

ETERNAL SUNSHINE OF THE SPOTLESS MIND

"Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind" may not be the first movie you consider when scanning the Variety page. For starters, you might say to yourself, "What's with the weird title?" Secondly, you know it is not really a chick flick nor a guys' action film. Still, this is a movie that stretches your thinking and touches your heart at the same time. Charlie Kaufman, who also wrote "Being John Malkovich," and "Adaptation," wrote this as a screenplay and it definitely keeps the viewer spinning into new and unexpected dimensions.

Jim Carrey stars as Joel Barish, who is nothing like Carrey's usual zany and manic characters. Joel is an introverted Manhattan single guy who "out of the blue" meets a free-spirited, blue-haired "motor mouth" named Clementine Krucznski (Kate Winslet). Despite being polar opposites, they are unexplainably drawn to one another. Their relationship seems to just be developing when it suddenly ends and Joel learns that Clementine's memories of their relationship are erased. Joel, the mature character that he is, decides that if it is okay for Clementine to erase him, then he will do the same. Sadly, once Joel begins to erase his memories, he quickly discovers that it is not what he wants, and he fervently attempts to stop the process.

Despite being pure fiction, this movie works as it has an intimate, real, and alive quality that holds your attention. It poses a common question, "If a relationship breaks up shouldn't you just wipe those memories out of your mind?" In a sense, this is a kind of Orwellian idea of neutralizing any painful event by scientific manipulation.

However, as Joel revisits his memories of Clementine through the erasure procedure he discovers a different way of understanding them and begins to treasure his memories. As a result, he experiences Clementine with new appreciation for the richness of their special relationship that is deeply meaningful and spiritual.

The title of the movie is based on a quotation recited by one of the actors whereby "eternal sunshine of the spotless mind" is meant to signify that ignorance is bliss. Yet the movie contradicts this, as Joel discovers that even though he may have been unhappy with Clementine, the truth is that it was far better for him to have known her.

A quote in Rolling Stone magazine stated, "*Watching "Eternal Sunshine," you don't just watch a love story - you fall in love with what love really is.*" This seemed pointedly true at the end of the movie, when Joel voiced a commitment to love Clementine unconditionally.

This is certainly a very unusual movie, yet we liked it. It is confusing at times, but bear with it. If you can figure out how to open a child-proof aspirin bottle, you will get it and come to see the simple beauty of love.

By Curt and Natalie Levang