

IN LOVE AND WAR (1996)

Rated PG-13. Running time: 1 hour min. 53 min.

Our content ratings (0-10): Violence 5; Language 3; Sex/Nudity 4.

Our star rating (1-5): 3

Based on letters and the diary of Agnes Von Kurowsky, the Red Cross nurse who cared for young Ernest Hemingway during his convalescence from war wounds, this Richard Attenborough film will appeal to lovers of romance. Eight years older than Hemingway, who was then but 18 going on 19, Agnes struggles with her feelings toward the attractive, brash patient, carries on a clandestine affair with him for a while, but in the end gives in to the conventions of the time forbidding such a relationship.

Sandra Bullock plays a very different role from her usual ones, but does it well. I found Chris O'Donnell lacking that tough edge we would expect to see even a young Hemingway.

A special moment of grace: Hemingway's friend Jim, covered with bandages masking his horrible burns from a phosphorent shell, dies by his own hand. Agnes, who had been writing a letter to his parents for him, is anguished over how to finish it. Hemingway throws her copy away and writes one in which Jim expresses gratitude to, and love for, his parents and a sense of purpose in his own life. It is a letter that will assuage their grief, one which will become a cherished keepsake.

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