

= When Harry Met Sally ... =

When Harry Met Sally ? is a 1989 American romantic comedy film written by Nora Ephron and directed by Rob Reiner . It stars Billy Crystal as Harry and Meg Ryan as Sally . The story follows the title characters from the time they meet just before sharing a cross @-@ country drive , through twelve years or so of chance encounters in New York City . The film raises the question " Can men and women ever just be friends ? " and advances many ideas about relationships that became household concepts , such as those of the " high @-@ maintenance " girlfriend and the " transitional person " .

The origins of the film were derived from Reiner 's return to single life after a divorce . An interview Ephron conducted with Reiner provided the basis for Harry . Sally was based on Ephron and some of her friends . Crystal came on board and made his own contributions to the screenplay , making Harry funnier . Ephron supplied the structure of the film with much of the dialogue based on the real @-@ life friendship between Reiner and Crystal . The soundtrack consists of standards performed by Harry Connick Jr . , with a big band and orchestra arranged by Marc Shaiman . Connick won his first Grammy Award for Best Jazz Male Vocal Performance .

Columbia Pictures released the film using the " platform " technique , which involved opening it in a few select cities , letting positive word of mouth generate interest , and then gradually expanding distribution over subsequent weeks . When Harry Met Sally ... grossed a total of US \$ 92 @.@ 8 million in North America . Ephron received a British Academy Film Award , an Oscar nomination , and a Writers Guild of America Award nomination for her screenplay . The film is ranked 23rd on AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Laughs list of the top comedy films in American cinema and number 60 on Bravo 's " 100 Funniest Movies " . In early 2004 , the film was adapted for the stage in a production starring Luke Perry and Alyson Hannigan .

= = Plot = =

In 1977 , Harry Burns (Billy Crystal) and Sally Albright (Meg Ryan) graduate from the University of Chicago and share the drive to New York City , where Sally is beginning journalism school and Harry is starting a career . Harry is dating a friend of Sally 's , Amanda (Michelle Nicastro) . During the drive , they discuss their differing ideas about relationships between men and women . Harry says that " Men and women can 't be friends because the sex part always gets in the way . " Sally disagrees , claiming that men and women can be strictly friends without sex . During a stop in a diner , Sally is angered when Harry tells her she is attractive ; she accuses him of making a pass at her . In New York , they part on unfriendly terms .

Five years later , Harry and Sally find themselves on the same flight . Sally has just started dating a man named Joe (Steven Ford) ? who is a neighbor of Harry 's ? and Harry is engaged to a woman named Helen , which surprises Sally . Harry suggests they become friends , forcing him to qualify his previous " rule " about the impossibility of male @-@ female friendships . Despite Harry 's suggestions of exceptions to that rule , they separate , concluding that they will not be friends .

Harry and Sally run into each other again in a bookstore five years later . They have coffee and talk about their previous relationships ; Sally and Joe broke up because she wanted a family and he did not want to marry , and Harry 's relationship ended when Helen fell in love with another man . They take a walk and decide to be friends . They have late @-@ night phone conversations , go to dinner , and spend time together . Their dating experiences with others continue to inform their differing approaches to relationships and sex .

During a New Year 's Eve party , Harry and Sally find themselves attracted to each other . Though they remain friends , they set each other up with their respective best friends , Marie (Carrie Fisher) and Jess (Bruno Kirby) . When the four go to a restaurant , Marie and Jess hit it off ; they later become engaged . One night , over the phone , Sally tearfully tells Harry that her ex is getting married . He rushes to her apartment to comfort her , and they unexpectedly have sex , resulting in an awkward moment the next morning as Harry leaves in a state of distress . This creates tension in their relationship . Their friendship cools for three weeks until the two have a heated argument

during Jess and Marie 's wedding dinner . Following this fight , Harry repeatedly attempts to mend his friendship with Sally , but she feels that they cannot be friends after what happened .

At a New Year 's Eve party that year , Sally feels alone without Harry by her side . Harry spends New Year 's alone , walking around the city . As Sally decides to leave the party early , Harry appears and declares his love for her . At first she argues that the only reason he is there is because he is lonely , but he disagrees and lists the many things he realized he loves about her . They make up and kiss , and marry three months later .

