

Foreign Language Film Festival 2006-2007

Girl with a Pearl Earring

About the movie (subtitled version)

DIRECTOR	Peter Webber
YEAR / COUNTRY	2003 / UK/ Luxembourg
GENRE	Dramatic
ACTORS	Colin Firth, Scarlett Johansson, Tom Wilkinson, Judy Parfitt



PLOT

Based on the bestseller by Tracy Chevalier, this extraordinary film takes us back into the Holland of 1665 when Johannes (Jan) Vermeer painted his haunting portrait of "The Girl with a Pearl Earring". The atmosphere, costumes and setting are so exact that the whole film itself is a work of art and resembles a painting by Vermeer. This is the imagined story of an intense relationship between the great artist (Colin Firth) and Griet (Scarlett Johansson), a servant in his household. Although she is illiterate and comes from a poor background, Griet has a rare sensitivity and understands the paintings of her master far better than his superficial wife, Catharine. Sighs and looks, things said and unsaid characterize the relationship between painter and subject and take us to where art and passion almost coalesce. That a great painting can inspire an intense novel and film after 350 years is a tribute to the genius of Vermeer and that of the writer and filmmakers.

LANGUAGE

With the exception of the kitchen help, Griet's butcher-boyfriend and people on the street, who speak with modified lower-class accents, the actors speak cultured British theatre English and are easy to understand.

VOCABULARY

Stop your ears: don't listen	Green as grass: innocent
Keep clear of: stay away from	Pockets as deep as mine: as rich as I am.
Scour (pots and pans): scrub hard	Track you down: find you. Glaze: patina
Nothing is settled yet: nothing has been decided	Grinding and stirring: pounding and agitating (here used with a sexual reference)
Shutters: blinds Bankrupt: having no money	<u>Twist</u> from the shoulder: <u>turn</u> ...
Stand gawking: stand staring	She needs a draught: she needs a medicine.
What takes your fancy?: what do you like?	Wet nurse: a woman who suckles someone else's baby.
Starve: go hungry	She's eating us out of house and home: she's bankrupting us because she eats so much.
She smashed all the china: she broke all the plates	She can't abide the smell when she's with child: she can't stand the stink when she's pregnant.
Don't set foot in his studio: don't enter his studio	She looked <u>trapped</u> : <u>imprisoned</u>
Tight fisted: stingy	Sneaking around shirking her work: creeping around and not doing her job.
That will be my <u>epitaph</u> : <u>what they write on my tombstone</u>	Swarming around like flies: crowding together like a lot of flies.
Wine <u>winking</u> in the glass: <u>sparkling</u> My ears aren't <u>pierced</u> : no holes for earrings A cock and bull story: an invented tale	I'll take your bait: I'll give in to your allurements. Where there's smoke, there's fire: rumours indicate something has really happened. Ripe as a plum, still unplucked: of age, but a virgin