



## From Notting Hill with Love... Actually

*Ali McNamara*

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She was just a girl, standing in front of a boy . . . wishing he looked more like Hugh Grant.

Scarlett loves the movies. But does she love sensible fiancé David just as much? With a big white wedding on the horizon, Scarlett really should have decided by now . . .

When she has the chance to house-sit in Notting Hill - the setting of one of her favourite movies - Scarlett jumps at the chance. But living life like a movie is trickier than it seems, especially when her new neighbour Sean is so irritating. And so irritatingly handsome, too.

Scarlett soon finds herself starring in a romantic comedy of her very own: but who will end up as the leading man?

## **From Notting Hill with Love... Actually Details**

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Author : Ali McNamara

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## **From Reader Review From Notting Hill with Love... Actually for online ebook**

### **Dana Marie says**

I won a copy of this book and was very excited to receive it in the mail. I love romantic comedies and adore Hugh Grant and Colin Firth. I sigh like crazy over Notting Hill and Love...Actually so I thought this would really speak to me.

The problem was that I just had a hard time getting into this book. I see nothing wrong with having a hobby (I'm addicted to Pinterest and drive my roommate crazy with my "ooh, that looks delicious" or "Wow, I can't believe they did that from cardboard" but this obsession will not ruin my life. Scarlett was so obsessed over finding her movie moments and proving to everyone that movie moments (as she called them excessively) were all around her that she didn't pay attention to what was going on in her life. And there were too many characters that I couldn't keep up. I would have to flip back pages and think "Who was this again?"

The book was fluffy, like a giant meringue. There were points where I laughed out loud or smiled at the memories of some of the scenes in my favorite movies. I guess what I'm trying to say is that it wasn't horrible but it's not going to be something that I'm going to press onto my friends. But hey, still a better love story than Twilight.

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### **Marissa says**

Well, I'm happy to have at least one book finished in 2013; I'm also glad I got it for free on my Nook. There is something irresistible to me about a good boy meets girl story. Chalk it up to that stingy extra "X" chromosome or the monthly hormone imbalance, but I've always been a fan of a decent meet-cute, and a satisfactory happy ending. While this book does actually have both of those, it's the pesky in-between that gets tedious.

From the outset, the premise is, at best highly questionable. A girl wants to housesit at her wealthy friend of a friend's home because she wants to prove that the same scenarios that happen in the movies she loves, also happen in real life. I know what you're thinking right now. It's something along the lines of "WHAAAAAA...?" Yeah, it took me a couple of minutes for my eyes to refocus after rolling so far back in my head as well. In today's digitally addicted, pop-culture saturated world, this notion seems just, well, silly. The fact that this would be the thesis statement of this book, if this book were, say a research paper, is not even on the road to Plausible Town. However, there are moments when Ms. McNamara forgets about this idea and focuses just on telling the story. The problem is that, it's not often enough. Just when you're getting into a chapter, enjoying the will they, won't they aspect that's part of every great romantic comedy, an actual admission of "another movie moment to add to my list" is uttered from the heroine's subconscious, snapping the reader jarringly back to the real world.

The pop culture references while, on point, are pervasive to the point of distraction. Anyone who is going to pick up a book titled "From Notting Hill to Love Actually" knows exactly what they're looking to read. This isn't going to be a murderous thriller or a novel about surviving the apocalypse; it's going to be a book that we read in bubble baths, on beaches, or after terrible days of dealing with even more horrible bosses, an escape. We probably won't need to be reminded what EVERY SINGLE reference is from. It's kind of like explaining a joke after you realize the audience was already laughing. It's just excessive. While it's clear that all of the references are coming from a place of charm and homage, it's almost too explanatory. A paint-by-

numbers of adorable coupling. I mean I wasn't necessarily looking for anything astoundingly original, but I was looking for something that didn't insult my excessive knowledge of Julia Roberts movies or make me feel even a little dirty for owning *Sleepless in Seattle*.

If you can carry on through the bits where you'd rather just say "DUH!" out loud and you enjoy your (insert favorite cheesy chick flick movie title here) well then, it's not an overly long book to finish and it does have all of the components that any good romance would, the main of which is making sure the answer to the "will they/won't they" question is "they will". However, it may also make you think "if this were a romantic comedy, I wish there were more comedy". While cinema benefits from the visuals and the allowances it can make for physical comedy, with that dimension removed, the banter should be wittier than is mostly found here.

