



Love, Sex, Religion, Death: The Complete Films of Terence Davies

# The Deep Blue Sea

---

## The Deep Blue Sea

*Directed by:* Terence Davies

©: Deep Blue Sea Productions Limited,  
UK Film Council

*Production Companies:* Camberwell, Fly Film

*Financed in association with:*

Fulcrum Media Finance

*In association with:* Protagonist Pictures

*Presented by:* UK Film Council,

Lip Sync Productions, Film4

*In association with:* Artificial Eye

*Made with the support of:*

UK Film Council Development Fund,

The UK Film Council Film Fund

*International Sales:* Protagonist Pictures

*Executive Producers:* Katherine Butler,

Lisa Marie Russo, Peter Hampden, Norman Merry

*Produced by:* Sean O'Connor, Kate Ogborn

*Line Producer:* Eliza Mellor

*For UKFC: Head of Film Fund:* Tanya Seghatchian;

*Senior Production and Development Executive:*

Lizzie Francke; *Story Editors:* Jon Croker, Fiona

Morham; *Senior Business Affairs Executive:*

Geraldine Atlee; *Head of Production Finance:*

Vincent Holden

*For Film4: Head of Business Affairs:* Harry Dixon;

*Head of Production:* Tracey Josephs; *Head of*

*Commercial Development:* Sue Bruce-Smith

*For Protagonist Pictures: CEO:* Ben Roberts; *Head*

*of Sales:* Charlotte Van Weede; *Head of*

*Acquisitions:* Jeremy Baxter; *Head of Legal and*

*Business Affairs:* Simon Osborn; *Head of*

*Marketing:* Bridget Pedgrift

*For Artificial Eye: Managing Directors:* Louisa Dent,

Jonathan Perchal; *Acquisitions Executive:*

Ailsa Ferrier

*For Fulcrum Media Finance: Managing Director:*

Sharon Menzies; *Head of Business Affairs:*

Alice Clough

*Production Manager:* Monique Mussell

*Assistant Production Co-ordinator:* Sanjay Sharma

*Production Accountant:* Maxine Stanley

*Unit Manager:* Chris Johnston

*Location Manager:* Pat Karam

*Post-production Supervisor:* Shuna Frood

*Post-producer for LipSync Post:* Aileen McIntosh

*1st Assistant Director:* Anthony Wilcox

*2nd Assistant Director:* Chris Croucher

*3rd Assistant Director:* Chris Foggin

*Script Supervisor:* Susanna Lenton

*Casting Director:* Jane Arnell

*Voice Casting:* Vanessa Baker

*Adapted by:* Terence Davies

*Based on the play by:* Terence Rattigan

*Director of Photography:* Florian Hoffmeister

*Crane Camera Operator:* Craig Feather

*Focus Puller:* Rupert Hornstein

*Clapper Loader:* Henry Landgrebe

*Gaffer:* Gary Varney

*Rigging Gaffer:* Tim Wiley

*Key Grips:* Dan Rake, Warwick Drucker

*Stills Photographer:* Liam Daniel

*Visual Effects by:* LipSync Post

*For LipSync Post: Digital Effects Supervisor:* Luke

Butler; *CG Supervisor:* Sam Cox; *Executive Visual*

*Effects Supervisors:* Sean H. Farrow, Stefan Drury;

*Visual Effects Co-ordinator:* Lucy Tanner; *Digital*

*Compositors:* Sheila Wickens, James Elster,

Paul Daiko

*Special Effects Supervisor:* Colin Gorry

*Senior Special Effects Technicians:* Ed Smith,

Jonathan Wilson

*Editor:* David Charap

In his centenary year, dramatist Terence Rattigan, long considered the outmoded epitome of bourgeois English theatre, has again become fashionable, with a spate of West End revivals. His new modishness certainly won't be part of his appeal to Terence Davies, whose cultural tastes make his as determinedly old-fashioned (or at least anti-fashion) a sensibility as Woody Allen's.

