

Film Review: Awkward Human Nature Explored in ‘On Chesil Beach’

Submitted by [PatrickMcD](#) [1] on May 25, 2018 - 12:50am

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CHICAGO – If you hook up with people for that inevitable physical connection, you’ve experienced the odd emotional wrestling match of the “first time” – whether it’s the first “first time” or any other new partner first time. “On Chesil Beach” focuses on a young British couple in 1962, as they first time their virginal wedding night.



Rating: **4.0/5.0**

It pairs hot Oscar-nominated Saoirse Ronan and relative newcomer Billy Howie as the couple, in a story adapted by Ian McEwan (“Atonement”) from his own novel. The duo have great chemistry in their lead up to the wedding night, and wonderful patience in their performances for that particular first time dance. This is relatable human nature, as that unique vulnerability emerges in everyone during such a situation, and as it is different in everyone, so does it work in its own way with the fictional couple. This is framed by both the history of their romance and their past difficulties in family... this film just connects as empathy, and is very honest in its representation.

Florence and Edward (Saoirse Ronan and Billy Howie) are freshly minted British newlyweds, in their early twenties, who have made their way to the honeymoon suite on the Chesil Beach seashore. The ceremony is over, the niceties of the walk on the beach has been accomplished and the special meal in the room has been served. Two, four, six, eight, now it’s time to consummate.

While they go through the rituals of fumbling their way through the night, the story flashes back to their development as a couple and the past challenges within their families. Florence’s family is upper class business owners, while Edward has had to deal with a mother with emotional/mental challenges in a middle class environment. Both of their past lives rush up to them through the wedding night, and some of those secrets are affecting the process.

“On Chesil Beach” opens in Chicago on May 25th, part of a nationwide release. See local listings for theaters and show times in your area. Featuring Saoirse Ronan, Emily Watson, Billy Howie, Samuel West and Anne-Marie Duff. Screenplay adapted by Ian McEwan, from his novel. Directed by Dominic Cooke. Rated “R”



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Hello Young Lovers: Edward (Billy Howie) and Florence (Saoirse Ronan) in ‘On Chesil Beach’
Photo credit: Bleecker Street Media

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