

My Afternoons with Margueritte

Cert 15 France 2010 82 mins

Crew

Director	Jean Becker
Screenplay	Jean Becker
	Jean-Loup Dabadie
Original Music	Laurent Voulzy
Cinematography	Arthur Cloquet
Editor	Jacques Witt

Cast

G�rard Depardieu	Germain Chazes
Gis�le Casadesus	Margueritte
Maurane	Francine
Patrick Bouchitey	Landremont
Claire Maurier	La m�re
Sophie Guillemin	Annette

Synopsis

Provincial France, the present. Germain Chazes, an uneducated, middle-aged handyman, lives next door to his mean spirited mother and divides his spare time between his much younger bus driver girlfriend Annette and hanging out in the local cafe owned by his friend Francine. One day he meets 95-year-old Margueritte, in the town park, and discovers that they share a mutual love of pigeons.

A friendship blossoms as they begin to meet regularly on the same park bench. Margueritte, a former scholar, takes to reading excerpts from her books to Germain and he, barely able to read, gradually discovers a love of literature. At the same time, his relationships with his friends, his girlfriend and his mother begin to transform.....



Reviews

The Rohmeresque English title seems to be offering a cross between *Love in the Afternoon* and *My Night With Maud*, but the French title, *La t te en friche*, means something like "the fallow mind", and refers to the middle-aged odd-jobman Germain (G rard Depardieu), who strikes up an acquaintance in the square of a small French town with the 95-year-old Marguerite (the nonagenarian Gis le Casadesus), a former international civil servant. A bloated giant in dungarees, more hulk than hunk, with low self-esteem and barely literate, he looks as if he could anchor a zeppelin. She's articulate, highly intelligent, frail, and looks as if a sharp breeze could send her floating away. Touchingly, their growing friendship centres on books and words – Marguerite's subtle love of them, Germain's inquiring wonder about them – and the first text is Camus's *La Peste*, which she reads to him. Gradually, if somewhat factitiously, his life is transformed through the experience, and in turn he enriches the lives of the collection of kindly, slightly bruised French types that constitute his circle. It's a charming, sentimental, well-acted movie, and any readers' group would want to make an outing to see it.

Philip French The Observer Nov'10

G rard Depardieu was born to play Falstaff, though unfortunately in the wrong country. He is glorious in *My Afternoons with Margueritte*, as glorious as he was with another Marguerite – single "t", surname Duras – in *Le Camion (The Truck)*. Like that intellectual "Beauty and the Beast", in which the diminutive author of *Hiroshima Mon Amour* conversed about life and art with the hulk who looks as if he can barely join two sapient syllables, the new movie is about a male mammoth having a torch shone down the path of enlightenment.

A boiler-suited giant in a small town, Depardieu's character lumbers across a sweet little old lady who sits and reads on a park bench. Soon they are parsing Camus' *La Peste* together. Soon after that, they are platonic sweethearts. Despite bombardments of feel-good banality from director Jean Becker, who fills in with folksy vignettes in the local bar (sometimes the whole of France seems a Stella Artois commercial), Gis le Casadesus as the biddy and Depardieu as the lunkhead guide us towards their own unshowy truth.

Nigel Andrews, Financial Times