I liked it well enough, but wouldn't necessarily recommend it across the board. The two star rating is mainly earned from the nostalgia garnered from the constant reminders about the movies that I did, in fact, love. However, if all you're looking for is that beach read, tub read, or that book to make you forget about the fact that you're sitting next to the guy who's hogging the armrest and is in constant threat of snoring, well then, this will probably get you through. But if *Love Actually* is the homemade bacon macaroni and cheese of the movie world, this book is the stale Kraft equivalent. It'll do, but it won't satisfy as much as you wish it would.

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### **Amanda says**

From *Notting Hill* with *Love...Actually* is a VERY sweet book. It wraps you up like a warm hug, with brilliant characters and a lovely plot (especially the last few scenes). I adored it. Of course, it was very obvious, very cliched and didn't hold any surprises - but that was the point, to me, in a way. It was certainly part of the charm. I am not going to say much more than this - anyone who loved movies like *Pretty Woman*, *Notting Hill*, *Love Actually* and *Sleepless in Seattle* will just love this, and will enjoy the many references. Recommended very much for cold winter evenings, curled up with a hot chocolate!

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### **QNPoohBear says**

This is one of the best books I've ever read. Like Scarlett, I like the escapism of a good romantic comedy, especially British director Richard Curtis's movies (*Notting Hill*, *Love Actually*, *Bridget Jones*). This book blends the plots of several well-known romantic comedies with a dash of real life to create a whole new romantic comedy. I was torn about how I wanted the story to turn out; I felt like Scarlett needed to get her head out of the clouds but I also really wanted her to have her movie moments. In the end, my heart chose romance over practicality, but I don't think she should have rushed a decision or chosen either or. Scarlett is perky and cheerful, which I normally hate, but she's very kind and caring so I felt for her and wanted her to find happiness. The men in her life are similar, yet different. One seems a bit too good to be true but is the very model of Mark Darcy. Scarlett's friends are off-the-wall funny. The movie moments in the plot are so much fun to pick out and parallel to their famous counterparts. I picked up on some moments that Scarlett took awhile to realize or didn't get at all. This story is the perfect escapist fantasy fluff for romantics at heart and movie buffs. If you love *Bridget Jones*, you will probably love this book too. It's one for the keeper shelf right alongside your romantic comedy DVDs.

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### **Cocktails and Books says**

"Everyone who's seen a romantic comedy at least once in their life knows the story. Boy meets girl. They fall in love. Something happens that separates the two of them. This is followed by a swoon-worthy, grand romantic gesture that sweeps the girl off her feet. We've seen them, and we love them. Some of us even wish for one of those grand romantic gestures at least once in our lifetime. I know I do! And so does Scarlett O'Brien.

The spitting image of Vivien Leigh, Scarlett is madly in love with the movies. She spends every day comparing events in her life to romantic comedies. She wants to live one so badly, that she tries to re-create scenes from various movies with the people around her. Usually, her attempts are humorous, yet endearing. She's fun, imaginative, and incredibly loveable.

Scarlett is engaged to David, a good looking young man who is part owner of a chain of cinemas. David is wealthy, but incredibly simple and tight with his money. He is a tad boring, a bit obsessed with DIY projects, and tends to be stuffy. He discourages Scarlett's love of the movies, and her imagination.

When Scarlett takes a trip to Notting Hill, to prove to her loved ones that she CAN live life like a movie, she meets Sean. Sean is a Brad Pitt look-a-like with a fun, down to earth personality that makes Scarlett laugh. He's mysterious, wealthy, and helps Scarlett open up to a world she didn't know existed.

From Notting Hill With Love... Actually was wonderful. Reading just like a romantic comedy, I couldn't put it down. I laughed several times, and the chemistry between the three main characters is so true to life. The supporting characters add depth to the story, and help Scarlett find the answers she's looking for. With a touching sub-plot, plenty of fun movie references, and a romance that's truly screen worthy, this is a book that I'd read more than once and recommend time and time again.

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### **Marina says**

3,5/5 lovely read!!! If you love London and movies, you will enjoy this light read. :)

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### **Angela says**

I think I'm one of the last people on earth that would qualify as a romantic. I hated *Titanic*, didn't cry during *P.S. I Love You*, have no desire to see most of Hugh Grant's movies, and I've never seen *Pretty Woman*. I'm still trying to understand why that movie is popular or romantic. Not that hookers don't deserve love, but all I can ever think of is if Richard Gere's character was ever tested for anything he could've caught from Julia Roberts' character. So, yeah, not a romantic.

This book kinda got to me. I understand Scarlett's quest, as annoying as it often was. But if you spend your whole life looking for movie moments, you're missing so many of your own. Who wants a life fabricated on fake moments you made happen? It takes all the magic away. So I also understand where her father and

fiancee are coming from.

