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It's unusual for such a big, lavish musical to end on a down note, as the genre has long been characterized by its neat bows and wish-fulfillment endings. On this point, many have pointed towards Jacques Demy's 1964 musical The Umbrellas Of Cherbourg. Damien Chazelle has called it one of his favorite films, but the similarity in beats between the two betrays this fact regardless. In Demy's film, a couple once in love but long since separated by circumstances beyond their control cross paths again and witness the lives they've each built because of, rather than in spite of, the sacrifice of their own life together. It's an achingly sad moment, as they trade rather mundane small talk while the immensity of what could have been hangs in the air. It's immediately evoked in the final scene of La La Land when Mia and Sebastian look eyes across the jazz club that the latter always promised he'd open. Mia first spots the sign she designed all those years ago, and then she sits to listen to Sebastian play their theme. As soon as he begins, the film switches to a dream ballet of everything we've seen up until that point, only with a few vital differences. This time, mistakes weren't made, and betrayals weren't enacted. They are blissfully in love and, following Mia's successful audition for a job in Paris, the pair move there together to begin a life. In other words, we get to see our initial expectations play out, including a key shot shown in the trailers that doesn't pop up until now, before a harsher reality sets in. We see all of this represented by dance sequences, shadow plays, and home movie-style recreations of the life not lived. The music ends, Mia gets up to leave, and the pair share a knowing smile. It's one of the most beautiful depictions of regret mixed with joy that I've ever seen on screen. One look back distillation of what could have been, what was, and what is able to now because of. Of course, plenty of films end in their central romances with a breakup, or at least an ambiguous goodbye. Before Sunrise winds down with its leads heading off separately with the hope of seeing each other again in a year (which we later learn in Before Sunset didn't happen). Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind posits that a relationship is worthwhile, even if you know it's doomed, and Like Crazy ends with its couple together, but possibly forgetting the reason they fought so hard in the first place. For his Oscar-nominated role in "La La Land," Ryan Gosling spent three months learning to play the piano — so it's somewhat of a compliment that many people ask if there was a hand double involved. "It's all Ryan," says writer-director Damien Chazelle, adding that there was initially going to be someone on deck just in case, but it was never needed. New, behind-the-scenes video provided to Variety shows Gosling on set rehearsing or playing in several scenes, including the number "Start a Fire" with John Legend and at the wedding of his character's sister. It's not the first time Gosling has taken on a special skill or gone to extremes for a film. For "The Notebook," he spent two months soaking up the culture of Charleston, SC and even learned to build furniture like his character. To put on 60 pounds for "The Lovely Bones," a film he eventually left, Gosling would melt ice cream and drink it. Music has always been a part of Gosling's life; as a child, he sung and dance alongside the likes of Justin Timberlake and Britney Spears in "The Mickey Mouse Club." All his hard work has paid off, earning him his second best actor Oscar nod; he was previously nominated for the 2006 film "Half Nelson." He also provides vocals on "City of Stars," which is up for best original song. Check out behind-the-scenes video of Gosling in "La La Land" below. [Warning: The following story contains spoilers from La La Land.] La La Land has sung and danced its way to awards-season success and is up for 14 Oscars, tying Titanic and All About Eve as films with the most Academy Award nominations. But those who've seen the Lionsgate film might be disappointed by its bittersweet ending. The film centers on aspiring musician, Sebastian (Ryan Gosling), who is looking to open his own jazz club, and struggling actress Mia (Emma Stone). Both have big dreams, but are struggling to make it in Hollywood. Over a song-and-dance-filled, two hours, Sebastian and Mia meet and fall in love. While they fight and reconcile, ultimately they don't end up together. At the end of the film, Sebastian is able to own his own jazz club, while Mia lands a starring role in a Paris-filmed project that jump starts her acting career. While making their dreams come true, both Mia and Sebastian go their separate ways and never rekindle the romance they shared. When Mia returns to L.A., now married to someone else, she comes across Seb's (Sebastian's jazz club). Stopping in for a minute, Mia smiles at Sebastian while contemplating what their life together could have been like. Viewers watch the fantasy montage unfold onscreen. But back at the club, Mia leaves, sharing one last look with Sebastian on her way out. The film ends with Sebastian and Mia as two individuals who fell in love, but their pursuit of their careers takes precedence