Davies's *The Deep Blue Sea* can certainly be considered 'old-fashioned', both in its fascination with traditional English mores and in the seriousness, unmodulated by mitigating irony, with which it treats intense emotion. In the film, Hester Collyer – a judge's wife who has an unhappy affair with an RAF pilot – dismisses her plight as not really tragic: 'Sad perhaps, but hardly Sophocles.' Yet Davies gives Hester's story an unembarrassed emotional resonance in the lineage of the great 'women's pictures' of the 1940s and 1950s.

Davies has adapted the play – previously filmed in 1955 by Anatole Litvak – partly by stripping down Rattigan's cluttered text. He clears out the verbose interventions of gauche neighbours the Welches, and pares down the role of the sympathetic Miller, a doctor struck off (it's implied) for homosexuality, and therefore well able to understand Hester's wilfully adopted outcast status.

At the same time, Davies has not exactly opened out the play – set over one day in Hester's flat – but amplified it with his own additions. The tolerant landlady Mrs Elton, formidably played here by Ann Mitchell, now has a key scene in which she offers Hester a home truth, in terms Rattigan might have shuddered at. Seen tending her invalid husband, she says to Hester, 'You know what real love is? It's wiping someone's arse... and letting them keep their dignity, so you can both go on.'

Davies also creates an episode in which the stresses of Hester's marriage become clear during a visit to her mother-in-law – a brittle tour de force by Barbara Jefford. This sequence leads Davies to somewhat overstate Hester's defiance – it's hard to credit her talking back to this fearsome matriarch quite so crisply – but there's some relishable wit in the older Mrs Collyer's espousal of 'guarded enthusiasm' over passion, and her cooing over the cake (in a line worthy of Joe Orton): 'The Battenberg – it's a pleasure I've never outgrown.'

There are other additions: the exuberantly boyish RAF banter of Hester's lover Freddie ('I served in the Battle of Britain, old fruit, old darling') is arguably laid on a bit thick, though it helps establish her amused delight in him. And there are several musical moments that echo Davies's earliest features: a single-shot track along the platform of Aldwych tube during the Blitz, to a sung 'Molly Malone'; one pub singalong, done straight, and another to 'You Belong to Me' which fades into the Jo Stafford recording as Hester and Freddie dance, perfectly capturing the fantasy-tinged intimacy of their romance.

In his patented singalong moments, Terence D, it might be objected, overwhelms Terence R. But then the film, unlike the play, is not remotely naturalistic. Rather than a conventional adaptation, this is more like a cinematic opera after Rattigan. The film's masterstroke is a seamless eight-minute 'prelude', set to Samuel Barber, in which the surging orchestrations

*On-line Editor:* Scott Goulding  
*Assistant Editor:* Gez Morris  
*Production Designer:* James Merifield  
*Supervising Art Director:* David Hindle  
*Art Director:* Sarah Pasquali  
*Set Decorator:* Deborah Wilson  
*Graphic Designer:* Kellie Waugh  
*Scenic Artist:* Ian Cooper  
*Production Buyer:* Deborah Wilson  
*Property Master:* Peter Hallam  
*Construction Manager:* Dan Crandon  
*Costume Designer:* Ruth Myers  
*Assistant Costume Designer:* William McPhail  
*Hair and Make-up Designer:* Lizzie Yianni Georgiou  
*Key Hair and Make-up Artist:* Sophia Knight  
*Titles by:* LipSync Post  
*Digital Grading by:* LipSync Post  
*Colourist:* Stuart Fyvie  
*Film Processing by:* DeLuxe (London)  
*Originated on:* Kodak Motion Picture Film  
*Music Supervisor:* Ian Neil  
*Sound Designer:* Tim Barker  
*Production Sound Mixer:* Tim Barker  
*Sound Maintenance:* Chinna Udenze  
*Re-recording Mixers:* Robert Farr, Yanti Windrich  
*Dialogue Editor:* Andrew Stirk  
*Sound Effects Editor:* Gernot Fuhrmann  
*Foley Artists:* Paul Hanks, Ian Waggot  
*Foley Recorded by:* Universal Sound  
*Foley Mixers:* Phillip Barrett, Simon Trundle  
*Sound by:* LipSync Post  
*Unit Publicist:* Emma Davie  
*EPK [Electronic Press Kit]:* Tracey Larcombe  
*Filmed with:* Panavision Cameras and Lenses  
*DI Supervisor:* James Clarke  
*Filmed at:* 3 Mills Studios  
*Cast:*  
 Rachel Weisz (*Hester Collyer*)  
 Tom Hiddleston (*Freddie Page*)  
 Simon Russell-Beale (*Sir William Collyer*)  
 Ann Mitchell (*Mrs Elton*)  
 Jolyon Coy (*Philip Welch*)  
 Karl Johnson (*Mr Miller*)  
 Harry Hadden-Paton (*Jackie Jackson*)  
 Sarah Kants (*Liz Jackson*)  
 Oliver Ford Davies (*Hester's father*)  
 Barbara Jefford (*Collyer's mother*)  
 Mark Tandy (*Ede and Ravenscroft assistant*)  
 Stuart McLoughlin (*singing man in tube*)  
 Nicholas Amer (*Mr Elton*)  
 Nick James (*man singing in pub*) \*  
 Jane Giles (*woman on tube platform*) \*  
 UK-Australia 2011©  
 98 mins  
 Digital

