

= Emma Thompson =

Emma Thompson (born 15 April 1959) is a British actress , a comedian , and a writer .

Thompson is known for her portrayals of reticent women and playing haughty or matronly characters with a sense of irony , often in period dramas and literary adaptations . She is considered one of Britain 's most accomplished actresses .

Born in London to English actor , Eric Thompson , and Scottish actress , Phyllida Law , Thompson was educated at Newnham College , University of Cambridge , where she became a member of the Footlights troupe . After appearing in several comedy programmes , she first came to prominence in 1987 , in two BBC TV series , Tutti Frutti and Fortunes of War , winning the BAFTA TV Award for Best Actress for her work in both series .

Thompson 's first film role came in the 1989 romantic comedy , The Tall Guy , and in the early 1990s she frequently collaborated with her then husband , actor , and director , Kenneth Branagh . The pair became popular in the British media , and co -@-@ starred in several films including : Dead Again (1991) and Much Ado About Nothing (1993) .

In 1992 , Thompson won multiple acting awards , including an Academy Award and a BAFTA Award for Best Actress , for her work in the period drama , Howards End . In 1993 , she garnered dual Academy Award nominations for her roles in The Remains of the Day as a stately housekeeper , and In the Name of the Father as a lawyer .

Thompson scripted and starred in Sense and Sensibility (1995) , which earned her (among other awards) an Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay , and a BAFTA Award for Best Actress . Other notable film and television credits include : the Harry Potter film series , Wit (2001) , Love Actually (2003) , Angels in America (2003) , Nanny McPhee (2005) , Stranger than Fiction (2006) , Last Chance Harvey (2008) , Men in Black 3 (2012) , and Brave (2012) . In 2013 , she received acclaim and several award nominations for her portrayal of P. L. Travers in Saving Mr. Banks .

Thompson is married to actor Greg Wise , with whom she lives in London . They have one daughter and an adopted son . She is an activist in the areas of human rights and environmentalism , and has received criticism for her outspoken nature . She has authored two books adapted from The Tale of Peter Rabbit .

= = Early life = =

Thompson was born in Paddington , London , on 15 April 1959 . A member of a show business family , her mother is the Scottish actress Phyllida Law , while her English father , Eric Thompson , was involved in theatre and the writer ? narrator of the popular children 's television series The Magic Roundabout . Her godfather was the director and writer Ronald Eyre . She has one sister , Sophie Thompson , who also works as an actress . The family lived in West Hampstead in north London , and Thompson was educated at Camden School for Girls . She spent much time in Scotland during her childhood , and often visited Ardentinn where her grandparents and uncle lived .

In her youth , Thompson was intrigued by language and literature , a trait which she attributes to her father who shared her love of words . In 1977 , she began studying for an English degree at Newnham College , University of Cambridge . Thompson believes that it was inevitable that she would become an actress , commenting that she was " surrounded by creative people and I don 't think it would ever have gone any other way , really " . While there , she had a " seminal moment " that turned her to feminism and inspired her to take up performing . She explained in an interview in 2007 how she discovered the book The Madwoman in the Attic , " which is about Victorian female writers and the disguises they took on in order to express what they wanted to express . That completely changed my life . " She became a self @-@ professed " punk rocker " , with short red hair and a motorbike , and aspired to be a comedian like Lily Tomlin .

At Cambridge , Thompson was invited into Footlights , the university 's prestigious sketch comedy troupe , by its president , Martin Bergman , becoming its first female member . Also in the troupe

were fellow actors Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie , and she had a romantic relationship with the latter . Fry recalled that " there was no doubt that Emma was going the distance . Our nickname for her was Emma Talented . " In 1980 , Thompson served as the Vice President of Footlights , and co @-@ directed the troupe 's first all @-@ female revue , Women 's Hour . The following year , Thompson and her Footlights team won the Perrier Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe for their sketch show The Cellar Tapes .