= = Cast = =

Billy Crystal as Harry Burns
Meg Ryan as Sally Albright
Carrie Fisher as Marie Fisher
Bruno Kirby as Jess Fisher
Steven Ford as Joe
Lisa Jane Persky as Alice
Michelle Nicastro as Amanda Reese
Kevin Rooney as Ira Stone
Harley Kozak as Helen Hillson
Franc Luz as Julian
Tracy Reiner as Emily
Estelle Reiner as Older Woman Customer

= = Production = =

In 1984 , director Rob Reiner , producer Andy Scheinman and writer Nora Ephron met over lunch at the Russian Tea Room in New York City to develop a project . Reiner pitched an idea for a film that Ephron rejected . The second meeting transformed into a long discussion about Reiner and Scheinman 's lives as single men . Reiner remembers , " I was in the middle of my single life . I 'd been divorced for a while . I 'd been out a number of times , all these disastrous , confusing relationships one after another " . The next time they all met , Reiner said that he had always wanted to do a film about two people who become friends and do not have sex because they know it will ruin their relationship but have sex anyway . Ephron liked the idea , and Reiner acquired a deal at a studio .

She then proceeded to interview Reiner and Scheinman about their lives in order to have material on which to draw . These interviews also provided the basis for Harry . Reiner was constantly depressed , pessimistic yet very funny . Ephron also got bits of dialogue from these interviews . Sally was based on Ephron and some of her friends . She worked on several drafts over the years while Reiner made *Stand By Me* and *The Princess Bride* . Billy Crystal came on board when the project was called *Boy Meets Girl* and made his own contributions to the screenplay , making Harry funnier . The comedian " experienced vicariously " Reiner 's (his best friend at the time) return to single life after divorcing comedian / filmmaker Penny Marshall and in the process was unconsciously doing research for the role of Harry .

During the screenwriting process when Ephron would not feel like writing , she would interview people who worked for the production company . Some of the interviews appeared in the film as the interludes between certain scenes featuring couples talking about how they met , although the material was rewritten and reshot with actors . Ephron supplied the structure of the film with much of the dialogue based on the real @-@ life friendship between Reiner and Crystal . For example , in the scene where Sally and Harry appear on a split screen , talking on the telephone while watching their respective television sets , channel surfing , was something that Crystal and Reiner did every night .

Originally , Ephron wanted to call the film *How They Met* and went through several different titles . Reiner even started a contest with the crew during principal photography - whoever came up with

the title won a case of champagne . In order to get into the lonely mindset of Harry when he was divorced and single , Crystal stayed by himself in a separate room from the cast and crew while they were shooting in Manhattan . The script initially ended with Harry and Sally remaining friends and not pursuing a romantic relationship because she felt that was " the true ending " , as did Reiner . Eventually , Ephron and Reiner realized that it would be a more appropriate ending for them to marry , though they admit that this is generally not a realistic outcome .

When posed the film 's central question , can men and women just be friends , Ryan replied , " Yes , men and women can just be friends . I have a lot of platonic (male) friends , and sex doesn 't get in the way . " Crystal said , " I 'm a little more optimistic than Harry . But I think it is difficult . Men basically act like stray dogs in front of a supermarket . I do have platonic (women) friends , but not best , best , best friends . "

Rob Reiner initially envisioned actress Susan Dey for the role of Sally Albright . When she declined , he later considered Elizabeth Perkins . He also considered casting Elizabeth McGovern . Molly Ringwald was almost cast , but Meg Ryan convinced Reiner to give her the role . Reiner 's mother Estelle and daughter Tracy both played roles in the film .

= = = Deli scene = = =

In a scene featuring the two title characters having lunch at Katz 's Delicatessen in Manhattan , the couple are arguing about a man 's ability to recognize when a woman is faking an orgasm . Sally claims that men cannot tell the difference , and to prove her point , she vividly (fully clothed) fakes one as other diners watch . The scene ends with Sally casually returning to her meal as a nearby patron (played by Reiner 's mother) places her order : " I 'll have what she 's having . " When Estelle Reiner died at age 94 in 2008 , The New York Times referred to her as the woman " who delivered one of the most memorably funny lines in movie history " . This scene was shot again and again , and Ryan demonstrated her fake orgasms for hours . Katz 's Deli still hangs a sign above the table that says , " Where Harry met Sally ... hope you have what she had ! "

This classic scene was born when the film started to focus too much on Harry . Crystal remembers saying , " ' We need something for Sally to talk about , ' and Nora said , ' Well , faking orgasm is a great one , ' and right away we said , ' Well , the subject is good , ' and then Meg came on board and we talked with her about the nature of the idea and she said , ' Well , why don 't I just fake one , just do one ? ' " Ryan suggested that the scene take place in a restaurant , and it was Crystal who came up with the scene 's classic punchline ? " I 'll have what she 's having . " In 2005 , the quote was listed 33rd on the AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes list of memorable movie lines . Reiner recalls that at a test screening , all of the women in the audience were laughing while all of the men were silent .

