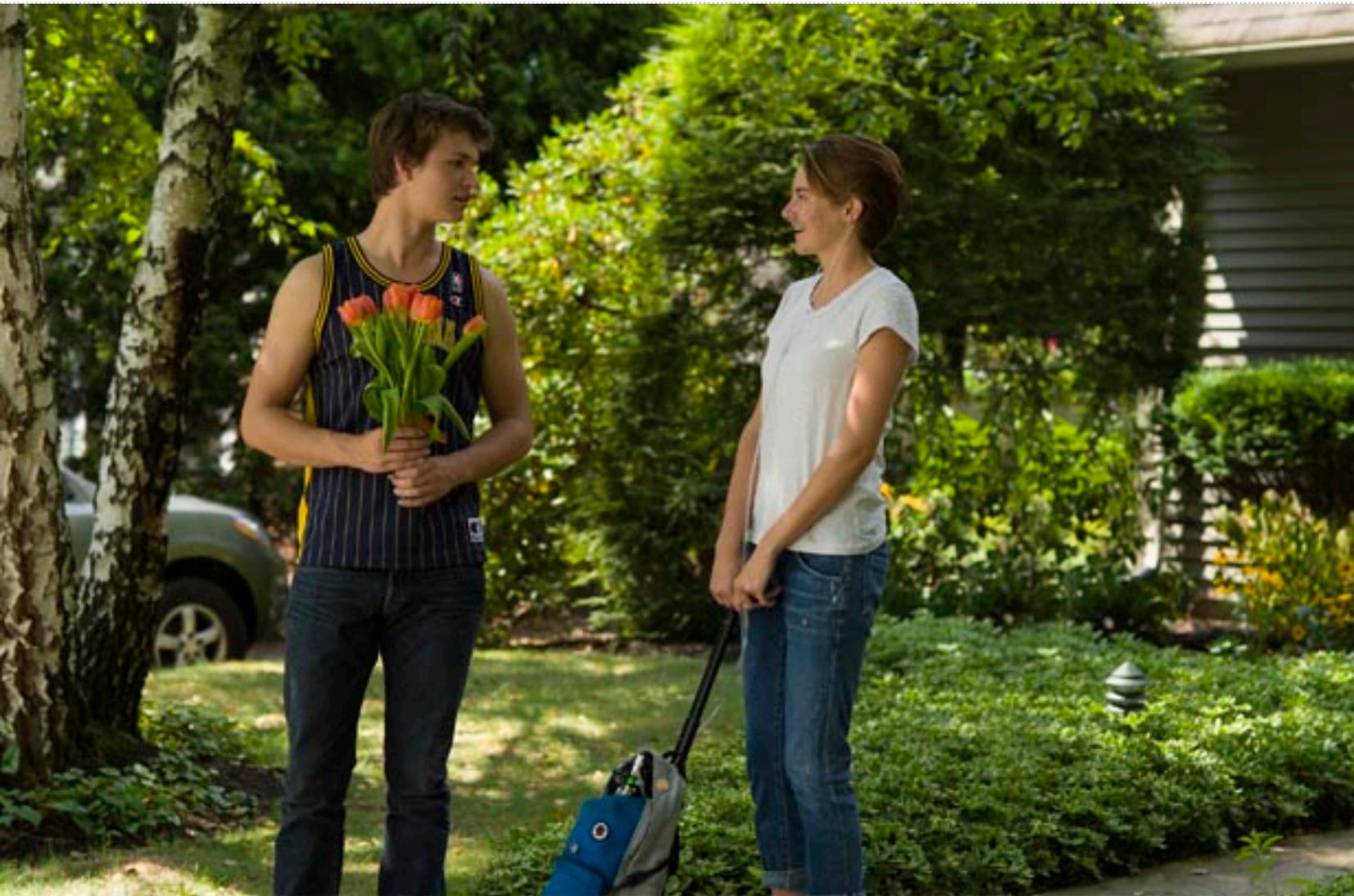
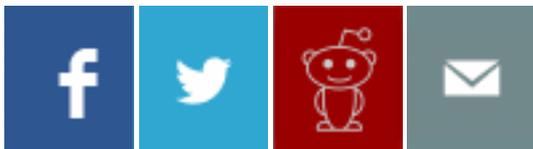