In 1982 , Thompson 's father died as a result of circulatory problems at the age of 52 . The actress has commented that this " tore [the family] to pieces " , and " I can 't begin to tell you how much I regret his not being around " . She added , " At the same time , it 's possible that were he still alive I might never have had the space or courage to do what I 've done ... I have a definite feeling of inheriting space . And power . "

= = Acting career = =

= = = 1980s : Breaking through = = =

Thompson had her first professional role in 1982 , touring in a stage version of Not the Nine O 'Clock News . She then turned to television , where much of her early work came with her Footlights co @-@ stars Hugh Laurie and Stephen Fry . The regional ITV comedy series There 's Nothing To Worry About ! (1982) was their first outing , followed by the one @-@ off BBC show The Crystal Cube (1983) . There 's Nothing to Worry About ! later returned as the networked sketch show Alfresco (1983 ? 84) , which ran for two series with Thompson , Fry , Laurie , Ben Elton , and Robbie Coltrane . She later collaborated again with Fry and Laurie on the acclaimed BBC Radio 4 series Saturday Night Fry (1988) .

In 1985 , Thompson was cast in the West End revival of the musical Me and My Girl , co @-@ starring Robert Lindsay . It provided a breakthrough in her career , as the production earned rave reviews . She played the role of Sally Smith for 15 months , which exhausted the actress ; she later remarked " I thought if I did the fucking " Lambeth Walk " one more time I was going to fucking throw up . " At the end of 1985 , she wrote and starred in her own one @-@ off special for Channel 4 , Emma Thompson : Up for Grabs .

Thompson achieved another breakthrough in 1987 , when she had leading roles in two television miniseries : Fortunes of War , a World War II drama co @-@ starring Kenneth Branagh , and Tutti Frutti , a dark @-@ comedy about a Scottish rock band with Robbie Coltrane . For these performances , Thompson won the British Academy Television Award for Best Actress . The following year , she wrote and starred in her own sketch comedy series for BBC , Thompson , but this was poorly received . In 1989 , she and Branagh ? who had formed a romantic relationship ? starred in a stage revival of Look Back in Anger , directed by Judi Dench and produced by Branagh 's Renaissance Theatre Company . Later that year , the pair starred in a televised version of the play .

Thompson 's first cinema appearance came in the romantic comedy The Tall Guy (1989) , the feature @-@ film debut from screenwriter Richard Curtis . It starred Jeff Goldblum as a West End actor , and Thompson played the nurse with whom he falls in love . The film was not widely seen , but Thompson 's performance was praised in The New York Times , where Caryn James called her " an exceptionally versatile comic actress " . She next turned to Shakespeare , appearing as Princess Katherine in Branagh 's screen adaptation of Henry V (1989) . The film was released to great critical acclaim .

= = = 1990 ? 93 : A leading British actress = = =

Thompson and Branagh are considered by American writer and critic James Monaco to have led the " British cinematic onslaught " in the 1990s . She continued to experiment with Shakespeare in the new decade , appearing with Branagh in his stage productions of A Midsummer Night 's Dream

and King Lear . Reviewing the latter , the Chicago Tribune praised her " extraordinary " performance of the " hobbling , stooped hunchback Fool " . Thompson returned to cinema in 1991 , playing a " frivolous aristocrat " in *Impromptu* , a period drama about the life of George Sand that starred Judy Davis and Hugh Grant . The film received positive reviews , and Thompson was nominated for Best Supporting Female at the Independent Spirit Awards . Her second release of 1991 was another pairing with Branagh , who also directed , in the Los Angeles @-@ based noir *Dead Again* . She played a woman who has forgotten her identity , and the thriller was number one at the US box office for two weeks . Early in 1992 , Thompson had a guest role in an episode of the American comedy series *Cheers* as Frasier Crane 's first wife .

