

## Blueberries Meet Luscious Taste Buds in 'My Blueberry Nights' With Jude Law, Rachel Weisz

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CHICAGO – We see sensual close-up shots of blueberry pie overflow with aqueducts of vanilla ice cream in Wong Kar-Wai's opening sequence of "My Blueberry Nights". This dreamy scene sets the tone of the latest film from the famous Chinese director as he confronts the West with his unique cinematic style.



Rachel Weisz in Wong Kar-Wai's "My Blueberry Nights".  
Photo credit: MaCall Polay, The Weinstein Company

Split into three separate stories, the film begins in a bohemian New York café owned by Jeremy (Jude Law) where Elizabeth (Norah Jones) discovers that her boyfriend has left her for another woman.

Distraught, she leaves her keys with sympathetic Jeremy and hopes her ex will pick them up at the café and be out of her life forever.

Elizabeth seeks comfort in Jeremy's companionship and accepts his advice over leftover blueberry pie. Still, her heart is broken. Elizabeth decides she must go on a journey to reinvent herself.

She travels the country by bus and stops first in Memphis where her part in the film becomes more of an observer than a participant. Elizabeth takes on two jobs: one as a diner waitress and the other as a cocktail server. She befriends a customer at the bar, Arnie (David Strathairn), who's an alcoholic cop grieving the loss of his wife's faithfulness.

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Rachel Weisz plays Arnie's wife, Sue Lynne, who parades around in sultry scenes with younger boyfriends until Arnie loses his cool. He not only threatens her young boyfriend but also threatens Sue Lynne's life. After realizing his marriage has ended, he offs himself by crashing his car and leaves Elizabeth to comfort his now-heartbroken wife.

Throughout her adventure, Elizabeth keeps in contact via postcards with Jeremy in New York. They build a long-distance relationship. Jeremy continuously tries to reach her and eventually is confronted by his own heartbroken past, which he's finally able to close.

Elizabeth moves on in her process and ends up in a Nevada casino where she waitresses yet again. At work, she meets Leslie (Natalie Portman): an amateur gambler on a losing streak. Somehow Elizabeth makes a deal with Leslie and gives all her savings in exchange for her brand-new Jaguar.

They end up taking a trip to Las Vegas to settle the differences of the bargain while Elizabeth helps Leslie deal with the death of her father. After a 300-day journey, Elizabeth makes it back to New York City to the café to eat her blueberry pie and be with Jeremy. She's now ready to embrace the love that Jeremy and her have created.



Norah Jones (left) and Natalie Portman in Wong Kar-Wai's "My Blueberry Nights".

*Photo credit: MaCall Polay, The Weinstein Company*

Cinematically this film is beautiful. Sweltering close-ups and sensational highlights are often slowed down to accentuate the feelings of melancholy and lost love.

Scenes reminiscent of Edward Hopper's famous "Nighthawks" create a loneliness with which only those who have loved and lost can associate.

Ornamental details like cigarette smoking and messy handwriting keep the settings tight and constrictive. This shows the suffocation that can be caused by the emotions of love.

Jones' acting ability is natural, and like her breathy tunes, it keeps the film surreal and airy. Her character represents the shock of heartbreak and will be identified with to those who have been through the same. Law delivers an excellent supporting performance and his enthusiasm compliments Jones' vacant character.

Portman's gambling southerner is boisterous to Jones' blues. However, Portman's anything but believable.



Jude Law in Wong Kar-Wai's "My Blueberry Nights".

Photo credit: MaCall Polay, The Weinstein Company

Stratharin's character is over the top and Weisz doesn't break out of an "actress" in her scenes. The story skips forward with titles representing the day of her journey. This creates an awkward shakiness that's fortified with interjections of high-volume, often-distracting soundtrack.

While Elizabeth goes on her soul-searching journey, it isn't clear how she as a character changes or adjusts to what she has been through.

Though she sees failed love and addictions take control of others, the relevance of it to her own life is watered down. While the idea somehow flows overall, it won't be accepted by the classic moviegoer.

Emotionally deep messages and sentimental concepts about losing love and depending on others as a mirror are key elements in this tale. "My Blueberry Nights" conjures up profound feelings from the heart and will call only to those who can put themselves into Elizabeth's place of heartbreak.

Art houses around the world will grace this film on their screens and hopeless romantics will relate. The eccentric film will linger in the place where your blues reside and make you think about your own heart whether you want to or not.

*"My Blueberry Nights" opened on April 18, 2008. In Chicago, the film is showing at AMC River East, AMC Loews Pipers Alley, Century Evanston and Landmark's Renaissance Place Cinema.*



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By [ALLISON PITACCIO](#) [16]

Staff Writer

HollywoodChicago.com

[allee@hollywoodchicago.com](mailto:allee@hollywoodchicago.com) [15]

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