

THE GIFT OF AN ENJOYABLE MOVIE

It is time to get in touch with your inner 'Elf'



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Having accepted a role far unlike any that he has previously played, ex-*Saturday Night Live* star Will Ferrell portrays a grown up, human elf in the film *Elf*, which was released into theaters on Friday, Nov. 7.

New holiday film proves that 'love actually' is all around

By James McArthur
Staff Writer

Review

Love is everywhere. Director and writer Richard Curtis proves that falling in love is a spell worth being under in his directorial debut *Love Actually*, this year's seasonal romantic comedy.

The film is a romance waiting to happen. It will make the audience want to fall in love all over again.

The story opens weeks before Christmas at the arrival area of an airport, where love is in the air as people are reunited with those who are most precious to them. Romance follows the lives of 10 dramatic love stories: a Prime Minister (Hugh Grant) who is drawn to the woman who brings him his tea; a father who wants the relationship with his 11-year-old son (Thomas Sangster) to last forever while helping him attract the attention of the coolest girl in school; a waiter who insists on finding romance in America; a man who falls in love with his best friend's new bride; a writer (Colin Firth), who can't stop thinking about the person who cleans

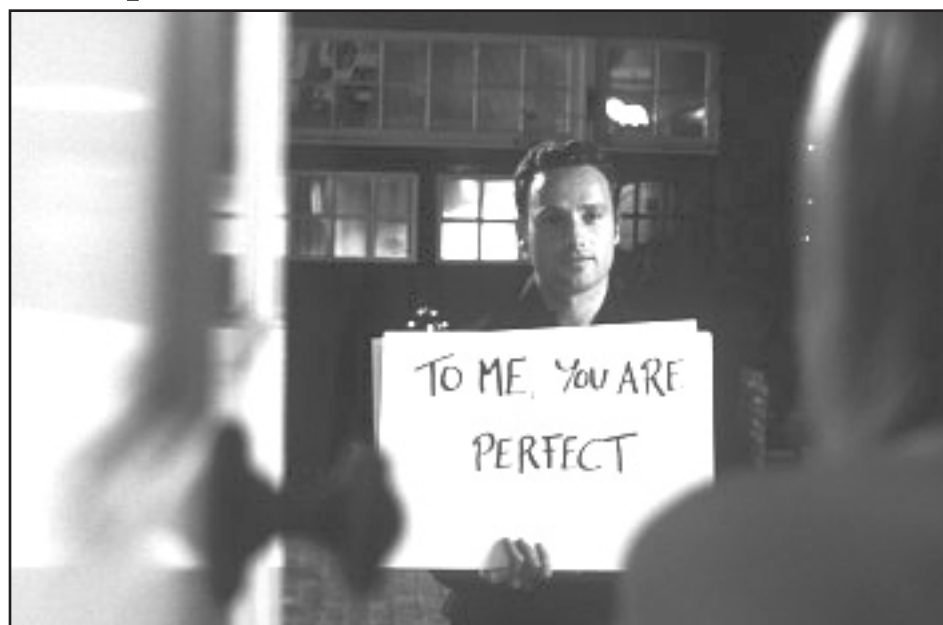


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Love Actually was released into theaters on Friday, Nov. 7.

his house; and a happily married man (Alan Rickman) whose flirtatious secretary makes him wonder just how happily married he is.

These are only a few of the types of drama that lie within the film. The story touches upon many different kinds of love. The love between siblings, love

By Jodi Cantor
Staff Writer

Review

If Christmas songs and decorations in malls that have been up since before Halloween are not enough to get you into the holiday mood, maybe you are in need of a warm and fuzzy holiday movie to put a spin on your attitude towards the holidays.

There are good films in the theaters right now to choose from, but watching sentinels attack the human city of Zion or tough guy Russell Crowe commanding a fleet of colonial ships does not exactly scream "holiday cheer." For those who think less action and more comedy would be fitting, then a good movie to see is *Elf*, starring *Saturday Night Live* alumnus Will Ferrell.

Ferrell plays Buddy, a human orphan who hitched a ride back to the North Pole with Santa Claus, played by veteran actor Edward Asner, one Christmas Eve. Buddy is raised from infancy all the way up to adulthood amongst the elves of the North Pole, who live for anything and everything having to do with Christmas. This includes gingerbread men, Christmas decorations and the natural wonder of snow. Unfortunately, as Buddy grows to be well over six feet and his elf friends remain a mere four, he is found to be the odd man out and brings down the pace of production in the toy factories. He goes from making Etch-A-Sketches to testing frightening toys like jack-in-the-boxes. But he still feels out of place.

Finally, Buddy's adopted dad, known as Papa Elf, who is played by Bob Newhart, tells Buddy of his real father, who lives in New York City. So with nothing more than his elf costume on his back, Buddy sets out through

the snow and travels to New York City to find his dad, Walter Hobbs, played by James Caan. Once Buddy arrives in his dad's office, he gets kicked out, but eventually after it is proved that Buddy is in fact Hobbs' son, he is taken in with his father's new family.

Ferrell plays Buddy with innocence and glee. Although Buddy's perkiness can be a bit much sometimes, not to mention sickening when it comes to his sugar-loving appetite, he is endearing. A good part of the film's laughs are due to his eating habits and his adjustment to city life and how he interacts with people who do not exactly act as perky or as welcoming as Buddy. The jokes and antics that Buddy pulls off, such as eating cotton balls and drawing Mona Lisa on an Etch-A-Sketch, are ridiculous, but in a funny way.

While Ferrell is best known for his grown-up friendly humor showcased on *Saturday Night Live*, he is able to humor a younger generation in this film, which is also a new landscape for the director, Jon Favreau. Favreau has acted in many films such as *Very Bad Things* and *Swingers*. Together the two are able to tackle this new genre while still keeping their original audience.

Elf is involving and the audience easily feels sorry for Buddy when no one really seems to accept his habits. It is easy to forget how annoying his energy can be at times and to have an interest in learning whether or not his father will come to terms with his son being raised in the North Pole. In addition, viewers will find out whether or not Buddy's dad will finally believe in Santa. Although it is just another Christmas movie, *Elf* is original and effortlessly gives its audience the distinctive and splendid feeling of Christmas in New York.

character as the experiences they go through pan out.

Love Actually is a romantic comedy with gorgeous stars, dialogue delivered in swoon-worthy English accents as well as 10 endings. Surprisingly none of the stories ever feel hurried or incomplete.

The film is all about taking chances. Whether characters are hopeful or hopeless they make big gestures to show their love. Even if they make viewers miserable, it reminds them that they are alive.

Curtis puts together a dream cast, including a real life cousin of Grant, and an already first-rate actor, Sangster. The actors portray the most endearing, vivid and vulnerable characters. It is the actors' brilliance that put together this masterful piece that may be the center of this season's cinematic attention.

Love Actually leaves viewers with one important lesson: that love is pure, hard to find and hard to lose, but once it is there, it is never forgotten. So make the most of this holiday season and spend it with a loved one.

between parents and their children, love between spouses, puppy love, platonic love and unrequited love, as well as the usual romantic love.

From beginning to end love takes the shape of many different forms, whether it is for the best or for the worst. *Love Actually* makes viewers feel for each