A turning point in Thompson 's career came when she was cast opposite Anthony Hopkins and Vanessa Redgrave in the Merchant Ivory period drama *Howards End* (1992) , based on the novel by E. M. Forster . The film explored the social class system in Edwardian England , with Thompson playing an idealistic , intellectual , forward @-@ looking woman who comes into association with a privileged and deeply conservative family . She actively pursued the role by writing to director James Ivory , who agreed to an audition and then gave her the part . According to the critic Vincent Canby , the film allowed Thompson to " [come] into her own " , away from Branagh . Upon release , Roger Ebert wrote that she was " superb in the central role : quiet , ironic , observant , with steel inside . " *Howards End* was widely praised , a " surprise hit " , and received nine Academy Award nominations . Among its three wins was the Best Actress trophy for Thompson , who was also awarded a Golden Globe and BAFTA for her performance . Reflecting on the role , *The New York Times* writes that the actress " found herself an international success almost overnight . "

For her next two films , Thompson returned to working with Branagh . In *Peter 's Friends* (1992) , the pair starred with Stephen Fry , Hugh Laurie , Imelda Staunton , and Tony Slattery as a group of Cambridge alumni who are reunited ten years after graduating . The comedy was positively reviewed , and Desson Howe of *The Washington Post* wrote that Thompson was its highlight : " Even as a rather one @-@ dimensional character , she exudes grace and an adroit sense of comic tragedy . " She followed this with Branagh 's screen version of *Much Ado About Nothing* (1993) . The couple starred as Beatrice and Benedick , alongside a cast that also included Denzel Washington , Keanu Reeves , and Michael Keaton . Thompson was widely praised for the on @-@ screen chemistry with Branagh and the natural ease with which she played the role marking another critical success for Thompson . Her performance earned a nomination for Best Female Lead at the Independent Spirit Awards .

Thompson reunited with Merchant Ivory and Anthony Hopkins to film *The Remains of the Day* (1993) , a film which has been described as a " classic " and the production team 's definitive film . Based on Kazuo Ishiguro 's novel about a housekeeper and butler in interwar Britain , the story is acclaimed for its study of loneliness and repression , though Thompson was particularly interested in looking at " the deformity that servitude inflicts upon people " , since her grandmother had worked as a servant and made many sacrifices . She has named the film as one of the greatest experiences of her career , considering it to be a " masterpiece of withheld emotion " . *The Remains of the Day* was a critical and commercial success , receiving eight Oscar nominations , including Best Picture and a second Best Actress nod for Thompson .

Along with her Best Actress nomination at the 66th Academy Awards , Thompson was also nominated in the Best Supporting Actress category , making her the eighth performer in history to be nominated for two Oscars in the same year . It came for her role as the lawyer Gareth Peirce in *In the Name of the Father* (1993) , a drama about the Guildford Four starring Daniel Day @-@ Lewis . The film was her second hit of the year , earning \$ 65 million and critical praise , and was nominated for Best Picture along with *The Remains of the Day* .

= = = 1994 ? 98 : Sense and Sensibility and Hollywood roles = = =

In 1994 , Thompson made her Hollywood debut playing a goofy doctor alongside Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito in the blockbuster *Junior* . Although the male pregnancy storyline was poorly received by most critics , Mick LaSalle of the *San Francisco Chronicle* praised

the lead trio . She returned to independent cinema for a lead role in Carrington , which studied the platonic relationship between artist Dora Carrington and writer Lytton Strachey (played by Jonathan Price) . Roger Ebert remarked that Thompson had " developed a specialty in unrequited love " , and the TV Guide Film & Video Companion commented that her " neurasthenic mannerisms , which usually drive us batty , are appropriate here " .

