

= Notting Hill (film) =

Notting Hill is a 1999 British romantic comedy film set in Notting Hill , London , released on 21 May 1999 . The screenplay was by Richard Curtis , who had written Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994) , and the film was produced by Duncan Kenworthy and directed by Roger Michell . The film stars Hugh Grant , Julia Roberts , Rhys Ifans , Emma Chambers , Tim McInnerny , Gina McKee , and Hugh Bonneville .

Notting Hill was well received by critics and became the highest grossing British film released that year . The film won a BAFTA , was nominated in two other categories , and won other awards , including a British Comedy Award and a Brit Award for the soundtrack .

= = Plot = =

William " Will " Thacker owns an independent travel bookshop in Notting Hill . He is divorced and shares his house with an eccentric , care @-@ free Welshman named Spike .

Will encounters Hollywood superstar Anna Scott when she enters his shop . Minutes later , they collide in the street and his drink spills on her clothes . Will offers his house nearby for Anna to change . Before leaving , she impulsively kisses him .

Days later , Anna leaves him a message that she is at the Ritz Hotel . Will is mistaken for a journalist ? in a panic he claims he works for Horse & Hound , and is made to interview the cast of Anna 's new sci @-@ fi film , which he has not seen . Anna calls him back in and says she has cleared her evening for him . Will is exhilarated , before remembering that he is expected at his sister Honey 's birthday party ; Anna surprises him by saying she will join him .

At the house of Max and Bella , Anna feels at home as she share stories with the small group of birthday party guests . She and Will share a moment in a private garden square . The next day they go to a restaurant , where Will overhears Anna being criticised and defends her . Anna invites Will to her room at the Ritz , but her American boyfriend , film star Jeff King , has arrived unannounced . Will pretends to be a room @-@ service waiter and Jeff is very dismissive towards him . Anna is apologetic and embarrassed ; she thought King had broken up with her . Will realizes he must end things with Anna .

Over the next six months , Max and Bella set Will up on a series of awful blind dates , hoping to help him move on from Anna . Anna appears at Will 's house ; some pre @-@ stardom nude photos have been published , and she needs a place to hide out . When she sees Will 's poster of the Marc Chagall painting La Mariée , Anna describes it as " how being in love should be . " After an amazing day together , Anna goes to him at night and they make love . The next morning , she makes him breakfast in bed and she asks if she can stay . The doorbell rings and they are horrified to find a horde of reporters , alerted by Spike 's outspoken talk at the pub . Spike re @-@ opens the door to be photographed in only his dirty underwear , exacerbating the situation . While Anna gets dressed , she verbally berates Will for what she views as his desire for publicity . He tries to cheer her up , reminding her that the fame is all nonsense , but she tells him the scandal will follow her forever , departing with the statement that she regrets their time together .

Several months pass . At a dinner with his friends , Will discovers that Anna is back in town to make a Henry James film , which Will had previously suggested to her . He visits her location shoot , where Anna sees him and invites him past security . Given headphones to hear the dialogue , Will leaves when he overhears Anna evading questions from her co @-@ star , stating that Will is no one important .

The next day , Anna comes to the bookshop with a present . She explains that her co @-@ star is a notorious gossip and she was simply being discreet . Anna admits she still has feelings for him , apologises for her behaviour months ago and explains that she now understands his comment , months earlier , that the fame is nonsense . Will hears her out , but turns her down , saying he is unable to handle another inevitable break up , especially considering how big of a star she is and that he would be unable to escape seeing her face . She leaves Will 's present behind , which turns out to be the original La Mariée .

Will meets his friends , where Spike is the first to lambaste him for turning away the woman he loves . His friends race him across London in Max 's car , to reach her press conference at the Savoy Hotel . Will adopts his Horse & Hound persona to ask a series of questions that reveals their relationship , while also convincing her to stay in the UK .

A montage shows the two getting married , at one of Anna 's movie premieres , then happily sitting on a garden square bench , where Will reads to a heavily pregnant Anna .