\* Uncredited

#### With thanks to

James Dowling, John Taylor, Dan Copley,  
Sophie Smith, Edge Hill University

#### The Terence Davies Estate



accompany a scene- and mood-setting crane shot from a bombed-out building to the window where Hester stands, prior to her suicide attempt (the shot is repeated in reverse, by daylight, as the film ends on an equivocally positive note). Barber's concerto continues through a sparsely worded series of flashbacks – notably a bedroom sequence showing just how unequivocally carnal Hester and Freddie's relationship is.

The three leads are superb: the anachronistic looks of Tom Hiddleston's Freddie fit the period perfectly; Simon Russell Beale has a sympathetic, wounded gravitas as Hester's husband William; and Rachel Weisz's lustrous evocation of sensual sorrow gives Hester a distinct cerebral edge. But it's hard to entirely accept that these three characters fit together as the play's triangle. You wonder whether a woman as sensually self-composed as Weisz's Hester would go for someone as obviously callow, yet burnt-out, as this Freddie. Conversely, would a woman so obviously youthful have married a stolid greybeard like Russell Beale's grizzled William? (Created by Peggy Ashcroft, Hester has generally been identified with older, certainly less girlish actresses than Weisz, such as Penelope Wilton or recently Greta Scacchi.)

In fact, Davies has skewed the triangle in a somewhat Freudian direction, emphasising that Hester is caught untenably between a father-figure and a surrogate son. And, while arguments have raged over interpretations of Rattigan's play as an encoded homosexual drama, the casting of Hiddleston as a faded ephebe certainly makes the film readable as both a traditional tragedy of female passion and an implicitly queer story about the pains of being mad about the boy.

Davies vividly catches the mood of Rattigan's tattered post-war England, of painfully observed proprieties on one hand, untameable desire on the other. Visually the film evokes both emotional grandeur and material shabbiness, in the clausturation of Hester's tobacco-brown flat, a space where, when curtains are flung open, daylight enters but doesn't illuminate. Rattigan's Ladbroke Grove (not named in the film) is a desert for social exiles, victims of 'anger, hatred, shame' – the conditions that afflict Hester's soul, but which, Davies's film reminds us, are perennial components of the English condition.

Jonathan Romney, *Sight and Sound*, December 2011

#### Dear Bud: The Creative Mind of Terence Davies

Edge Hill University, the repository of the Terence Davies Archive, curates a free exhibition of previously unseen materials from Davies' personal archive and the archive of production company Hurricane Films. The exhibition will include materials from both Terence's personal life and film career such as family letters and belongings, behind-the-scenes photos, props and draft scripts, highlighting his career long connection to the BFI, his deep love of music and a glimpse of his creative space with an interactive recreation of his working desk.

1-30 Nov BFI Southbank Mezzanine

#### Become a BFI Member

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at [bfi.org.uk/join](http://bfi.org.uk/join)

#### Sight and Sound

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25\*

\* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info:

[sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk/subscribe](http://sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk/subscribe)

**SIGHT  
AND  
SOUND**