In late 2013 , Improv Everywhere , the New York City initiative behind the annual No Pants Day in the subways and various flash @-@ mob stunts , convened and filmed a re @-@ enactment . While a look @-@ alike couple performed the scene , 30 others joined as if it was contagious . Surprised staff and customers responded in appreciation . The film and follow @-@ up interviews are public . In October of the same year , Katz Delicatessen invited Baron Von Fancy to display his ten @-@ foot high mural quoting the famous line in its pop @-@ up gallery next door , The Space .

= = Soundtrack = =

The When Harry Met Sally ... soundtrack album features American singer and pianist Harry Connick Jr . Bobby Colomby , the drummer for Blood , Sweat & Tears , was a friend of Reiner 's and recommended Harry Connick Jr . , giving the director a tape of the musician 's music . Reiner was struck by Connick 's voice and how he sounded like a young Frank Sinatra . The movie 's soundtrack album was released by Columbia Records in July 1989 . The soundtrack consists of standards performed by Harry Connick Jr. with a big band and orchestra arranged by Marc Shaiman . Connick won his first Grammy for Best Jazz Male Vocal Performance .

Arrangements and orchestrations on " It Had to Be You " , " Where or When " , " I Could Write a

Book ", and " But Not for Me " are by Connick and Shaiman . Other songs were performed as piano / vocal solos , or with Connick 's trio featuring Benjamin Jonah Wolfe on bass and Jeff " Tain " Watts on drums . Also appearing on the album are tenor saxophonist Frank Wess and guitarist Joy Berliner . The soundtrack went to # 1 on the Billboard Traditional Jazz Chart and was within the top 50 on the Billboard 200 . Connick also toured North America in support of this album . It went on to reach double @-@ platinum status .

The music in the film is performed by various artists , such as Louis Armstrong and Ella Fitzgerald , Frank Sinatra , Ray Charles , Bing Crosby , and Harry Connick Jr .

= = Reception = =

= = = Box office = = =

Columbia Pictures released the film using the " platform " technique which involved opening it in a few select cities letting positive word of mouth generate interest and then gradually expanding distribution over subsequent weeks . On its opening weekend , it grossed \$ 1 million in 41 theaters . Billy Crystal was worried that the film would flop at the box office because it was up against several summer blockbuster films , like Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade and Batman . The film went into wide release on July 21 , 1989 , and grossed \$ 8 @. @ 8 million on its opening weekend in 775 theaters . This was later expanded to 1 @, @ 174 theaters and the film grossed a total of \$ 92 @. @ 8 million in North America , well above its \$ 16 million budget .

= = = Critical reviews = = =

Reviews for When Harry Met Sally ... were positive . It has a rating of 89 % on Rotten Tomatoes , summarized in the view that : " Rob Reiner 's touching , funny film set a new standard for romantic comedies , and he was ably abetted by the sharp interplay between Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan " . On Metacritic , the film has a score of 76 out of 100 , based on 17 critics .

The film led Roger Ebert to call Reiner " one of Hollywood 's very best directors of comedy " , and said that it was " most conventional , in terms of structure and the way it fulfills our expectations . But what makes it special , apart from the Ephron screenplay , is the chemistry between Crystal and Ryan . " In a review for The New York Times , Caryn James called When Harry Met Sally ... an " often funny but amazingly hollow film " that " romanticized lives of intelligent , successful , neurotic New Yorkers " ; James characterized it as " the sitcom version of a Woody Allen film , full of amusing lines and scenes , all infused with an uncomfortable sense of déjà vu " .

