

Penguin Bloom

Penguin Bloom is a 2020 Australian drama film directed by Glendyn Ivin, from a screenplay by Shaun Grant and Harry Cripps, and is based on the book of the same name by Cameron Bloom and Bradley Trevor Greive. It stars Naomi Watts, Andrew Lincoln and Jacki Weaver.^[4] The book and film are based on a true story of Sam and Cameron Bloom's family and their interactions with an Australian magpie named 'Penguin'.^[5]

It was theatrically released in Australia by Roadshow Films on 21 January 2021 and digitally in the United States by Netflix on 27 January.

Plot

During a family vacation in Thailand, Sam Bloom accidentally falls off a high balcony and breaks her T6 thoracic vertebrae resulting in partial paralysis. Back home in Australia, Sam, an avid surfer, struggles to adjust to life in a wheelchair, but is supported by her husband Cameron, their three sons Noah, Rueben, and Oli, and Sam's overbearing mother Jan.

One afternoon, the three boys find and bring home an injured magpie chick who they name Penguin. Sam is initially too despondent to care for Penguin but understands it's important to Noah, and as time goes on, she bonds with her. Noah feels guilty for being the one who asked his mum to go up to the balcony in Thailand and has withdrawn from her since the accident. Sam and Cameron's relationship also deteriorates as she struggles to find joy in daily life and wishes to forget who she was before the fall since she can no longer live in the same way. She demands he never ask her how she is.

After several weeks, Penguin fully recovers and learns to fly, inspiring Sam to want to do something for herself; she starts kayaking lessons. For Sam's birthday, the Blooms go for dinner at Jan's house, joined by Sam's sister Kylie and Sam's kayaking instructor Gaye. While Jan and Cameron argue about Sam's new life and their responsibilities to her, Penguin is attacked by two larger birds and then flies away.

Penguin Bloom



Australian theatrical release poster

Directed by	Glendyn Ivin
Written by	Shaun Grant <div></div> Harry Cripps
Based on	<i>Penguin Bloom</i> <div></div> by Cameron Bloom <div></div> Bradley Trevor Greive
Produced by	Emma Cooper <div></div> Bruna Papandrea <div></div> Steve Hutensky <div></div> Jodi Matterson <div></div> Naomi Watts
Starring	Naomi Watts <div></div> Andrew Lincoln <div></div> Jacki Weaver
Cinematography	Sam Chiplin
Edited by	Maria Papoutsis
Music by	Marcelo Zarvos
Production companies	Screen Australia <div></div> Endeavor Content

Sam eventually confronts Noah about his guilt and tells him he is not to blame for what happened to her. She apologises for being distant and reveals she has found her strength, and the whole family reconcile. Sam asks Cameron to ask her how she is, and when he does, she replies, "I'm better."

Penguin returns home a few days later, and Sam thanks her for helping her recover.

Cast

- Naomi Watts as Sam Bloom, Cameron's wife and Jan's daughter.
- [Andrew Lincoln](#) as Cameron Bloom, Sam's husband
- Griffin Murray-Johnston as Noah Bloom
- Felix Cameron as Rueben Bloom
- Abe Clifford-Barr as Oli Bloom
- Jacki Weaver as Jan, Sam's mother
- [Rachel House](#) as Gaye
- [Leeanna Walsman](#) as Kylie
- [Lisa Hensley](#) as Bron

Production

The rights to the book were acquired in December 2016 by [Bruna Papandrea](#). [Naomi Watts](#) was set to star and to co-produce with Mark Audet, Emma Cooper, and [Made Up Stories](#).^{[6][7]} In June 2017, Shaun Grant was hired to write the screenplay.^[8] By February 2019, Glendyn Ivin was set to direct, and in July [Andrew Lincoln](#), [Jacki Weaver](#) and [Rachel House](#) were added to the cast.^{[9][10][11]}

Filming began in Australia in early August 2019.^{[12][7][13]}

Release

Penguin Bloom had its world premiere at the [Toronto International Film Festival](#) on 12 September 2020.^[14]

The film was released theatrically in Australia on 21 January 2021 by [Roadshow Films](#),^[15] and hit number one at the Australian box office for its opening weekend.^[16]

[Netflix](#) released the film in North America, the United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, France and select Asian countries on 27 January 2021.^[17]

Reception

Review aggregator [Rotten Tomatoes](#) gives the film a 67% approval rating based on 84 reviews, with an average rating of 6.1/10. The website's critical consensus reads: "*Penguin Bloom*'s fact-based story could have been adapted with greater nuance, but strong work from Naomi Watts and Andrew Lincoln adds some much-needed heart."^[18] According to [Metacritic](#), which sampled 17 critics and calculated a [weighted average score](#) of 54 out of 100, the film received "mixed or average reviews".^[19]

	<div>Create NSW</div> <div>Made Up Stories</div> <div>Jam Tart Films</div> <div>Broadtalk</div>
Distributed by	<div>Roadshow Films</div> <div>(Australia)</div> <div>Netflix</div> <div>(United States)</div>
Release dates	12 September 2020 (TIFF) <div>21 January 2021 (Australia)</div> <div>27 January 2021 (United States)</div>
Running time	95 minutes ^[1]
Countries	Australia <div>United States</div>
Language	English
Box office	\$6.3 million ^{[2][3]}

The script for *Penguin Bloom* by Shaun Grant and Harry Cripps was shortlisted for the Betty Roland Prize for Scriptwriting at the 2021 New South Wales Premier's Literary Awards.^[20]

Accolades

Award	Ceremony date	Category	Subject	Result	Ref
<u>AACTA Awards</u>	<u>December 8, 2021</u>	<u>Best Film</u>	<u>Emma Cooper</u>	Nominated	^[21]
			<u>Steve Hutensky</u>	Nominated	
			<u>Jodi Matterson</u>	Nominated	
			<u>Bruna Papandrea</u>	Nominated	
			<u>Naomi Watts</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Direction</u>	<u>Glendyn Ivin</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Adapted Screenplay</u>	<u>Harry Cripps</u>	Nominated	
			<u>Shaun Grant</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Actress</u>	<u>Naomi Watts</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Supporting Actress</u>	<u>Jacki Weaver</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Cinematography</u>	<u>Sam Chiplin</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Original Music Score</u>	<u>Marcelo Zarvos</u>	Nominated	
		<u>Best Production Design</u>	<u>Annie Beauchamp</u>	Nominated	

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External links

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 - *Penguin Bloom* (https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/penguin_bloom) at Rotten Tomatoes
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