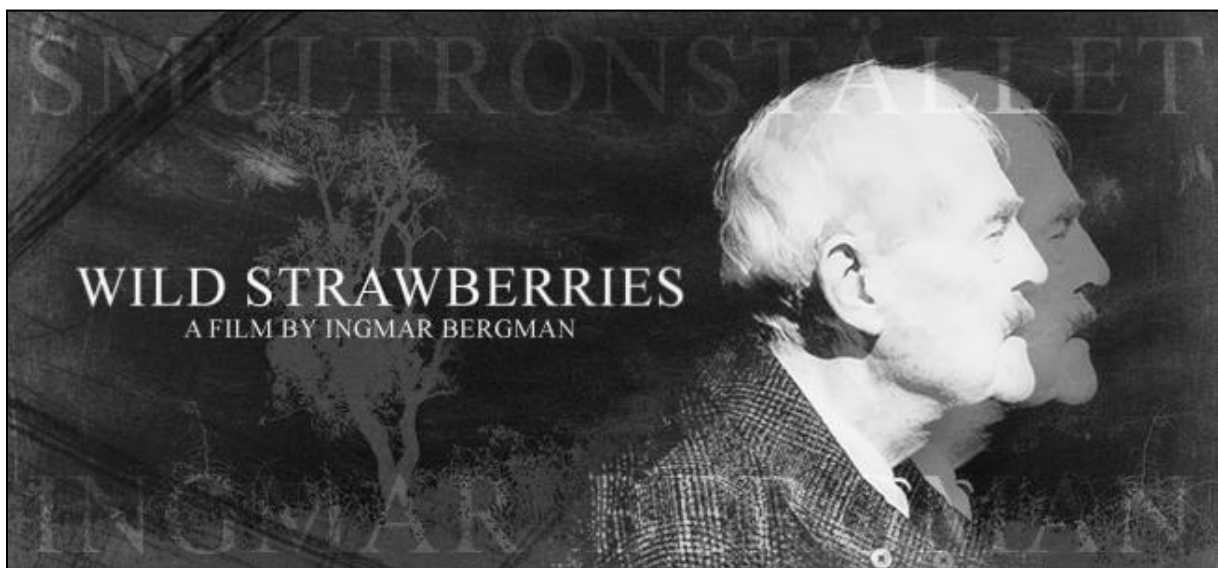


## *Wild Strawberries* (1957)

A Swedish symbolical road movie about life, mortality and love

Like many of his other films, particularly *The Seventh Seal*, *Wild Strawberries* is a character study that moves at a slow, deliberate pace. Seemingly casual conversations between characters take on extra weight when the viewer considers the subtext of their words, and the resolution of the story carries with it a melancholy tone, as the main character comes to terms with the **choices that have led to his present circumstances...**



### SYNOPSIS

The retired and widowed grouchy Professor Isak Borg (**Victor Seastrom**) has a disturbing nightmare about a runaway funeral carriage, a clock without hands, a man without a face and his own impending death the night before he's to **fly to Lund University** from his country retreat – where he has withdrawn from life to write his memoirs – to receive an honorary degree for 50 years of distinguished medical practice. He finally changes plans and decides to **go by car**. His pretty daughter-in-law Marianne (**Ingrid Thulin**), who has been staying with him for the last few weeks after a marital dispute with his son Evald (**Gunnar Bjornstrand**), decides to join him for the car ride to return back home in Lund for a reconciliation.

## ANALYSIS

- **The youthful trio of hitchhikers : Remembering his own youth and how he lost his love because he was too intellectual and selfish**

Along the way, the professor stops off at his childhood home in the country and while standing by a wild strawberry patch recalls some powerful childhood memories. He recalls how he lost his childhood sweetheart Sara (**Bibi Anderson**), to his more forward brother Sigfrid Borg (**Per Sjöstrand**), and how that loss still hurts. He's approached by a teenage girl, whose dad now owns the house. The lively girl reminds him of his first love, so when she asks for a ride with her two youthful male travelling companions, Anders (**Folke Sundquist**) and Viktor (**Björn Bjelvenstam**), he agrees. The playful and argumentative college trio – the men are rivals for the girl's affection, though she favours Anders – quickly become symbolic of the Professor's own youth. He was the distant, intellectual one, while his brother Sigfrid was the romantic, who eventually won the girl's affections and married her.



- **The ever-fighting couple : Remembering his adult life and his failed marriage**

When on the road again, the Professor's car just eludes a speeding car taking a curve while on the wrong side of the road. The near fatal accident was caused by a disputing hostile couple, the Almans, who are verbally abusive to each other and lost concentration behind the wheel.

They are given a lift but as they continue to bicker their bad marriage, the Professor is reminded of his own unhappy marriage, where he was emotionally cruel and standoffish to his adulterous wife Karin. When the couple's dispute gets too heated, Marianne asks them to leave to spare the youths from becoming disillusioned about marriage.

- **Remembering his old age and solitude**

The Professor later visits his mother, a cold, humourless woman who seems to have abandoned all personality, and eventually arrives at Lund University after picking up his son at the train station. But when he tries to strike up a conversation with him, his son treats him respectfully but coldly. He's left alone in bed that evening to **contemplate a life that was full of accomplishments and financial gain but was yet devoid of meaningful relationships.**



## CONCLUSION

I was reminded of James Joyce's stories in *Dubliners* and their examinations of lives squandered on things that did not matter much in the end. Much in the same way, the Professor confronts his **past mistakes** and mortality and **understands that his life was empty due to his egotistical ways, stuffiness and inability to find love.** Yet it does end up on an **optimistic note** that this inspiring Professor to anyone doesn't know him deeply – **so outwardly self-satisfied but inwardly festering from old wounds and feelings of failure** – has a chance to change and correct some of those past mistakes before it's too late !