= = Cast = =

Julia Roberts as Anna Scott : A Hollywood film star . She meets Will when she comes into his book shop in Notting Hill . Roberts was the " one and only " choice for the role , although Roger Michell and Duncan Kenworthy did not expect her to accept . Her agent told her it was " the best romantic comedy she had ever read " . Roberts said that after reading the script she decided she was " going to have to do this " .

Hugh Grant as William " Will " Thacker : Recently divorced everyman owner of a travel book shop in Notting Hill . The decision to cast Grant was unanimous , as he and Richard Curtis had a " writer / actor marriage made in heaven " . Michell said that " Hugh does Richard better than anyone else , and Richard writes Hugh better than anyone else " , and that Grant is " one of the only actors who can speak Richard 's lines perfectly " .

Emma Chambers as Honey Thacker : Will 's younger sister , she is a fan of Anna Scott . She later marries her brother 's flatmate Spike .

Hugh Bonneville as Bernie : An incompetent stockbroker and a friend of Will . He does not recognise Anna Scott upon meeting her and by way of small talk about the low pay in acting , asks her how much money she made on her last film .

Rhys Ifans as Spike : Will 's slacker Welsh flatmate who dreams of being an artist . He later marries Honey Thacker and becomes Will 's brother @-@ in @-@ law . He is described by Will as " the stupidest person in the world , only doubled " .

Tim McInnerny as Max : Will 's best friend , in whom Will often confides . He and Bella host Honey 's birthday party .

Gina McKee as Bella : A paraplegic lawyer who is married to Max . She is described by Will as one of the only two women that he has ever loved .

James Dreyfus as Martin : William 's unprofessional assistant at his bookshop .

The casting of Bonneville , McInnerny , McKee , Chambers , and Ifans as Will 's friends was " rather like assembling a family " . Michell explained that " When you are casting a cabal of friends , you have to cast a balance of qualities , of types and of sensibilities . They were the jigsaw that had to be put together all in one go , and I think we 've got a very good variety of people who can realistically still live in the same world . "

Other characters

Richard McCabe as Tony : A failing restaurateur . The group meets at his restaurant .

Dylan Moran as Rufus : A thief who attempts to steal from Will 's bookshop . Despite being caught on CCTV concealing a book down his trousers he professes his innocence , then asks Anna if she wants his phone number .

Alec Baldwin makes an uncredited appearance as Anna 's boyfriend , Jeff King .

Sanjeev Bhaskar has a cameo role as a loud and offensive restaurant patron (who refers to Meg Ryan as the actress who has an orgasm every time she 's taken out for a cup of coffee) in the restaurant Anna and Will visit .

Mischa Barton appears as the child actor whom Will pretends to interview for Horse & Hound .

Emily Mortimer as Will 's " Perfect Girl " , a potential love interest for Will .

John Shrapnel as Anna 's UK press agent .

Lorelei King as an assistant to press events .

= = Production = =

Richard Curtis developed the film from thoughts while lying awake at night . He described the starting point as " the idea of a very normal person going out with an unbelievably famous person and how that impinges on their lives " . Four Weddings and a Funeral director Mike Newell was approached but rejected it to work on Pushing Tin . He said that in commercial terms he had made the wrong decision , but did not regret it . The producer , Duncan Kenworthy , then turned to Roger Michell , saying that " Finding someone as good as Roger , was just like finding the right actor to play each role . Roger shone out . "

Curtis chose Notting Hill as he lived there and knew the area , saying " Notting Hill is a melting pot and the perfect place to set a film " . This left the producers to film in a heavily populated area . Kenworthy noted " Early on , we toyed with the idea of building a huge exterior set . That way we would have more control , because we were worried about having Roberts and Grant on public streets where we could get thousands of onlookers . " In the end they decided to film in the streets . Michell was worried " that Hugh and Julia were going to turn up on the first day of shooting on Portobello Road , and there would be gridlock and we would be surrounded by thousands of people and paparazzi photographers who would prevent us from shooting " . The location team , and security personnel prevented this , as well as preventing problems the presence of a film crew may have caused the residents of Notting Hill , who Michell believes were " genuinely excited " about the film . The location manager Sue Quinn , described finding locations and getting permission to film as " a mammoth task " . Quinn and the rest of her team had to write to thousands of people in the area , promising to donate to each person 's favourite charity , resulting in 200 charities receiving money .