Thompson 's Academy success continued with Sense and Sensibility (1995) , generally considered to be the most popular and authentic of the numerous film adaptations of Jane Austen 's novels made in the 1990s . Thompson ? a lifelong lover of Austen 's work ? was hired to write the film based on the period sketches in her series Thompson . She spent five years developing the screenplay , and took the role of the spinster sister Elinor Dashwood despite , at 35 , being 16 years older than the literary character . Directed by Ang Lee and co @-@ starring Kate Winslet , Sense and Sensibility received widespread critical praise and is one of the highest @-@ grossing films of Thompson 's career . Shelly Frome remarked that she displayed a " great affinity for Jane Austen 's style and wit " , and Graham Fuller of Sight and Sound saw her as the film 's auteur . Thompson received a third nomination for Best Actress and won the award for Best Adapted Screenplay , making her the only person in history to win an Oscar for both acting and writing . She also earned a second BAFTA Award for Best Actress and a Golden Globe Award for Best Screenplay .

Thompson was absent from screens in 1996 , but returned the following year with Alan Rickman 's directorial debut , The Winter Guest . Set over one day in a Scottish seaside village , the drama allowed Thompson and her mother (Phyllida Law) to play mother and daughter on screen . She then returned to America to appear in an episode of Ellen , and her self @-@ parodying performance received a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Guest Actress in a Comedy Series .

For her second Hollywood role , Thompson starred with John Travolta in Mike Nichols 's Primary Colors (1998) , playing a couple based on Bill and Hillary Clinton . Thompson 's character , Susan , is described as that of an " ambitious , long @-@ suffering wife " who has to deal with her husband 's infidelity . The film was critically well received but lost money at the box office . According to Kevin O 'Sullivan of the Daily Mirror , Americans were " blown away " by her performance and accent , and top Hollywood producers became increasingly interested in casting her . Thompson rejected many of the offers , expressing concerns about living in Los Angeles behind walls with bodyguards , and stated " LA is lovely as long as you know you can leave " . She also admitted to feeling tired and jaded with the industry at this point , which influenced her decision to leave film for a year . Thompson followed Primary Colors by playing an FBI agent opposite Rickman in the poorly received thriller Judas Kiss (1998) .

= = = 2000s : Smaller roles = = =

When she became a mother in 1999 , Thompson made a conscious decision to reduce her workload , and in the following years many of her appearances were supporting roles . She was not seen on screen again until 2000 , with only a small part in the British comedy Maybe Baby , which she appeared in as a favour to its director , her friend Ben Elton .

For the HBO television film Wit (2001) , however , Thompson happily took the lead role in what she felt was " one of the best scripts to have come out of America " . Adapted from Margaret Edson 's Pulitzer Prize winning play , it focusses on a self @-@ sufficient Harvard University professor who finds her values challenged when she is diagnosed with ovarian cancer . Thompson was instrumental in bringing Mike Nichols to direct the project , and the pair spent months in rehearsal to get the complex character right . She was greatly drawn to the " daredevil " role , for which she had no qualms about shaving her head . Reviewing the performance , Roger Ebert was touched by " the way she struggles with every ounce of her humanity to keep her self @-@ respect " , and in 2008 he called it Thompson 's finest work . Caryn James of The New York Times also described it as " one of her most brilliant performances " , adding " we seem to be peering into a soul as embattled as its body . " The film earned Thompson nominations at the Golden Globes , Emmys and Screen Actors Guild Awards .

Thompson 's only credit of 2002 was a vocal performance in Disney 's *Treasure Planet* , an adaptation of *Treasure Island* , where she voiced Captain Amelia . The animation earned far less than its large budget and was considered a " box office disaster " . This failure was countered the following year by one of Thompson 's biggest commercial successes , Richard Curtis 's romantic comedy *Love Actually* . As part of an ensemble cast that included Liam Neeson , Keira Knightley , and Colin Firth , she played a middle @-@ class wife who suspects her husband (played by Alan Rickman) of infidelity . The scene in which her stalwart character breaks down was described by one critic as " the best crying on screen ever " , and in 2013 , Thompson mentioned that she gets commended for this role more than any other . She explained , " I 've had so much bloody practice at crying in a bedroom then having to go out and be cheerful , gathering up the pieces of my heart and putting them in a drawer . " Her performance received a BAFTA nomination for Best Supporting Actress .

