



## The Deep Blue Sea

Terence Davies

UNITED KINGDOM, 2011  
English

98 minutes ■ Colour/35mm  
Production Company: Camberwell/Fly Films  
Executive Producer: Katherine Butler,  
Lisa Marie Russo, Peter Hampden,  
Norman Merry  
Producers: Sean O'Connor, Kate Ogborn  
Screenplay: Terence Davies  
Cinematographer: Florian Hoffmeister  
Editor: David Charap  
Production Designer: James Merifield  
Sound: Tim Barker  
Music: Samuel Barber  
Principal Cast: Rachel Weisz,  
Tom Hiddleston, Simon Russell Beale

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(see page 436)

Postwar England has been a recurring and vital setting for Terence Davies. His semi-autobiographical masterpieces *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives* and *The Long Day Closes*, as well as the bulk of his rapturous documentary *Of Time and the City*, take place largely in the fifties and movingly evoke the hardship and camaraderie of that era.

*The Deep Blue Sea* is also a product of that age. An adaptation of a famous play by British playwright Terence Rattigan, it features one of the greatest roles for an actress in modern theatre; Peggy Ashcroft, Vivien Leigh, Penelope Keith and Blythe Danner have all taken a swing at it. Joining them now in an impossibly intimate and deeply vulnerable performance is Rachel Weisz. She plays Hester Collyer, the former wife of a high-WASP judge, now the nearly abandoned lover of a drunken former World War II pilot. Emotionally stranded and physically isolated, she attempts suicide to win him back and perhaps also to send a message to her former husband. Her gesture serves only to estrange her more from the men in her life and reality itself.

Davies cleverly strips away many of the play's supporting characters and expands the film visually and psychologically into Lady Collyer's dream life. Gently abstracted flashbacks take us into luminous cinematographic landscapes, including a bravura tracking shot through an underground station during the Blitz. But it is the unrelenting focus on Weisz — her face, her pain — in long, masterfully composed takes that draws us inside

her utter desperation and the desperation of the British people, struggling to rebuild their society after a calamitous war and the loss of an Empire.

■ Noah Cowan



Terence Davies was born in Liverpool. His first successes came with three short films, *Children* (76), *Madonna and Child* (80) and *Death and Transfiguration* (83). They were later combined and screened as the feature *The Terence Davies Trilogy* (84), which played at the Festival in 2008. He went on to direct the acclaimed features *Distant Voices*, *Still Lives* (88), *The Long Day Closes* (92), *The Neon Bible* (95), *The House of Mirth* (00), *Of Time and the City* (08) and *The Deep Blue Sea* (11).

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