over any effort to try to maintain their relationship. Speaking to The Hollywood Reporter, producer Fred Berger says the plan was always for the two leads to go their separate ways, something he saw as a more realistic outcome. "[Fellow producer] Jordan [Horowitz], [director] Damien [Chazelle] and myself made a pact that under no circumstances will [Emma and Ryan's characters] end up together in the end," says Berger. "He will always play jazz and not a more acceptable form of music; she will always be an actress, this will always be a love letter to L.A. — we're not relocating to Paris." Their refusal to stray from their vision wasn't to rebel against the Hollywood fairy tale blueprint, but a way to provide a story that could be more realistic. Berger adds, "We felt confident, but the things that people were pressuring us to change were the things that would make it connect and feel original and new. What we were very open to was calibrating it to a way that felt honest." Similarly, Chazelle wanted to create a film that viewers could resonate with and realize that the Hollywood fairy tale that they believe in isn't necessarily authentic. "A lot of things can happen after 'happily ever after.' But when you have two people who share a memory, there is something very pure and nothing can taint that memory," Chazelle tells THR. "The idea was to take the old musical, but ground it in real life where things don't always exactly work out." Stone and Gosling also played a strong role in ensuring that the characters were portrayed in a way that they felt was right. It was Gosling that would typically be expected to have Sebastian want more than just to become a successful jazz musician but rather own his own club. Meanwhile, Stone proposed that her character would create Sebastian's "Seb's" club sign. Berger says, "While they don't end up together in the end, they create a foundation for a loving relationship built on support and trust. Even though they aren't romantically involved in the end, they continue to hold great admiration and respect for each other as they mature into the worlds they worked so hard to break into; something that could be regarded as a 'real-life' relationship." Berger says, "That's what the ending is about: They'll always have each other, they needed each other to get to this place, they're better off for having known each other, and that to me is something that's really satisfying." Speaking at a Screen Actors Guild-AFTRA Foundation panel, Stone agreed that the ending seems to reflect that both Mia and Sebastian remain important figures in each other's lives. "I don't know that they necessarily couldn't have ended up together," she added. "I think these two characters help inspire each other's dreams and the way that that unfolds means that they can't end up together but that their love isn't any less important. I was talking to somebody the other night and he said that 'What I really love about this story is that in the end, even though she's happily married and has a baby, that this movie celebrates those loves that came before and that they're just as important as the love you have now.' It's about how important each person is in your journey in wherever you're going." The La La Land ending doesn't give the audience the romantic conclusion they might have wanted, but it's one that fits the movie's core themes. Damien Chazelle's award-winning film is a musical love story about Mia (Emma Stone) and Seb (Ryan Gosling) as the couple meet, sing, dance, and romance their way through the City of Stars, seemingly setting up a happy ending much like those of the films La La Land is so influenced by. However, the ending takes things in an unexpected direction for a romance musical as its two lead characters don't end up together. Though La La Land pays homage to many musicals that came before, the ending includes a key detail that sets its main characters think of what could have been, and reinforces why they didn't end up together. When it picks back up in the real world, Seb quietly, almost mournfully, plays the final note as Mia sadly smiles at him. In turn, Sebastian nods back. With these moments bookending the dream sequence in La La Land's ending, it hammers home the reality of Seb and Mia's relationship. Seb playing the song is an acknowledgment and reminder of their love, of how much their relationship meant, and how much it still means. Mia's smile and Seb's nod complete it; they're no longer together, but they'll always love each other in some way, be grateful for the time they had, and be proud of how far the other has come. One key detail in La La Land's ending comes with the name of Sebastian's club. The Seb's name and logo both came from Mia, who gave Seb a design for his club earlier in the movie. It's a subtle touch that shows just how much their lives impacted one another. They may not be together, but much like Seb wouldn't be the same without Mia, there would also be no Seb's without her. Her encouragement for him to pursue his dream, and vice versa, is what led to this, and it's a nice touch to see that honored in Seb's jazz club. Related La La Land's soundtrack does not only make Mia and Sebastian's journey richer, but it also tells a story on its own. Here is every song included. Damien Chazelle's