This was cheesy chick-lit that was perfect for a person like me. It was cute, mentioned moments I actually recognized, and managed to have family issues that didn't seem to exist just as a way for the hero/heroine to get together.

Oh, I'll still go and spend Valentine's Day watching *A Good Day to Die Hard* instead of making the bf watch a chick flick, so this book hasn't converted me. However, it is a book I'll pick up again in the future, when I'm in the mood for a cheesy romance and neither *Bridget Jones* book is nearby.

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### **Love Fool says**

What you need to know about me is I love everything British (I should have been born in London instead of Long Island, New York) so this book was made for me! The main character loves movies like me (British movies!) and the romance of it all. I'm a dreamer like her as well. Basically, this was me in a nutshell and I loved it. While reading this I would be skipping down the halls of my office and apartment, singing Disney songs. So if you want to be jolly like I was then read this book!

Also, this book gave me the kick in the ass to travel to London and I loved it <3 Such a magical place and beautiful place.

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### **Tammy says**

I really enjoyed this book.

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### **Lisa says**

This started out pretty great. I was immediately drawn in and found it enjoyable and cute. At some point, it just got a little bit too cute, if you know what I mean.

I guess all the movie references were adorable for maybe the first half of the book but after a while, I wanted to scream. It's not even the movie references that bothered me; it was the way the main character had to explain them. I think most people who will read this book will know the references. We don't need to be told what situations/quotes/etc come from what movie.

It was really quite good for a chick lit. I was definitely surprised. However, I had those couple of issues which made me have to knock off a couple of stars.

I'd recommend this to anyone who likes the idea of a chick lit book that incorporates every chick flick reference you can think of.

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## Helen says

I really enjoyed this book - a lot! I read chick lit because it is light, fluffy and entertaining - this book was all that and more. It was fun and funny, yet the characters really drew you in. The movie references had me laughing out loud and nodding my head. Great job for its genre!

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## Georgiana 1792 says

In un primo momento, confesso di essermi ricordata perché *Colazione da Darcy* non mi avesse persuasa fino in fondo. Non è facile che il chick-lit mi convinca. Spesso le storie sono banali, scontate, oppure sono piene di falilonerie: alla protagonista va tutto liscio come l'olio e, anche se può capitare che abbia difficoltà a sbarcare il lunario, riesce sempre a cadere in piedi.

Non vi dico, poi, quanto mal sopporti la descrizione da capo a piedi dell'abbigliamento dei personaggi con tanto di marche e, poco ci manca, relativo cartellino dei prezzi. Da buona austeniana non solo non considero le descrizioni dell'abbigliamento importanti, ma posso anche fare a meno delle descrizioni fisiche dei personaggi! Ma si sa, *I love shopping* docet, quindi ci dobbiamo sorbire questa peculiarità del genere letterario spiccatamente femminile e pettigolo. Una volta superate le mie difficoltà, però, mi sono trovata davanti a un romanzo alquanto divertente.

Scarlett O'Brien abita a Stratford-Upon-Avon, la città natale di Shakespeare, eppure non sopporta le tragedie del Bardo: lei va pazza per il cinema, in particolare le commedie romantiche, vorrebbe vivere in un film, vorrebbe poter parlare con i suoi attori preferiti, Brad Pitt e Johnny Depp e, quando incontra una qualsiasi persona, ha la tendenza a paragonarla con il personaggio di un film o un attore.

Purtroppo, il suo fidanzato David, con cui dovrebbe convolare a nozze nel giro di pochi mesi, pur essendo ricco – possiede una catena di sale cinematografiche – è non solo piuttosto tirchio, ma anche lontano anni luce dal somigliare a un qualsivoglia attore. Scarlett sostiene di esserne innamorata ma, in realtà il suo è anche un matrimonio di interesse, dal momento che lei è socia del padre in un'azienda di distributori di pop-corn e quale miglior luogo per collocare macchinette per pop-corn se non nell'atrio di una bella sala cinematografica?

Comunque, la mania per il cinema sta portando Scarlett sempre più vicina all'orlo della crisi: la sua vita è ben diversa dalle commedie romantiche che tanto le piacciono, eppure vorrebbe poter dimostrare a suo padre, a David e alla sua migliore amica Maddie, che è possibile vivere in un film. Ne ha l'occasione quando Harry e Belinda, degli amici di Maddie, devono partire per un mese e hanno bisogno di qualcuno che badi alla loro casa. Già c'è il richiamo al film *L'amore non va in vacanza* del 2006 regia di Nancy Meyers in cui Cameron Diaz e Kate Winslet si scambiano le case e inoltre la casa in questione è situata a Notting Hill, location nonché titolo di uno dei film preferiti in assoluto da Scarlett.

