YOU CAN'T HELP yourself from being drawn to a film about first love, even if it is rather mediocre. And this is what saves The Notebook – an old-fashioned but heart-warming movie about two lovebirds uniting against all odds.

Directed by Nick Cassavetes, the film is based on the best-selling novel by Nicholas Spark. It begins with scenes of an old man named Duke (James Garner) reading a love story to Allie Calhoun (Gena Rowlands), an Alzheimer's patient.

Duke’s story is about how two young lovers – Noah (Ryan Gosling), a poor rural boy, and Allie (Rachel McAdams), a rich city girl – overcome obstacles such as class, war, memory loss, time and illness to reunite.

Although Cassavetes’ directing and camera work is often dull and sluggish, the brilliant performances by wonderful actors such as Rowlands, Garner and Gosling are enough to illuminate the screen.

Of particular note is McAdams, whose strong features and pouting lips render her the perfect actress to play a character who is cheeky in appearance but tender at heart.

If you happen to be a fan of the sort of films that make you cry, The Notebook is the perfect movie for you.

VERDICT: GO TO THE MOVIES