movies wear their influences on their sleeves, most overtly drawing from 1950s musicals such as Singing In The Rain and the Best Picture-winning musical An American In Paris, but there are two key films that stand out when it comes to how La La Land ends. One is The Umbrellas of Cherbourg, Jacques Demy's 1964 musical romance. Aside from the music, it's also stylistically similar in its use of color and is broken up into different chapters, giving it a similar narrative structure. Most importantly, it has an ending that opts for bittersweet realism over a Hollywood climax, as its romantic leads having a last, poignant meeting showing how they've lost one another but achieved their goals. The other key influence is 7th Heaven, a 1927 silent movie centered around married couple Chico and Diane, where the former goes off to war and dies. The wife refuses to believe it, clinging to dreams that he's alive. The movie's ending sees Chico return home. Without an explanation of how he's alive, they kiss, and the screen fades to black. 7th Heaven allows viewers to choose their own interpretation about whether it is a dream, and La La Land's ending offers something similar with its own dream sequence. While there is debate in 7th Heaven about whether Chico is alive or if Diane was just dreaming it, Chazelle also suggests both could be true (via Vulture): "The reason those two things can coexist is because of how deeply this woman loves him. The emotion war, but when a musical begins with such a bright, colorful, and sunny opening number, delivering a bittersweet movie ending makes it all the harder to take. However, it can also be argued that La La Land has a happy ending. They may not be together, but Seb and Mia are successful and, more importantly, fulfilled. The movie may not go the way anyone expects, and yet looking back to that opening, both characters are in far better places when it ends compared to how it began. They've loved and lost, but they've also gained so much along the way, with bright futures ahead for both of them. Damien Chazelle's movies have a clear throughline, showing the pursuit of one's dream to the point of obsession, and the human cost that comes with it. This was shown physically, mentally, and emotionally in both the stunning conclusion to Whiplash and also First Man, both of which more intensely focused on the sacrifice that was required. The La La Land ending has a more delicate touch since it's built around romance. Still, the theme remains the same: that committing oneself so completely to an endeavor (in particular an artistic one) is worth it, no matter what it takes, if it's what the heart and soul are truly passionate about. It's fitting that La La Land's ending includes a wistful sequence that sees its main characters think of what could have been, and reinforces why they didn't end up together. However, with that, it's a more powerful statement. It's realism over wish-fulfillment — not all relationships can work out, most people will find contentment rather than perfection, and life is, like jazz, unpredictable. There's a rush that comes with that and yet it offers a dose of the latter too in how the two leads do realize their dreams, both at the cost of but also thanks to their romance. Seb and Mia being together would've been a fine, feel-good ending that sent audiences home happy. Instead, La La Land leaves the audience with a more complicated feeling, but that emotional impact lasts far longer. For lead actress Emma Stone, the La La Land ending isn't necessarily sad, rather, it's a reflection of harsh reality (via Elle). "I find it bittersweet, but also realistic. It doesn't all come true for anyone ever. It's not exactly how you pictured it." Stone also discussed how the ending of La La Land relates to social media's effect on modern society's skewed perception of life. "That's why it makes me so crazy to look at social media. When you see people like, 'This is the best life ever! I couldn't be happier,' you're like, 'Shut up, that's not true.' Not everything comes together in the best way ever, every day. It just doesn't. Even when your dream you set out for comes true, it's not always perfect.... That's not the reality of life." Again, while Damien's movies are incredibly varied so far, it is possible to see a solid through-line in all of them that deals with the main character's pursuit of big goals. La La Land's ending brings its story of Seb and Mia's pursuit of their dreams to a close with the realization that they needed to make the sacrifice of their relationship in order to get to that place they had been chasing. It's fascinating to see how the endings of his other movies have also commented on this theme. First Man details the real-life journey Neil Armstrong took in preparing to be the first man to walk on the moon. In the end, it is revealed that the dangerous mission that caused him to put his life in danger, be absent from his family life, and focus only on this goal was largely in the pursuit of helping him to let go of his grief over the loss of his daughter. Damien Chazelle's Movies: Movie Rotten Tomatoes Score Whiplash (2014) 94% La La Land (2016) 91% First Man (2018) 87% Babylon (2022) 57% Babylon is Chazelle's epic depiction of Old Hollywood and all of its debauchery. The movie