Stuart Craig , the production designer , was pleased to do a contemporary film , saying " we 're dealing with streets with thousands of people , market traders , shop owners and residents which makes it really complex " . Filming began on 17 April 1998 in West London and at Shepperton Studios . Will 's bookshop was on Portobello Road , one of the main areas in which filming took place . Other places within Notting Hill included Westbourne Park Road , Golborne Road , Landsdowne Road and the Coronet Cinema . Will 's house , 280 Westbourne Park Road , was owned by Richard Curtis and behind the entrance there is a grand house , not the flat in the film that was made up in the studios . The blue door was auctioned for charity . The current door is blue again . The Travel Book Store is located at 142 Portobello Road . After filming for six weeks in Notting Hill , filming moved to the Ritz Hotel , where work had to take place at night , the Savoy Hotel , the Nobu Restaurant , the Zen Garden of the Hempel Hotel and Kenwood House . One of the final scenes takes place at a film premiere , which presented difficulties . Michell wanted to film Leicester Square but was declined . Police had found fans at a Leonardo DiCaprio premiere problematic and were concerned the same might occur at the staged premiere . Through a health and safety act , the production received permission to film and constructed the scene in 24 hours . Interior scenes were the last to be filmed , at Shepperton Studios . The final cut was 3 @. @ 5 hours long , 90 minutes edited out for release .

The film features the 1950 Marc Chagall painting La Mariée . Anna sees a print of the painting in William 's home and later gives him what is presumably the original . Michell said in Entertainment Weekly that the painting was chosen because Curtis was a fan of Chagall 's work and because La Mariée " depicts a yearning for something that 's lost . " The producers had a reproduction made for the film , but had to get permission from the owner as well as clearance from the Design and Artists Copyright Society . Finally , according to Kenworthy , " we had to agree to destroy it . They were concerned that if our fake was too good , it might float around the market and create problems . " The article also noted that " some experts say the real canvas could be worth between US \$ 500 @, @ 000 and US \$ 1 million . "

The film features the book Istanbul : The Imperial City (1996) by John Freely . William recommends this book to Anna , commenting the author has at least been to Istanbul . In reality , Freely teaches at Bo?aziçi University in Istanbul , and is the author of nine books about the city .

= = Music = =

Music was composed by Trevor Jones . Several additional songs written by other artists include Elvis Costello 's cover of the Charles Aznavour song " She " , Shania Twain 's remixed version of " You 've Got A Way " , as well as Ronan Keating 's specially recorded cover of " When You Say Nothing at All " ; the song reached number one in the British charts . Pulp recorded new song " Born to Cry " , which was released on the European version of the soundtrack album .

The song played when Will strides down Portobello Road is " Ain 't No Sunshine " by Bill Withers . Tony and Bernie play " Blue Moon " on the piano at Tony 's restaurant on the night it closes . Originally , Charles Aznavour 's version of " She " was used in the film , but American test screening audiences did not respond to it . Costello was then brought in by Richard Curtis to record a cover version of the song . Both versions of the song appear in non @-@ US releases .

The soundtrack album was released by Island Records .

US version track listing

" No Matter What " ? Boyzone

" You 've Got a Way " (Notting Hill remix) ? Shania Twain

" I Do (Cherish You) " ? 98 Degrees

" She " ? Elvis Costello

" Ain 't No Sunshine " ? Bill Withers

" How Can You Mend a Broken Heart ? " ? Al Green

" Gimme Some Lovin ' " ? Spencer Davis Group

" When You Say Nothing at All " - Ronan Keating

" Ain 't No Sunshine " ? Lighthouse Family

" From the Heart " - Another Level

" Everything About You " - Steve Poltz

" Will and Anna " ? Trevor Jones (Score)

" Notting Hill " ? Trevor Jones (Score)

The film score and original music was recorded and mixed by Gareth Cousins (who also mixed all the songs used in the film) and Simon Rhodes .