Non appena la giovane vi mette piede rivivrà scene che sembrano essere tratte da quel film, ma non solo. Si scontra-incontrerà con un giovane molto attraente (una via di mezzo fra Jude Law, Ewan McGregor e Brad Pitt) che, forse perché si chiama Sean Bond, non sopporta il cinema. Il padre, infatti, era tanto patito di 007 (forse anche a causa del suo cognome) da chiamare i figli Ursula – come l'attrice che interpretò la sua Bond-girl preferita – e Sean, come Connery. E per fortuna che si è convinto a non chiamarlo proprio James! Sean è il vicino di casa di Scarlett a Londra e, convinto da Ursula e dal bizzarro amico Oscar, aiuterà Scarlett a rivivere alcune scene dai suoi film preferiti, per ricavare un vero e proprio tour cinematografico nei suoi

trenta giorni di soggiorno a Notting Hill.

E così, fra Quattro matrimoni (niente funerale, per fortuna, dopo tutto siamo in un chick-lit!), tappe nelle location di *Notting Hill*, giri per i negozi di Bond Street (d'accordo, non è Rodeo Drive come in *Pretty Woman*, ma è il suo equivalente londinese e poi Sean fa un lavoro che somiglia moltissimo a quello di Richard Gere-Edward) e tantissimi spezzoni tratti da *Bridget Jones* (sia 1 che 2), *Love Actually*, *Insomnia d'amore*, *Harry ti presento Sally* e innumerevoli altri film romantici, ci ritroviamo a seguire Scarlett in una ricerca.

Già, perché, a quanto pare, nulla accade per caso, e Scarlett si ritrova mille indizi, che la porteranno sulle tracce di sua madre Rosie, un'appassionata di cinema, proprio come lei (e altrimenti perché chiamarla Scarlett, come Rossella O'Hara in *Via col vento*?), che l'ha abbandonata quando aveva pochi mesi lasciando soli lei e il padre Tom.

Per gli appassionati di cinema, soprattutto per coloro che conoscono a menadito i film citati nel libro, è divertentissimo identificare le scene che la McNamara dissemina nell'arco della trama e che ricordano questo o quell'episodio.

Scarlett incontrerà, nell'arco di tutto il romanzo, alcuni dei suoi attori preferiti (non vi dico chi sono per non farvi perdere il divertimento di scoprirla) ma in nessun caso riuscirà a far sì che l'incontro sia quel che avrebbe voluto. Perché anche se sogniamo di incontrare le star dei nostri sogni e ci figuriamo tutto quel che vorremmo dire e chiedere loro, quando l'opportunità si presenta sarà sicuramente difficile riuscire a comportarsi con naturalezza, sempre ammesso di riuscire a riconoscerle per tempo!

Che dire? Le affermazioni di The Sun («Una storia scoppettante e divertente.»), del Daily Mirror («Ali McNamara ha saputo creare una storia incantevole e originale.») e di Stylist («Lo leggerete tutto d'un fiato... è davvero entusiasmante.») possono sembrare scontate ma, se penso che ho letto il libro tutto d'un fiato e l'ho trovato estremamente scoppettante e originale, non posso certo parlare di esagerazione. Sempre tenendo presente che si tratta di chick-lit e che si sa come va a finire. È tutta una questione di percorsi per raggiungere quel finale, e questo percorso cinematografico creato dalla McNamara è davvero divertente.

Potete leggere la recensione completa [QUI](#)

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## **Meredith (Austenesque Reviews) says**

### **Romantic Comedy Adventures in London!**

#### **Rating: 4.5 stars**

I was drawn to this book by two things, the title and its dual movie references, and the fact that it was published by Sourcebooks (who published quite a bit of Jane Austen works years ago.)

I immediately fell in love with this fun tale that has a movie-obsessed heroine who dreams of her life being like in the movies. I loved all the fun movie references and nods - *Sleepless in Seattle*, *Pretty Woman*, *Notting Hill*, and *Bridget Jones's Diary* are the most featured but there are also mentions of *Finding Neverland*, *Four Weddings and A Funeral*, *Love Actually*, *When Harry Met Sally*, *The Holiday*, *An Affair to Remember*, and at least a dozen more! The story was well written, our heroine is trying to find what is

missing in her life and she goes on a monthlong break to housesit in Notting Hill. She meets some new friends and these new experiences begin to change her perception of her life. Sean was completely wonderful and I couldn't help but fall in love with him. \*sigh\* I think just a little bit more development with some of the characters and I would be rating this 5 stars! But overall this story was a clever and sparkly romantic movie love-fest and now all I want to do is have a day in to rewatch all these lovely movies! A perfect summer or vacation read! :)

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### **Vanessa says**

In the beginning this book was really cute and funny, even though Scarlett's obsession with movies and re-creating movie moments in real life could be a tad annoying. However, as the story progressed I liked the book less and less, until I got to the point where it really made me angry!