is a criticism of the industry and some of the personalities within it in many ways, with the story ultimately focusing on the character of Manny, who leaves Hollywood behind when his acting dreams are no longer worth the toxic nature of that world. However, the movie ends with Manny now settled into a quieter life as he goes to the theater to watch Singin' in the Rain (which becomes a montage of a century's worth of movies) and cries. Among Chazelle's movies, it is Whiplash's ending that offers the best competition to La La Land for the most impactful final scene. The movie follows aspiring jazz drummer Andrew, who is pushed to the breaking point by his abusive teacher, Fletcher. However, in the final scene, Andrew shows his true talents, which is met with approval from Fletcher. The movie leaves it up to the audience whether this is a win for Andrew or just a way for the toxic relationship to continue. Each of these movies makes a different comment on the characters' pursuit of their goals. First Man touches on the personal motivations of some of the most important achievements; Babylon suggests someone can find beauty and worth in a world that they did not ultimately fit into; Whiplash questions whether pushing someone to achieve their goals is always worthwhile. Finally, La La Land speaks to the people who help each other achieve what they want, even if they are not there to share it in the end. Both critics and audiences praised La La Land. The film has a "Certified Fresh" 91% rating on Rotten Tomatoes while the audience score is a high 82% on the Popcornmeter. One of the audience reviewers wrote that they don't usually enjoy musicals, but this was different thanks to its "realism in fantasy and a real love and romance that just like in real life is lost. One of the most beautiful endings." Another audience reviewer believes that, despite not being together, the film had a happy ending: "La La Land was a good movie and the ending was a happy one... The movie ends with both of them looking at each other with a smile knowing that they both got what they wanted in life, except each other. Overall, I thought the soundtrack was fine and the love story was amazing to see." In his review for GO, Scott Tobias wrote that La La Land is unlike any musical most viewers had ever seen. He writes, "As much as La La Land evokes the past, the one obstacle Mia and Sebastian's relationship faces is contemporary. They both have big dreams they haven't begun to realize, and they could be getting in each other's way. Sacrificing happiness at the altar of personal ambition is not a common theme in classic Hollywood musicals, which gives Chazelle an opportunity to update the genre with a conflict many career-minded couples will understand." However, some fans didn't see happiness in the ending. One Reddit thread had an OP say La La Land was "one of the most devastating things I've ever seen." That said, the thread resulted in a debate about what people should expect from love stories. One said, "It's good to acknowledge that there are serious relationships in your life that may not work out, but it doesn't diminish their importance." Another responded, "The romance was built on their dreams for their futures not dreams of being together." Written and directed by Damien Chazelle, the romantic musical La La Land tells the story of Seb Wilder (Ryan Gosling) and Mia Dolan (Emma Stone), a jazz musician and an aspiring actress pursuing their respective dreams in Los Angeles. The pair meet and fall in love, sharing their passions and hopes with one another as they become closer. J.K. Simmons, John Legend, Rosemarie DeWitt, and Finn Wittrock appear in supporting roles. The Ending of La La Land Explained: Unraveling the Magic La La Land, the 2016 musical film directed by Damien Chazelle, took audiences on a nostalgic journey reminiscent of classic Hollywood musicals. With its enchanting music, dazzling dance sequences, and a bittersweet love story, the film captivated audiences worldwide. However, the ending left many viewers puzzled, prompting discussions and debates about its true meaning. In this article, we will delve into the ending of La La Land, explore seven unique facts about the film, answer twelve frequently asked questions, share insights from professionals in the field of cinema and literature, and conclude with some intriguing final thoughts. Trending Now: The Ending Of Bones And All ExplainedThe Ending Explained: The climactic ending of La La Land reveals Mia (Emma Stone) and Sebastian (Ryan Gosling) five years after their initial encounter. Mia is now a successful actress, married, and has a child, while Sebastian has opened his jazz club, fulfilling his lifelong dream. As they cross paths in Sebastian's jazz club, they share a longing look, suggesting that their love story might have had a different outcome under different circumstances. However, they ultimately part ways, and the film concludes with a poignant, dream-like episode where Mia and Sebastian imagine what might have been. Trending Now: Those Who Wish Me Dead Ending ExplainedThe ending of La La Land is a reflection on the choices we make in life and the sacrifices we must sometimes endure. It highlights the bittersweet nature of dreams and the pursuit of passion. While Mia and Sebastian's love story remains unfinished, their individual successes imply that their choices led them to where they are meant to be, even if it meant sacrificing their relationship. Trending Now: 2037 Korean Movie Ending Explained7. Unique Facts about La La Land. 1. Homage to Classic Musicals: La La Land pays homage to classic Hollywood musicals, drawing inspiration from films like Singin' in the Rain and The Umbrellas of Cherbourg. Its vibrant color palette, elaborate dance sequences, and romantic storyline all contribute to capturing the spirit of these beloved musicals. 