Thompson continued with supporting roles in the 2003 drama *Imagining Argentina* , where she played a dissident @-@ journalist abducted by the country 's 1970s dictatorial regime . Antonio Banderas played the husband who tries to find her , in a film that most critics disliked . The film was booed and jeered at when it was screened at the Venice Film Festival and received a scathing article in *The Guardian* . Thompson had greater success that year when she worked with HBO for a second time in the acclaimed miniseries *Angels in America* (2003) . The show , also featuring Al Pacino and Meryl Streep , dealt with the AIDS epidemic in Reagan @-@ era America . Thompson played three small roles ? a nurse , a homeless woman , and an angel ? and was again nominated for an Emmy Award . In 2004 , she played the eccentric Divination teacher Sybill Trelawney in the third *Harry Potter* film , the *Prisoner of Azkaban* , her character described as a " hippy chick professor who teaches fortune @-@ telling " . She later reprised her role in the *Order of the Phoenix* (2007) and the *Deathly Hallows ? Part 2* (2011) , and has called her time on the popular franchise " great fun " .

The year 2005 saw the release of a project Thompson had been working on for nine years . Loosely based on the *Nurse Matilda* stories that she read as a child , Thompson wrote the screenplay for the children 's film *Nanny McPhee* ? which centres on a mysterious , unsightly nanny who must discipline a group of children . She also took the lead role , alongside Colin Firth and Angela Lansbury , in what was a highly personal project . The film was a success , taking number one at the UK box office and earning \$ 122 million worldwide . Commenting on Thompson 's screenplay , film critic Claudia Puig wrote that its " well @-@ worn storybook features are woven effectively into an appealing tale of youthful empowerment " . The following year , Thompson appeared in the surreal American comedy ? drama *Stranger than Fiction* , playing a novelist whose latest character (played by Will Ferrell) is a real person who hears her narration in his head . Reviews for the film were generally favourable .

Following a brief , uncredited role in the post @-@ apocalyptic blockbuster *I Am Legend* (2007) , Thompson played the devoutly Catholic Lady Marchmain in a 2008 film adaptation of *Brideshead Revisited* . Critics were unenthusiastic about the film , but several picked Thompson out as its highlight . Mark Kermode said " Emma Thompson is to some extent becoming the new Judi Dench , as the person who kind of comes in for 15 minutes and is brilliant ... [but then] when she goes away , the rest of the movie has a real problem living up to the wattage of her presence " . Thompson was further acclaimed for her work in the London @-@ based romance *Last Chance Harvey* (2008) , where she and Dustin Hoffman played a lonely , middle @-@ aged pair who cautiously begin a relationship . Critics praised the chemistry between the two leads , and both received Golden Globe nominations for their performances . Thompson 's two 2009 films were both set in 1960s England , and in both she made cameo appearances : as a headmistress in the critically praised drama *An Education* and as a " tipling mother " in Richard Curtis 's *The Boat that Rocked* .

= = = 2010s : Veteran performer = = =

Five years after the original , Thompson returned to *Nanny McPhee* with 2010 's *Nanny McPhee*

and the Big Bang . Her screenplay transported the story to Britain during the Second World War , and incorporated a new cast including Maggie Gyllenhaal . Building on the first film 's success , it was another UK box office number one and the sequel was widely seen as an improvement . The same year , Thompson reunited with Alan Rickman for the BBC television film *The Song of Lunch* , which focused on two unnamed characters meeting at a restaurant 15 years after ending their relationship . Thompson 's performance earned her a fourth Emmy Award nomination .

