explain the following to David: There are agents out there who make slight adjustments to make sure the human race continues according to plan. They don’t do anything drastic enough to be noticed but that time when your cell phone wouldn’t get a signal or you missed your bus, that was them “adjusting.” And they can even influence decisions, not directly but just in the way people process upcoming decisions. They instruct David that if he reveals the wizards behind the curtain, they will fry his brain instantly. Oh, and he’s not allowed to see Elise again. Why? Well, he wasn’t supposed to see her on that bus and she’ll derail his fate — to lead the free world.

VERY loosely based on a Phillip K. Dick (“Blade Runner,” “Total Recall,” “A Scanner Darkly,” many more film adaptations), “The Adjustment Bureau” takes the author’s concept and does something very different with it, turning it into a commentary on what matters in the world. What do you do when your heart tells you something is right even though everyone else tells you it’s wrong? How far would you go to satisfy that heart’s desire?





The Adjustment Bureau

Photo credit: Universal Pictures

The complex plot of "The Adjustment Bureau," especially in a final act that gets bogged down in spirituality (the agents are clearly variations on the concept of angels and "The Chairman" will be read as God by many), holds the film back from its true potential. Nolfi is a great writer when it comes to dialogue, usually the weakest part of both sci-fi and modern romance, but he drops the ball a little bit when it comes to the plot by focusing on it too heavily. There's a period between the second and third act of "Adjustment" when characters are CONSTANTLY explaining what's going on. The fact is that the audience doesn't need to have every question answered (we learned that with the success of "Inception"). And so hearing this much expository dialogue takes away from what truly works about the movie. A piece this grounded in concepts like fate, destiny, and eternal love actually should make less sense than "The Adjustment Bureau." I was frustrated every time Nolfi felt the need to explain the movie again when it should be as simple as "love conquers even the unknown."

Luckily, there's way more to like here than to bemoan the movie that could have been. Most of it is right there in the performances by Damon and Blunt, who have such chemistry that other screen couples should be forced to watch the movie to see how it's done. We not only believe these two should get together, we want it to happen — a crucial difference. So many sci-fi directors focus so much on the science and the fiction that they forget the realism needed to make their characters resonate. David and Elise will surely be one of the most interesting couples of 2011. And the movie that tells their story will be one of the year's most pleasant surprises.

*"The Adjustment Bureau" stars Matt Damon, Emily Blunt, Anthony Mackie, John Slattery, and Terrence Stamp. It was written and directed by George Nolfi. It will be released in theaters on March 4th, 2011. It is rated PG-13.*



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