I liked the whole idea of the book, and the writing was not all bad. Basically, there were good parts, and there were bad parts, but the further the story got the worse the plot (and the writing) became.

Scarlett was likable at first, but sometimes I found her to be too immature and out of touch with reality. Her fiancé, David, is painted as an impatient, self-absorbed control freak, and I wondered from the start why she would be engaged to him.

Sean, now him I actually liked. However, considering the fact that we learn pretty early on that he owns a successful company I was actually a bit surprised that he never really seemed to be working. He was certainly able to jet off with Scarlett anywhere and everywhere at all hours of the day.

Fair warning --- there are spoilers ahead!!!

There were parts in the story that were just completely implausible and unbelievable. For example, when Scarlett goes to Paris for her best friend's wedding she spontaneously invites Sean along --- even though she knows that her fiancé will be there. Now, how would you explain to your fiancé that you invited your temporary neighbor - whom you have known for maybe two weeks, and who is really handsome - to go to Paris with you to attend the wedding of someone he has never met?

And that's another thing --- Scarlett keeps dreading meeting David at the wedding, yet while she is there she promises David that she has no feelings for Sean, and that she is still looking forward to marrying him (David) a few weeks later. But she has no qualms about spending the next day - which happens to be Valentine's Day - with Sean in Paris instead of going back to England with David. Also, it is already clear at this point that Scarlett is in love with Sean, and he with her.

What really made me roll my eyes in disgust and quit reading was this:

There is a scene after about 270 pages in which Sean and Scarlett are together in his hotel room in Paris, and are talking about her upcoming marriage to David. Sean is trying to figure out why she is so set upon marrying David even though they are not really compatible.

Suddenly Sean asks her if the reason why she wants to marry David could possibly be to merge his family's chain of cinemas with her father's popcorn machine business, and after hesitating a moment she tells him that yes, that is a big part of it.

So, the author actually expects her readers to believe that a 23-year-old woman who is completely obsessed with romantic movies would get married for a business opportunity????

I'm sorry, but for me that was just the last straw, and I quit reading at that point.

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### **Simona says**

I have been wanting to read this for ages! I heard so many great things about Ali's writing and especially that it's, so I was really excited to read it! Now I finally got round to it and all I can say is that it is just FABULOUS!!! And the cover is gorgeous ??

Scarlett O'Brien is a big movie fan, she co-owns a business with her father, they sell, install etc. popcorn machines, so it's all connected to the movies. She lives the think about movie scenes and also connects them to her real life. This gets her in "trouble" with her fiancé David and also her best friend Maddie and her father. They all think she is more than obsessed with films and that she thinks life is a movie. To prove them wrong Scarlett takes a break and goes to Notting Hill to house-sit. Even arriving there and then spending time in Notting Hill she sees herself in several movie scenes. I loved all the movie references, it was great to read about Scarlett imagining herself and the people around her in the characters. From Notting Hill, to Pretty Woman over the Four Weddings and A Funeral, so many awesome movie references.

The book starts spot on and I was hooked immediately. They way Scarlet meets Oscar and then tells him why she is here is just awesome, so well described and full of spark and energy!

Reading about Scarlett's life with David made me dislike him, he seemed boring and just not the right type for Scarlett. She's full of life and passion and they didn't have anything in common.

Now let's talk about the house-sitting, or should I rather say the neighbor that comes with it. He's called Sean Bond, he is his own boss and he is drop dead gorgeous. He and Scarlett are off on a rocky start, but they get along really well after a while. I felt that they had a special chemistry from the start.

Meeting Oscar opens a lot of doors for Scarlett and they form a great friendship. Next to him she also gets to know Sean's sister Ursula (so funny why they have the names they have ??). Them knowing about Scarlett's movie obsession, a lot of movie scenes come up and Scarlett suddenly finds herself traveling to Glasgow with Sean to go to a wedding (Four Weddings and a Funeral). On the train ride the two of them get to know each other better and it gets personal really fast. I enjoyed reading about their lives and I loved their teasing. Meeting Sean's dad and his step mom Diana opens a possibility for Scarlett to find her mom. She starts looking for her, but it's harder than she thought. Sean encourages her and starts helping her, I really loved that about him! I also really liked how he reacted to all her movie mentions.