In 2012 , Thompson made a rare appearance in a big @-@ budget Hollywood film when she played the head Agent in *Men in Black 3* ? a continuation of the popular sci @-@ fi comedy franchise starring Will Smith . With a worldwide gross of \$ 624 million , MIB3 is Thompson 's biggest commercial hit outside of the Harry Potter films . This mainstream success continued with the Pixar film *Brave* , in which Thompson voiced Elinor ? the Scottish queen despairing at her daughter 's defiance against tradition . It was her second consecutive blockbuster release , and critics were generally kind to the film . Also in 2012 , Thompson played Queen Elizabeth II in an episode of *Playhouse Presents* , which dramatised an incident in 1982 when an intruder broke into the Queen 's bedroom . Her first film of 2013 was the fantasy romance *Beautiful Creatures* , in which she played an evil mother . The film aimed to capitalise on the success of *The Twilight Saga* , but was poorly reviewed and a box office disappointment . Film critic Peter Travers was critical of Thompson 's performance and " outrageously awful Southern accent " , and feared " the damage this crock may do to [her] reputation " .

Conversely , her next appearance was so successful that it led one journalist to write " Emma Thompson is back , firing on all cylinders . " *Saving Mr. Banks* depicted the making of *Mary Poppins* , and starred Thompson as P. L. Travers , curmudgeonly author of the source novel , and Tom Hanks as Walt Disney . The actress considered it the best screenplay she had read in years and was delighted to be offered the role . She considered it to be the most challenging of her career because she had " never really played anyone quite so contradictory or difficult before " , but found the inconsistent and complicated character " a blissful joy to embody " . The film was well @-@ received , grossed \$ 112 million worldwide , and critics were unanimous in their praise for Thompson 's performance . The review in *The Independent* expressed thanks that her " playing of Travers is so deft that we instantly warm to her , and forgive her her snobbery " , while *Total Film* 's critic felt that Thompson brought depth to the " predictable " film with " her best performance in years " . Thompson was nominated for Best Actress at the BAFTAs , SAGs and Golden Globes , and received the Lead Actress trophy from the National Board of Review . Meryl Streep stated that she was " shocked " to see that Thompson did not receive an Academy Award nomination for the film .

The romantic @-@ comedy *The Love Punch* (2013) gave Thompson her second consecutive leading role , where she and Pierce Brosnan played a divorced couple who reunite to steal his ex @-@ boss 's jewellery . In March 2014 , she made her first stage appearance in 24 years ? and her New York debut ? in a Lincoln Center production of *Sweeney Todd : The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* . She appeared in the musical for five nights , and her " playful " performance of Mrs Lovett was highly praised ; the critic Kayla Epstein wrote that she " not only held her own against more experienced vocalists , but wound up running off with the show . " She received her sixth Emmy nomination for the televised version of the show .

In 2014 , Thompson provided the narration for Jason Reitman 's film *Men , Women & Children* , before seeing the release of a project she had been working on for many years . The drama *Effie Gray* , based on the true @-@ life story of art critic John Ruskin 's marriage , was written by Thompson but was subject to a copyright case before being cleared for cinemas . The American playwright Gregory Murphy claimed *Effie Gray* infringed on his play and screenplay *The Countess* , which deals with the same story and which Murphy says he submitted to Thompson and her husband Greg Wise to play the roles they subsequently played in Thompson 's film . In March 2013 a judge , after allowing Thompson to submit a second revised screenplay into evidence , ruled that the works were " quite dissimilar in their two approaches to fictionalising the same historical events , " but noted twelve significant similarities between Murphy 's play and screenplay and Thompson 's screenplay that could not be accounted for even after taking into consideration their " shared historical backgrounds . " *Effie Gray* was finally released in October 2014 , to a modest reception .

Thompson appeared in the film , alongside her husband Greg Wise and actress Dakota Fanning , but declined to promote it , as did Mr. Wise .

