With Valentine’s Day still fresh in our memories, I decided to review a film that offers a different take on romance and the visual portrayal thereof. The film One Day is based on the number 1 best seller with the same title written by David Nicholls who also wrote the screenplay for the movie. Dexter (played by Jim Sturgess) and Emma (played by Anne Hathaway) meet after their college graduation celebrations and end up spending the night together, though not in a manner as is so often the case with drunk graduates who pair up and further their celebrations privately and in a physical way. The date of this is the 15th of July 1988 and the movie opens with this day. The film proceeds to show Dexter and Emma on that exact date every year from their graduation onwards, and how they lead their own lives separately but with a desperate longing for each other that never fades.

On 15 July 1989, Dexter helps Emma move into a rather dilapidated apartment in London where she will aspire to become a famous writer, whereafter Dexter leaves for India. 15 July 1990 shows Emma working in a Mexican restaurant obviously unsuccessful in her writing career. A new guy by the name of Ian (played by Rafe Spall) starts working in the restaurant and Emma is tasked with showing him the ropes as a newly hired waiter. 15 July 1991 and Emma is offered the position of manager in the restaurant. Emma and Dexter have irregular telephonic contact, and he tries his best to get Emma to work on her true passion: writing. 15 July 1992 sees Emma and Dexter on their way to France for a shared holiday. While driving in France Emma lays down the rules for their holiday: no shared beds, no flirting (as Dexter has a girlfriend) and no seeing each other. This causes her to snap at Dexter, and they have an argument. The day goes on and Emma goes swimming after spending time on her writing. She leaves a message for Dexter apologising for the argument that they had that morning, and that she will be late for a special dinner date that they had planned. This is where I will leave the rest of the film to you to discover, because what happens next is a pure and heartbreaking ‘oh no!’ moment.

One Day is a very different film. The way that it is presented to the viewer requires a lot of attention and mental flexibility while following Emma and Dexter’s story. This is especially so because the film shows extracts in Emma and Dexter’s lives in consecutive years over a span of 23 years. The overriding impression or message that the film left with me was that if one’s path crosses with ‘the one’, the person or love object that you feel overwhelmingly attracted to and when the attraction is mutual, you should pursue a lasting and meaningful relationship with that person before it is ‘too late’. Life is strange and one can never be certain as to tomorrow or any day further in the future. All we really do have is today, even if it is ‘a day to remember’. Valentine’s Day is a day to celebrate love and the visual portrayal thereof. The film presents the realities of real-life love and loss, and the film is a fine movie with an excellent screenplay - really worth viewing.

Their love and attraction to each other have never disappeared, and both have evolved and matured. Their love and attraction to each other have never disappeared, and both have evolved and matured. They have a strong bond and understanding of each other that they are able to play a part in each other’s life and help each other despite the struggles that they face in their individual lives.

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