‘The Fault in Our Stars’ Review: Shailene Woodley Grounds Dewy-Eyed Cancer Weepee



MOVIES | By **Diane Garrett** on June 3, 2014 @ 4:00 pm

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Woodley stars opposite her “Divergent” brother Ansel Elgort in this unabashed tearjerker about teens battling life-threatening illness

Get out your hankies for “The Fault in Our Stars,” an unabashed tearjerker based on **John Green**’s popular YA novel of the same name. The movie, which evokes classic cancer weepies **“Love Story”** and “Brian’s Song,” is starry-eyed, affecting, and preternaturally wise.

It certainly benefits from appealing leads: **“Divergent”** siblings **Shailene Woodley** and **Ansel Elgort** star as cancer-afflicted teens. Tears will definitely be shed at multiplexes around the country.

Wearing its sorrow on its sleeve, the movie opens with a voiceover about sad stories. Promising not to sugarcoat the truth, **“The Fault in Our Stars”** sprinkles fairy dust over it instead.

See video: [Shailene Woodley Falls in Love With Ansel Elgort](#) in New ‘Fault in Our Stars’ Trailer

The movie is glossy Hollywood sad — cathartic without being too much of a bummer. Hazel (Woodley) and Gus (Elgort) battle health challenges but never really lose their looks, engaging in an almost fantastical quest to see a reclusive author in Amsterdam while bantering with pal Isaac (**Nat Wolff**) and her concerned but never overbearing parents (**Laura Dern** and **Sam Trammell**) on the homefront.

They even meet cute in a cancer support group.

Hazel, who must wear a breathing tube and tote around oxygen, goes reluctantly to appease her mother, all but rolling her eyes at the gathering. When she bumps into Gus, she is thrown off her game by his frank interest.

The two begin a halting friendship that turns into romance. Hazel, who considers herself a grenade capable of inflicting great emotional damage, tries to keep him at arm’s length, but Gus is not deterred. They bond over her passion for “An Imperial Affliction,” a book about cancer, and he introduces her to video games and sci-fi.

See photos: [‘The Fault in Our Stars’ Premiere: Shailene Woodley, Ansel Elgort](#), John Green Hit the Red Carpet

Once a jock, he lost part of a leg but is in remission at the movie’s outset, with Hazel more outwardly at risk. In the best YA style, he takes on her quest to meet “Imperial Affliction” author Peter Van Houten (**Willem Dafoe**), getting an email response where she could not. After requisite obstacles — cost, doctors’ opposition — the couple travel to Europe with her mom in tow.

It’s all too good to be true (except for the cancer part) until their disappointing meeting with the writer. The dismayed teens instead sight-see Amsterdam with the author’s assistant as their guide. (Mom’s conveniently back at the hotel.) After their romantic interlude they head back home, where cancer rears its ugly head.

Also read: [‘Fault in Our Stars’ Rising: How Social Media Is Turning the Bestseller Into a Shailene Woodley Box-Office Hit](#)

From there it’s a downhill slide for one of our star-crossed lovers. The movie does not shy away from the morbid concerns of terminal teens, who worry about their parents and their eulogy with equal import.

It also addresses the very real concern that



romantic interests will bail in the face of severe health issues. After watching pal Isaac split with the girlfriend that had pledged to always be there for him, Hazel and Gus decide their watchword will be “OK,” a fairly less definitive choice.

Under the direction of **Josh Boone** (“Stuck in Love,” which also featured Wolff), **“The Fault in Our Stars”** strains credulity at moments (it’s a bold move to have teens take their relationship to the next level after a visit to the Anne Frank house) and verges on cutesy in

others. But it never gets cloying, which is a testimony to the grounding influence of Woodley. Against all odds, it even manages to end on an upbeat note.

See video: Ed Sheeran’s ‘Fault in Our Stars’ Music Video Will Make You Weepy

“The Fault in Our Stars” may not show the true messiness of cancer, but it does grapple with death and the ability to survive great loss. Maybe that’s enough truth for one movie.



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