Thompson 's first film of 2015 was *A Walk in the Woods* , a comedy adapted from the book by Bill Bryson , where she appeared opposite Robert Redford and Nick Nolte . She next starred with Robert Carlyle in his directoral debut *The Legend of Barney Thomson* . Her role was his 77 @-@ year @-@ old mother , a Glaswegian foul @-@ mouthed , chain @-@ smoking former prostitute . Neither film was a critical success , although the latter received some positive reviews and *Empire* magazine wrote that Thomson was " unforgettable " . Later that year , she had a supporting role in John Wells ' restaurant @-@ based film *Burnt* , alongside Bradley Cooper . In 2016 , she starred with Brendan Gleeson in the World War II @-@ drama *Alone in Berlin* , based on the story of Otto and Elise Hampel .

As of April 2016 , Thompson has three upcoming roles . In *Bridget Jones 's Baby* , for which she also co @-@ wrote the screenplay , she will play a doctor . The film is released in September . She will also appear as Mrs Potts in Disney 's upcoming live action film *Beauty and the Beast* , and has a supporting role as a hippy in Noah Baumbach 's dramedy *Yeh Din Ka Kissa* , both scheduled for 2017 .

= = Reception and acting style = =

Thompson is widely considered to be one of the finest actresses of her generation and one of Britain 's best @-@ known actresses , accepted in Hollywood . Early in her career , when she was closely associated with her first husband Kenneth Branagh , she was somewhat unpopular and considered a " luvvy " . The public warmed to her after the separation , and she became one of the key actresses of the 1990s . Her status has continued to grow ; in 2008 , journalist Sarah Sands stated that Thompson has improved with age and experience , and Mark Kermode and said of her performances , " There is something about her which is - you just trust her . You just think ' I 'm in proper hands here . ' ... She 's up there with the great , I mean really great , British female performers " .

Thompson is particularly known for playing reticent women , and Sands describes her as " the best actress of our times on suffering borne with poignant dignity " . According to Kate Kellaway of *The Guardian* , she specialises in playing " a good woman in a frock " . She also plays many haughty characters , with a " bracing , nanny @-@ like demeanour " , but she is noted for her ability to win the empathy of audiences . Thompson belongs to a group of highly decorated British actresses including Judi Dench , Kate Winslet and Helena Bonham Carter who are known for appearing in " heritage films " and typically showing " restraint , rendering emotions through intellect rather than feelings , and a sense of irony , which demonstrates the heroine 's superior understanding " . Projecting a typically " British image " , Thompson 's often dogmatic and tight @-@ jawed manner has also been compared to Maggie Smith .

With a background in comedy , Thompson 's performances are typically delivered with an ironic touch . Ang Lee , director of *Sense and Sensibility* stated that Thompson 's comedic approach may be her greatest asset as an actress , remarking , " Emma is an extremely funny lady . Like Austen , she 's laughing at her own culture while she 's a part of it . " Thompson has stated that the " most moving things are often also funny , in life and in art " which is present in her film work . She often brings her real personality to her roles , and Kellaway believes that her lack of conventional beauty contributes to her likeability as an actress .

= = Personal life = =

Thompson , although born in London , has confessed to feeling Scottish : " not only because I am half Scottish but also because I 've spent half my life here " . She frequently returns to Scotland and visits Dunoon in Argyll and Bute , where she owns a home .

Thompson 's first husband was the actor and director Kenneth Branagh , whom she met in 1987 while filming the television series *Fortunes of War* . The couple married in 1989 and proceeded to

appear in several films together , with Branagh often casting her in his own productions . Dubbed a " golden couple " by the British media , the relationship received considerable press interest . The pair attempted to keep their relationship private , refusing to be interviewed or photographed together . In September 1995 , Thompson and Branagh announced that they had separated ; their statement to the press blamed their work schedules , but it later emerged that he had fallen in love with actress Helena Bonham Carter .

Thompson was living alone as the relationship with Branagh deteriorated , and entered into clinical depression . While filming *Sense and Sensibility* in 1995 , she began a relationship with her co -@-star Greg Wise . Commenting on how she was able to overcome her depression , she told BBC Radio Four , " Work saved me and Greg saved me . He picked up the pieces and put them together again . " In 1999 , the couple had a daughter , Gaia , born when Thompson was 39 . The pregnancy was achieved through IVF treatment ; afterwards Wise and Thompson attempted to have another child using the same method . Three years of further IVF treatment were unsuccessful .