Her best friend Maddie's wedding comes up, Scarlett invites Sean and they have a great time at the joint hen night/stag do, in the wedding day David arrives and trouble is ahead. Let's just say it really gets intense and dramatic here! Sean also has news about Scarlett's mother and she finds herself looking for her in Paris with Sean. Their chemistry gets more magical and I have to say that I just loved their scenes together, but what about David?!

Back in London Scarlett is confused and doesn't really know what she wants! Her father and other people

don't make the situation easier. When Scarlett finds her mother the story gets even more interesting, we later find out what was behind it all and just ??????

It comes to a huge showdown when everybody meets and Scarlett thinks she has made a decision, especially after talking to her mum and also her dad! Scarlett really had me worried until the end, I couldn't bare the uncertainty and I was scared that she might make the wrong decision. The end though was just brilliant, fabulous and everything great out together, I LOVED it!!! And the connection to some movies was fantastic. I couldn't stop smiling, it's so romantic!

I'm so glad I finally picked up an Ali McNamara book, because she is a brilliant writer that has her own unique voice and so much spark!

The storyline is perfectly well lined out, the scenes are authentic, vivid, I literally felt like watching a movie. It has many LOL moments and memorable scenes, the characters are awesome and it's also very touching and emotional. It's the perfect chick-lit! I couldn't put it down and I can't wait to read book 2 and 3 of this fabulous series!!!!

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### **Scout J says**

Books don't make me angry often, but this did. I am furious I paid seven quid for it and it took up space in my suitcase that could have been filled with another book.

This is why Rom Coms have a bad name. Bad, dull, cliched writing: a protagonist so unbearable it's like being stuck in the corner of the xmas party with the office bore, except in your own house, and you're paying for it. The author has stumbled across the GENIUS strategy of interjecting terrible, insanely pointless monologues with "that's so funny! It's the way you tell it!" Or "you're such a character!" She even tries to face off criticism with a heroine who "can't believe XYZ is SO FASCINATED with my boring story!!!".

Guess what? NEITHER CAN WE.

This treads the fine line between an homage and sheer plagiarism. The vapid, shallow heroine references a (usually bad) film three or four times a paragraph. Even the PLOT is just lifted. Within a few chapters she's in 'the' book shop in Notting Hill, she's spilt orange juice down a stranger and been invited to his house. Richard Curtis should be getting his lawyers involved.

Great rom-coms are great because - and there's a clue in the title - they're romantic and funny. This is neither, and it's not fresh or original: it's a scrapbook of other people's work.

This is going straight to a charity bin, and I pity the poor soul who picks it up.

Great that other people like it, but personally my brain needs a good bath immediately.

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### **patrycja polczyk says**

I'm giving this book 5 stars not because it's some kind of groundbreaking masterpiece, but because it's absolutely adorable and perfect read for romantic comedies sucker. I have to admit - I got it as a freebie on Amazon and wasn't hoping for much, but I was nicely surprised. It's good to read book like that from time to time and be completely charmed by the story. It's well written, page-turner about girl, who reminded me of myself a bit. I love romantic comedies, movies in general. I sometimes wish there was some prince charming, who will swept me away from my feet and will make my life a fairytale. Characters in this book are easy to like, they don't really have those oh-so-complicated lives and pasts. They live here and now. I'm already imaging movie made out of this book and who should play who. And it would be good movie! :) There are things in this book, that strike very personal string in me, but that's another thing. I've read it in 3 days (well, 4 maybe), but only because I had to sleep and work :) This book is also very comforting - it makes you think that there's still love in this World... So yes, I loved it!

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### **Leah says**

Scarlett O'Brien lives her life as if she's in one big movie production but often finds herself in trouble for indulging in such fantasies. When Scarlett is given the chance to house-sit a mansion in Notting Hill, she jumps at the chance to live out her life-long film fantasies. As she gets comfy in her Notting Hill mansion and finds herself re-creating many famous film scenes, she also realises that there may be more to life than the one she was leading prior to her house-sitting expedition. As Scarlett spends more time in Notting Hill, she finds herself strangely attracted to neighbour Sean, but what of her fiance David? Could it be that Scarlett O'Brien has inadvertently found herself in her very own romantic comedy?

When I first heard about From Notting Hill With Love... Actually, I was split in two; on the one hand, I thought it sounded fantastic and right up my street but on the other, it could so easily be a homage to all things movies but it might not have managed to pull off an actual credible plot. However, I received a proof copy and after admiring the beautiful cover I was taken in immediately. My curiosity about the book finally reached fever point and I decided to give it a read. I'm so glad I did as it's one of my favourite books of 2010.