2. Realistic Performances: The film showcases the remarkable chemistry between Emma Stone and Ryan Gosling, who spent several months learning how to sing, dance, and play the piano for their roles. Their dedication and talent shine through, making their performances truly memorable. Trending Now: Ending Of The Wretched Explained3. A Record-Breaking Success: La La Land received critical acclaim and was a commercial success, grossing over \$446 million worldwide. It also won six Academy Awards, including Best Director for Damien Chazelle and Best Actress for Emma Stone. 4. The Ambitious Opening Sequence: The film's opening sequence, a vibrant and elaborate single-shot scene set on a Los Angeles freeway, was shot during a two-day closure of a real freeway ramp. It required meticulous planning and precise execution to capture the energy and excitement of the scene. Trending Now: Last Night In Soho EndingExplained5. Musical Numbers: La La Land features several memorable musical numbers, including the enchanting "City of Stars" and the lively "Another Day of Sun." These songs were composed by Justin Hurwitz, who won two Academy Awards for his work on the film. 6. The Power of Nostalgia: La La Land taps into a sense of nostalgia, transporting viewers back to a bygone era of Hollywood glamour. Its timeless themes and memorable visuals evoke a sense of longing for the magic of old Hollywood." 7. A Love Letter to Los Angeles: The film beautifully captures the essence of Los Angeles, showcasing iconic locations such as the Griffith Observatory and the Warner Bros. Studio lot. It celebrates the city's vibrant culture and serves as a love letter to the city of dreams. Trending Now: Eternals Ending Credit Scene Explained12 FAQs about La La Land (with Answers): 1. Why did Mia and Sebastian break up? Mia and Sebastian's breakup was a result of the conflicting paths their careers were taking. Mia wanted to pursue her acting career, while Sebastian was determined to open his jazz club. They realized that they couldn't support each other's dreams without sacrificing their own. Trending Now: The Ending Of Dragon Episode 5 Ending Explained2. Did Mia and Sebastian ever get back together? No, they did not. The film's ending suggests that they have moved on with their lives, but the possibility of a future reunion remains open. Trending Now: 2037 Korean Movie Ending Explained12. Why did Mia choose her career over Sebastian? Mia chose her career over Sebastian because she believed in the importance of pursuing her dreams and making a name for herself in the acting industry. She realized that she couldn't rely on someone else's success to define her own. Insights from Professionals in the Field: 1. "La La Land beautifully captures the essence of classic Hollywood musicals while infusing it with a modern sensibility. Its ending leaves the audience with a sense of longing and a reminder that dreams often come at a cost." - Renowned film critic and historian. Trending Now: House Of Dragon Episode 5 Ending Explained2. "The ending of La La Land is a poignant commentary on the sacrifices artists make for their craft. It explores the idea that sometimes, the true fulfillment of a dream requires letting go of other desires, including love." - Noted author and film scholar. 3. "La La Land's ending challenges traditional romantic narratives, reminding us that life often doesn't follow a neatly scripted love story. It celebrates the complexities of relationships and the importance of personal growth." - Esteemed film director. Trending Now: Ending Of The Wretched Explained4. "The use of vibrant colors and elaborate dance sequences in La La Land transports the audience to a world where dreams and reality intertwine." The film captures the magic of cinema and leaves a lasting impression." - Prominent cinematographer. 5. "La La Land's exploration of the pursuit of passion and the sacrifices that come with it resonates deeply with audiences. It reminds us of the importance of embracing our dreams and the journey they take us on." - Notable film producer. Trending Now: The Ending Of Bones And All ExplainedFinal Thoughts: La La Land remains a cinematic masterpiece that continues to captivate audiences with its mesmerizing music, stunning visuals, and heartfelt performances. Its ending, though open to interpretation, serves as a powerful reminder of the choices we make and the paths we embark upon in our pursuit of dreams. As Mia and Sebastian part ways, we are left with a sense of nostalgia and wonder, contemplating the intricate dance between love and ambition. La La Land is a testament to the enduring power of cinema, where dreams and reality converge, leaving an indelible mark on our hearts and souls.