In 2003 , Thompson and Wise were married in Dunoon . The family 's permanent residence is in West Hampstead , London , on the same road where she lived in her youth . Also in 2003 , Thompson and her husband informally adopted a Rwandan orphan and former child soldier named Tindyebwa Agaba . They met at a Refugee Council event when he was 16 , and she invited him to spend Christmas at their home . " Slowly , " Thompson has commented , " he became a sort of permanent fixture , came on holiday to Scotland with us , became part of the family . " Tindy became a British citizen in 2009 .

= = = Views and activism = = =

Thompson has said of her religious views : " I 'm an atheist ... I regard religion with fear and suspicion . It 's not enough to say that I don 't believe in God . I actually regard the system as distressing : I am offended by some of the things said in the Bible and the Qur 'an and I refute them . " Despite this , she has said that she approves of the " guiding moral principles " of the Christian tradition " if applied properly " , and that she observes Christmas . She is politically liberal and a supporter of the Labour Party ; she told the BBC Andrew Marr Show in 2010 that she had been a member of the party " all my life . " She supports the socialist Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn .

Thompson has been a campaigner since her youth . Since becoming a public figure she has regularly voiced her views and been involved in many issues , prompting criticism that she is overly outspoken . In 2010 , The Daily Telegraph asked : " Emma Thompson : a national treasure or Britain 's most annoying woman ? " She has justified her assertiveness by saying , " what I feel is that we all need to speak up and a woman who has got a louder voice needs to shout very loudly indeed . "

She is particularly active in human rights work . As an ambassador for the charity ActionAid she has travelled to Uganda , Mozambique , Ethiopia , Liberia , and Burma . She is chair of the Helen Bamber Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture , a patron of the Refugee Council , and has a therapy room in her office for traumatised refugees . Thompson is also an activist for Palestinians , having been a member of the British @-@ based ENOUGH ! coalition that seeks to end the " Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip and West Bank . " She is a patron of the Elton John AIDS Foundation , and in 2009 Time named her a " European Hero " in recognition of " her work to highlight the plight of Aids sufferers in Africa . "

Aside from humanitarian work , Thompson is also an active environmentalist . She is a supporter of Greenpeace , and in January 2009 , as part of her campaign against climate change , she and three other members of the organisation bought land near the village of Sipson to deter the building of a third runway for Heathrow Airport . In August 2014 , Thompson and her daughter , Gaia , went on a Greenpeace " Save the Arctic " expedition to raise awareness of the dangers of drilling for oil . She is also an ambassador for the Galapagos Conservation Trust .

In May 2016 Thompson announced that she would be supporting the Women 's Equality Party in the 2016 London mayoral election . Writing in The Guardian she said , " I am backing the Women 's Equality party because I really do not want to die before closing the pay gap , which stands , in our great and supposedly modern capital city , at 23 % . "

= = Books = =

In 2012 , Thompson wrote The Further Tale of Peter Rabbit as an addition to the Peter Rabbit series by Beatrix Potter to commemorate the 110th anniversary of the publication of The Tale of Peter Rabbit . She was approached by the publishers to write it , the first authorised Peter story since 1930 and the only one not written by Potter . The book falls in the middle of the earlier series , rather than at the end , and takes Peter Rabbit outside of Mr. McGregor 's garden and into Scotland . It was a New York Times Best Seller . In 2013 , Thompson wrote a second book in the series titled The Christmas Tale of Peter Rabbit .

= = Filmography and awards = =

As of December 2015 Thompson has appeared in 40 films , 20 television programmes and eight stage productions . She has won and been nominated for many awards during her career , including five Academy Award nominations (winning two) , nine Golden Globe Award nominations (winning two) , seven BAFTA Award nominations (winning three) , and six Emmy Award nominations (winning one) .