From Notting Hill With Love... Actually is an incredibly interesting book. It's main focus is on the movies, absolutely, but there were plenty of other plots to keep the book moving along. For one, there's Scarlett's move to Notting Hill to house-sit for a month, I thought that was such an interesting way to begin the book that I was instantly intrigued and although I hadn't planned to continue reading the book I was soon hooked. There are many other sub-plots, Scarlett's desire to prove that it is possible to find yourself in the middle of movie scenes in real life, Scarlett's issues with her mother, but most of all there's Scarlett deciding if David, her fiance, is the man she wants to marry. Made even harder after Sean, her next door neighbour in Notting Hill, comes along and they become ever friendlier.

The movies, though, what can I say about the movies featured throughout the book? A book that references the creme de la creme of romance films is always going to be a hit with me. I love Notting Hill, Pretty Woman, Runaway Bride et al and I vaguely remember Love Actually although I wasn't a huge fan of that film bar that one scene with Keira Knightley. What From Notting Hill With Love... Actually does is, it meshes all of those films together to create one big romance-film-fest. I absolutely adored all of the movie references within the book and I kept getting excited every single time I remembered a scene that was playing out from any given film throughout the book. It was completely cheesy, how the scenes played out, but it was goofy-grin cheesy; the kind of cheesy that's acceptable and is actually really good.

The best thing about the book though is the characterisation. Scarlett is mirrored on Vivien Leigh, of whom I've never heard of but was in Gone With The Wind, meaning her name isn't just irony, and I loved her immediately. She is a bit of a dreamer, don't get me wrong, but who doesn't want to live in a world where you want your life to be like a movie scene? Unlike her father, best friend and fiance, I found Scarlett's movie obsession endearing. I warmed to Scarlett immediately and she's become one of my favourite heroines ever. She is someone I would want to be friends with. I also found Sean, the neighbour in Notting Hill, very intriguing. Although he and Scarlett don't get off to the best start, I could see there was something there, some kind of spark and I loved seeing their relationship go from strength to strength as they got to know each other better. Never in my life have I wanted two characters to get together as much as Sean and Scarlett, making it annoying that Scarlett had a fiance, David. David. I didn't like him, he never really caught my attention and he seemed a bit too controlling for me. Whilst in Notting Hill Scarlett makes friends with Oscar and Ursula, both of whom I loved and would have liked to have seen more of!

The book is told entirely from Scarlett's point of view and once I'd started the book I found it very difficult to put down as I just wanted to know what was going to happen next. It was infectious. The movies, the characters, the setting, it all added up to a really fantastic book. I have no qualms whatsoever saying that it is one of my favourite books of 2010 and I cannot believe that it's only Ali McNamara's first novel. I sincerely hope she's on writing her second because I cannot wait for it. But do you want to know what my favourite scene was of the entire book? The ending. If you're the type of person to skip to the ending because you're a cheater (like me usually) and can't wait to read all the pages to get there, I recommend you don't do it, because you will completely ruin the best book ending I have ever come across. It is cheesy, it is romantic and it had me grinning like a complete and utter loon. I knew it was coming – or rather, I hoped it was coming, and I wasn't disappointed at all. From Notting Hill With Love... Actually will be a huge hit with any rom-com film fan, particularly if, like Scarlett, you're hankering after your own fairytale ending.

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## Swissmiss says

Cliched, shallow, cringingly embarrassing, and trite, with cardboard characters, unbelievable coincidences, and a questionable moral message.

In its defense, it was meant to be cliched, with the entire premise being that the protagonist was trying to live out various moments from romantic comedies. I found that a clever enough gimmick. One flaw in this plan, though, was that the author relied on too few films: Pretty Woman, Sleepless in Seattle, Pride & Prejudice (not exactly a romantic comedy, but at least a chick flick), Four Weddings and a Funeral, and Bridget Jones' Diary provided the bulk of the plot, all of them being drawn on multiple times. With dozens of other well-known films that could have been used, I felt that the joke wore thin by the tenth mention of how a certain situation was just like in Pretty Woman.

I think this could have been pulled off much better if the characters had been better developed, for one thing. I actually thought the female lead was all right, as well as her male counterpart. But the rest of the characters were pretty much place-holders (the gay, fashion-conscious sidekick; the stiff, boring fiance; the well-meaning but emotionally distant father), and none of them had a distinct voice or interest.

