

# AN IMPOSSIBLE LOVE (Un amour impossible)

France (2018) 135 minutes

**Director:** Catherine Corsini

**Cast:** Rachel (Virginie Efira)  
Phillippe (Neils Schneider)  
Chantal, as teenager (Estelle Lescure)  
Chantal (Jhenny Beth)



**Screening 09 February 2022 at Swindon Arts Centre**

## Synopsis

A chronicle of the unconditional love between a mother and her daughter, from 1958 to the present day, which is endangered by an unsteady and manipulative father....

## Reviews



This is a love that begins sweetly, turns terrible, and is told with unflinching directness. Directed by Catherine Corsini, *An Impossible Love* is based on a novel by Christine Angot (known in France, and increasingly elsewhere, for her powerful autobiographical fiction), which is in turn based on Angot's own troubling early life and family experiences. If the film is too direct – an anti-melodrama melodrama – it is only because it is honest and treats emotional extremes with great fidelity....

*An Impossible Love* is an unbearably sad film dotted with brief moments of sweet, sunny reprieve. A more constant joy in the film is the power of the performances, particularly that of Estelle Lescure as the adolescent Chantal, and of course Virginie Efira as Rachel. The love between these two characters – or the female experience of love, more broadly – is where Corsini's eye is most acutely focused, and she takes us there with candour, integrity and overwhelming emotion.

*Tom Baily, The Arts Desk*

The film begins in 1958 in Châteauroux in central France, where 25-year-old Rachel works as a typist. She clicks with a handsome young man she meets in the office canteen, Philippe, a romantic young intellectual from a wealthy family, fond of quoting Nietzsche. The couple begin a passionate relationship, and Rachel eventually gives birth to a daughter, Chantal (played as a teenager by impressive newcomer Estelle Lescure). But Philippe refuses to marry Rachel, or to allow his daughter to bear his family name. Over the years that follow, it would be a severe understatement to say that he plays fast and loose, elusive and manipulative with Rachel. Even so, Rachel remains in love with him, while building a career and raising her daughter alone – a feat requiring real determination and strength of character in France in the '60s and '70s especially. It's when Chantal is a little older, and starts growing closer to the father she's barely known that Philippe's character starts to reveal an even darker side.

*Jonathan Romney, Screen Daily*

## Film Facts

- Filming took place in spring 2017, in Châteauroux, Champagne-Ardenne, Nice, Imperia and Paris.
- Virginie Efira is known for *Elle* (2016), *Victoria* (2016) and *Sibyl* (2019). She's a skilled poker player and has participated in professional tournaments such as the European Poker Tour. She gave up the game in 2015.
- The film was nominated for the Audience Award, Rotterdam International Film Festival 2019.

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