

Dirty Pretty Things

Director: Stephen Frears
2002 (93')



Dirty Pretty Things is a drama set in 21st Century London. But there are no swinging times here; no martinis, no beautiful people and no escape to the ideal. What we have instead are the little people, the dirty, pretty things who populate our cities and do our dirty not-so-pretty jobs. In an age when the immigrant is more and more unwelcome in Europe this tale is seen through the eyes of Okwe and Senay who have come to Britain to escape from their terrible lives back home. And what they find is no paradise.

Film Review Extracts:

The shadowy world of illegal immigrants living in Britain is dramatically presented in "Dirty Pretty Things," an intelligent and extremely well-made romantic drama that tells an intriguing story with economy and insight. The small-scale film finds director Stephen Frears at the top of his form, and critical support should elevate this to the upper success level of indie distribution in most territories.

David Stratton in Variety It is often said that America is a "melting pot." Judging by director Stephen Frears' unconventional portrait of life in London, the U.K. is just as much a bubbling cauldron as its former colonies. Today, the reality is that every major city across the world is populated by men and women of all different ethnicities and backgrounds. Homogenous populations have become the exclusive province of remote villages and small towns. In many ways, immigrants represent the lifeblood of cities, providing (on the pragmatic side) cheap labor and (on the esoteric side) cultural diversity. After 9/11/01, however, the immigration noose has grown tighter and, for those without the proper papers, avoiding the authorities has become a full-time job.

James Berardinelli in Reelviews.

With asylum seekers in the headlines at the moment the film could hardly be more timely, and its picture of a whole service industry hiding in plain sight will give anyone with a conscience something to ponder. As for Frears, it marks an upward curve on his uneven career path; not always able to pick the right projects, he is here very close to the top of his game, drawing an unusual portrait of London, that "weird city", and from Chiwetel Ejiofor a performance to rank among the very best of the year.

Anthony Quinn in The Independent

Lines from the film:

You're an illegal here, Okwe. You don't have a position here.

You have nothing. You are nothing.

(Guo Yi to Okwe)

For you and I there is only survival.

It's time you woke up from your stupid dream.

(Okwe to Senay)

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