The main thing that really disappointed me though was the ending. The central character worries throughout the book about hurting others through her actions, and in the end she makes the selfish choice (hardly a spoiler, you knew that's how it would turn out) and winds up hurting someone she supposedly cared a lot about, likely repeating exactly the same mistake her mother made. The problem is, there's no better

conclusion. The way the plot is set up, she has to go for the fantasy fulfillment ending. I would have loved it if the author had been clever enough to come up with an ending that left everyone happy or at least went beyond the movies the book was based on.

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### **Katrina Passick Lumsden says**

I'm at an almost total loss here. I feel like Ali McNamara raped my brain. I feel...insulted. This book. Wow, this book. It's difficult to put into words just how awful this is. First of all, the stereotypes are *embarrassing*. Perhaps not 'naked in front of strangers' embarrassing, but maybe 'tripping at a job interview' embarrassing. The stereotypical homosexual shows up like, four pages in. Oscar owns a designer clothing boutique, a tiny dog named Delilah, says things like, "honey" and "darling" to a disgusting degree, and is just overall puking-rainbows fabulous. His best friend is, of course, a stylish woman who dresses in vintage clothing from the 1950s.

Oscar spills orange juice on Scarlett and the two are instafriends. He invites her to his home, and she just assumes it's totally safe to go to a strange man's house since, you know, he's so obviously gay...

At Oscar's house, Scarlett proceeds to tell him everything that's happened in her life for the past week...all the things that have led her to housesitting in Notting Hill. Throughout *that* ordeal, the reader is twice treated to Scarlett's disbelief that Oscar is finding this tale riveting. I couldn't believe it, either. I kept hoping Oscar was just feigning interest to keep Scarlett in his home until his sex trafficking colleagues could show up to kidnap her.

Alas, nothing that interesting ever happened.

At 6%, I was treated to some of the funniest racism I've ever witnessed. The bit from the Japanese businessman will live on in my memory for years to come. I'll never be able to hear a Robbie Williams song without blurting out, "Ah, Wobbie Williams! Vey good singer. I like. You like?"

Scarlett's dad, Tom, is the hardworking single dad who doesn't understand stereotype. Her mom, Rose, is the flaky, absent but understanding stereotype. Her fiance, David, is an asshole. I don't know what McNamara *wanted* him to be. I got the sense we were supposed to feel bad for him or something, but I'm still not sure about that. Scarlett's love interest, Sean, is...well, Sean isn't a fleshed out character at all. His personality changes depending on what Scarlett needs him for at the time. His part in the story sadly revolves around whether or not he's needed to fill a particular role in each scene, but he's never treated to any kind of development or deeper analysis. He just is. The counterpoint to David. And even in that hollow sense, he's a much better person than David, yet he gets shit on continually. By everyone. Including Scarlett.

Scarlett is a brain dead moron. There's really no better way to describe her. She has two emotional modes; Upset and Cinema, and maybe five thoughts that run through her head on a continual loop:

1. What movie does this remind me of?
2. Do I love David?

3. David loves me.
4. Where is my mother?
5. Why doesn't anyone understand me?

Later on, she taxes her little pea brain by adding a few questions like, 'Does Sean love me?' and 'Do I love Sean?'...there might be an 'I wonder where she got those shoes...' thrown in at times, but I think that's only when she's really rested and can handle the extra workload. She can't make decisions for herself, and is constantly second guessing her own feelings. She knows she loves Sean, but she has to marry David to help her father's business. This was so tragically out of character for her that it was completely confusing. It made *zero* sense. She allows everyone around her to influence her opinions, her feelings, her thoughts, everything, then chastises herself at the end for **being selfish and only ever thinking of herself...**

She's marrying a guy **she doesn't love** in order to **help her father**. Do you see my dilemma? She *is* self-centered, so this whole sacrificing herself for the greater good of the company thing makes very little sense. She keeps *saying* she loves David, but deep down knows she doesn't, but has resigned herself to her fate because she just doesn't know Sean well enough to risk her relationship with David, who doesn't make her happy, anyway. Desperation from a 24-year-old. It's just bizarre.

To make matters even worse, when the inevitable last-minute wedding day indecision occurs, she's *still* looking to those around her to make the decision for her! Sean or David? And then she only runs off to Sean because David finally grows a brain and dumps her stupid ass!

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I can't anymore. A simpler summation: A boring, irritating, insulting, unoriginal piece of feces that's dressed itself up in romcom clothes and is parading about, soiling perfectly good book shelves. Ali McNamara didn't craft a decent plot, characters, or obstacles, and her dialogue is trite and puerile. Hell, the title alone should scare most people away. If I could give it half a star, I would.