= = Release = =

= = = Critical reception = = =

The film had generally positive reviews , scoring an 82 % " Certified Fresh " rating at Rotten Tomatoes . Variety 's Derek Elley said that " It 's slick , it 's gawky , it 's 10 minutes too long , and it 's certainly not " Four Weddings and a Funeral Part 2 " in either construction or overall tone " , giving it an overall positive review . Cranky Critic called it " Bloody damned good " , as well as saying that it was " A perfect date flick . " Nitrate said that " Notting Hill is whimsical and light , fresh and quirky " , with " endearing moments and memorable characters " . In his review of the film 's DVD John J. Puccio noted that " the movie is a fairy tale , and writer Richard Curtis knows how much the public loves a fairy tale " , calling it " a sweet film " . Desson Howe of The Washington Post gave the film a very positive review , particularly praising Rhys Ifans ' performance as Spike . James Sanford gave Notting Hill three and a half stars , saying that " Curtis ' dialogue may be much snappier than his sometimes dawdling plot , but the first hour of Notting Hill is so beguiling and consistently funny it seems churlish to complain that the rest is merely good . " Sue Pierman of the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel stated that " Notting Hill is clever , funny , romantic ? and oh , yes , reminiscent of Four Weddings and a Funeral " , but that the film " is so satisfying , it doesn 't pay to nitpick . " Roger Ebert praised the film , saying " the movie is bright , the dialogue has wit and intelligence , and Roberts and Grant are very easy to like . " Kenneth Turan gave a good review , concluding that " the film 's romantic core is impervious to problems " . CNN reviewer Paul Clinton said that Notting Hill " stands alone as another funny and heartwarming story about love against all odds " .

Widgett Walls of Needcoffee.com gave the film " three and a half cups of coffee " , stating that " the humor of the film saves it from a completely trite and unsatisfying (nay , shall I say enraging)

ending " , but criticised the soundtrack . Dennis Schwartz gave the film a negative review with a grade of " C- " citing " this film was pure and unadulterated balderdash " . Some criticised the film for giving a " sweetened unrealistic view of London life and British eccentricity . " The Independent derided the film for being unrealistic .

= = = Lists = = =

Notting Hill was 95th on the British Film Institute 's " list of the all @-@ time top 100 films " , based on estimates of each film 's British cinema admissions .

= = = Box office = = =

The film had its premiere at the Odeon , Leicester Square , on 27 April 1999 . It earned US \$ 116 @, @ 089 @, @ 678 as its overall domestic gross , with a worldwide gross of US \$ 363 @, @ 889 @, @ 678 . It totalled US \$ 27 @. @ 7 million over its opening weekend , an American record , the biggest opening for a romantic comedy film , beating My Best Friend 's Wedding (which also starred Julia Roberts) . Notting Hill made another US \$ 15 million the following week . One month after its release , Notting Hill lost its record for highest grossing opening weekend for a romantic comedy film to Runaway Bride (again starring Roberts) . It was the sixteenth highest grossing film of 1999 , and as of February 2014 is the 215th highest grossing film of all time . In 2007 , it became the then highest grossing British film . It opened the same weekend as Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace , which didn 't affect its Box Office as Notting Hill opened at Number 2 .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

Notting Hill won the Audience Award for Most Popular Film at the BAFTAs in 2000 , and was nominated in the categories of The Alexander Korda Award for Outstanding British Film of the year , and Best Performance by an Actor in a supporting role for Rhys Ifans . The film won Best Comedy Film at the British Comedy Awards . The film 's soundtrack won Best Soundtrack at the Brit Awards , beating Star Wars : Episode I ? The Phantom Menace . The film won Best British Film , Best British Director for Roger Michell , and Best British Actor for Hugh Grant at the Empire Awards . The film received three nominations at the Golden Globes , in the categories Best Motion Picture ? Comedy / Musical , Best Motion Picture Actor ? Comedy / Musical for Hugh Grant , and Best Motion Picture Actress ? Comedy / Musical for Julia Roberts .