Rita Kempley 's review in The Washington Post praised Meg Ryan as the " summer 's Melanie Griffith ? a honey @-@ haired blonde who finally finds a showcase for her sheer exuberance . Neither naif nor vamp , she 's a woman from a pen of a woman , not some Cinderella of a Working Girl . " Mike Clark , of USA Today , gave the film three out of four stars , writing , " Crystal is funny enough to keep Ryan from all @-@ out stealing the film . She , though , is smashing in an eye @-@ opening performance , another tribute to Reiner 's flair with actors . " David Ansen provided one of the rare negative reviews of the film for Newsweek . He criticized the casting of Crystal , " Not surprisingly he handles the comedy superbly , but he 's too cool and self @-@ protective an actor to work as a romantic leading man " , and felt that as a film , " of wonderful parts , it doesn 't quite add up " .

= = = Awards = = =

Nora Ephron received an Oscar nomination and a Writers Guild of America Award nomination for her screenplay . She won a British Academy Film Award for Best Original Screenplay and was nominated for Best Film . Rob Reiner was nominated for an Outstanding Directorial Achievement in Motion Pictures (DGA) award . The film was also nominated for five Golden Globes , including Best

Motion Picture ? Musical or Comedy , Reiner for Best Director ? Motion Picture , Billy Crystal for Best Actor ? Motion Picture Musical or Comedy , Meg Ryan for Best Actress ? Motion Picture Musical or Comedy , and Nora Ephron for Best Screenplay .

= = = Legacy = = =

Over the years , When Harry Met Sally ... has become " the quintessential contemporary feel @-@ good relationship movie that somehow still rings true " . Ephron still received letters from people obsessed with the film and still had " people who say to me all the time , ' I was having a Harry @-@ and @-@ Sally relationship with him or her ' . " The film is 23rd on AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Laughs list of the top comedy films in American cinema and number 60 on Bravo 's " 100 Funniest Movies . " Entertainment Weekly named it as one of the Top 10 romantic movies of all time . The magazine also ranked it 12th on their Funniest Movies of the Past 25 Years list . The periodical also ranked it 7th on their 25 Best Romantic Movies of the Past 25 Years list and # 3 on their Top 25 Modern Romances list . The film has inspired countless romantic comedies , including A Lot Like Love , Hum Tum and Definitely , Maybe . In addition , the film helped popularize many ideas about love that have become household concepts now , such as the " high @-@ maintenance " girlfriend and the " transitional person " .

In June 2008 , AFI revealed its " Ten top Ten " ? the best ten films in ten " classic " American film genres ? after polling over 1 @, @ 500 people from the creative community . When Harry Met Sally was acknowledged as the sixth best film in the romantic comedy genre . It is also ranked # 15 on Rotten Tomatoes ' 25 Best Romantic Comedies .

In early 2004 , the film was adapted for the stage in a Theatre Royal Haymarket production starring Luke Perry and Alyson Hannigan . Molly Ringwald and Michael Landes later replaced Hannigan and Perry for the second cast .

= = = = American Film Institute recognition = = = =

2000 : AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Laughs - # 23

2002 : AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Passions - # 25

2004 : AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Songs :

" It Had to Be You " - # 60

2005 : AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes :

Customer : " I 'll have what she 's having . " - # 33

Harry Burns : " But I would be proud ... " Sally Albright : " But I would be proud ... " " Harry Burns : " ... to partake ... " Sally Albright : " ... to partake ... " Harry Burns : " ... of your pecan pie . " Sally Albright : " ... of your pecan pie . " - Nominated

2007 : AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movies (10th Anniversary Edition) ? Nominated

2008 : AFI 's 10 Top 10 :

6 Romantic Comedy Film

= = Home release = =

When Harry Met Sally ... was first released on VHS in late 1989 , a few months after its theatrical release . It was later re @-@ released on VHS in 1994 as part of a Billy Crystal collection , and in 1997 under the Contemporary Classics edition ; the latter release included trailers that were not included in the original VHS release . It was released on DVD for the first time on January 9 , 2001 , and included an audio commentary by Reiner , a 35 @-@ minute " Making Of " documentary featuring interviews with Reiner , Ephron , Crystal , and Ryan , seven deleted scenes , and a music video for " It Had To Be You " by Harry Connick Jr . A Collector 's Edition DVD was released on January 15 , 2008 , including a new audio commentary with Reiner , Ephron , and Crystal , eight deleted scenes , all new featurettes (It All Started Like This , Stories Of Love , When Rob Met Billy , Billy On Harry , I Love New York , What Harry Meeting Sally Meant , So Can Men And Women

Really Be Friends ?) , and the original theatrical trailer . The film was released on Blu @-@ ray on July 5 , 2011 containing all of the special features found on the 2008 DVD release .