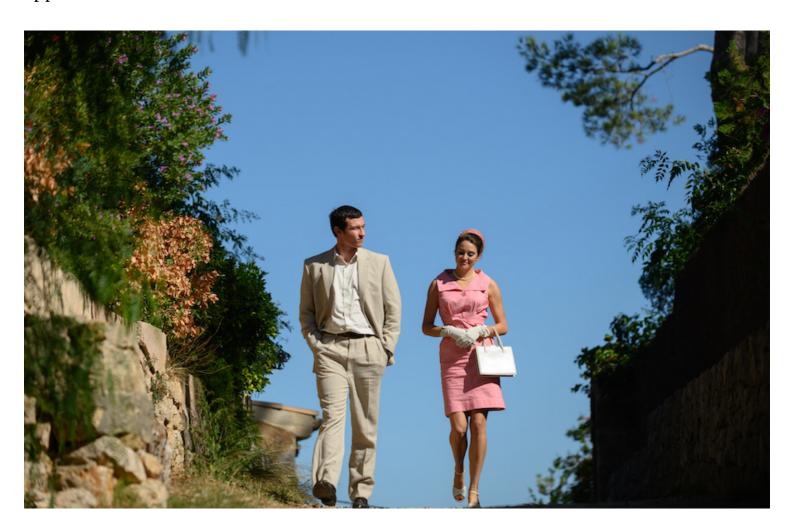CHENNAI: Right from the start "The Last Letter from Your Lover," a new Netflix film, is too syrupy for my liking. Only time will tell how this plays out with international audiences – they may jump at the chance to be transported to the world of love letters and old-fashioned romance based on Jojo Moyes's 2008 bestseller.

Directed by Augustine Frizzell, with a screenplay by playwright Nick Payne and author Esta Spalding, the film moves across two time zones: London in 1965, with brief interludes in gorgeously scenic coastal France, and the present day. Having made her name with a Sundance title, "Never Goin' Back," Frizzell appears to have lost her wildly comic touch in her latest adventure of stolen glances, tender kisses and missed appointments.

The film is diirected by Augustine Frizzell, with a screenplay by playwright Nick Payne and author Esta Spalding, Supplied

After finding a trove of love letters from the 1960s, journalist Ellie Haworth (Felicity Jones) sets out to solve the mystery of a secret affair.

Shailene Woodley plays a young woman married to a British businessman who falls for another man on holiday. Their romance takes off from there and the pair go to London, where matters come to a head.

This portion of the tale is beautifully done and has a magical zing to it. Add in blazing shots of the sun and sand in 1960s France, a fantastic period wardrobe by costume designer Anna Robbins ("Downtown Abbey") and feeling performances by Woodley, Joe Alwyn (her husband) and her lovestruck secret beau (Callum Turner) and it is a lovely watch.

The story is based on Jojo Moyes's 2008 bestseller. Supplied

In comparison, the modern storyline appears forced, with Ellie falling for archivist Rory (Nabhaan Rizwan) in the newspaper where she works. The romance here is clumsy and it feels like an afterthought for the director, detracting from the charming beauty of the first love story.

The chemistry itself between Ellie and Rory is completely lacking, and there is no palpable rapport.