

DRAMA SERIAL
3 x 60 minutes

Written & created by
Victoria Taylor Roberts

MIDLAND GRAND

A grand, ornate staircase with red patterned wallpaper and Gothic-style windows. The staircase is the central focus, with a patterned carpet and ornate railings. The walls are covered in red wallpaper with a repeating gold floral pattern. There are several Gothic-style windows with intricate tracery. The lighting is warm and dramatic, highlighting the architectural details.

Albert was the love of Emmeline's life. Sadly, life had other plans.



After half a century apart, can death finally unite them?

**Towering over Kings Cross at the close of the 19th century,
Midland Grand was London's premier luxury hotel.**





**A century on, its
derelict shell
forms the final
backdrop to the
tale of unfulfilled
love
that spans two
countries,
surviving two
world wars.**

Emmeline's story

Spanning 90 years, this ill-fated love story begins in London, 1912. Staying at the then illustrious Midland Grand Hotel, 12-year-old daughter of a Yorkshire wool exporter, Emmeline Harding, meets Albert Powell for the first time, travelling from France with his father, a wealthy textiles wholesaler. The two children form an instant friendship that is cemented the following summer when Albert's family visit Emmeline's home town.

Upon their next encounter four years later, again at the Midland Grand, Albert and Emmeline's romantic bond is sealed. Despite separation by war and his betrothal to a woman that he gets pregnant whilst fighting in France, Albert and Emmeline vow to meet each year at their treasured hotel. To avoid spinsterhood, Emmeline marries another man but bears Albert's son, raising the child as her husband's.

The illicit lovers' recurring trysts at the hotel span three decades until Albert is killed in an accident on his way to meet her. Emmeline is left to presume that Albert simply never showed up and believes herself to have been forsaken. It is not until several years after the tragic loss of her army officer son and grieving husband, soon after, that Emmeline discovers her beloved Albert had not abandoned her but died trying to reach her. Clinging to the memory of Albert and dreams of being reunited in the afterlife with both her soul mate and their son, the old woman abandons her home and belongings to squat in the now derelict building where she and Albert first met.



Where we meet her...

It is 2002 when Celia, a young writer, who has befriended Miss Harding, follows her into the abandoned building one evening. Returning night after night, Celia records the old woman's confessional as she sifts through treasured photos, reliving decades of passion, deceit and loss.

Satisfied that the memories she has shared with the young writer will be her only legacy, Emmeline feels it is time to let go, certain that, when she passes over, Albert will be waiting.

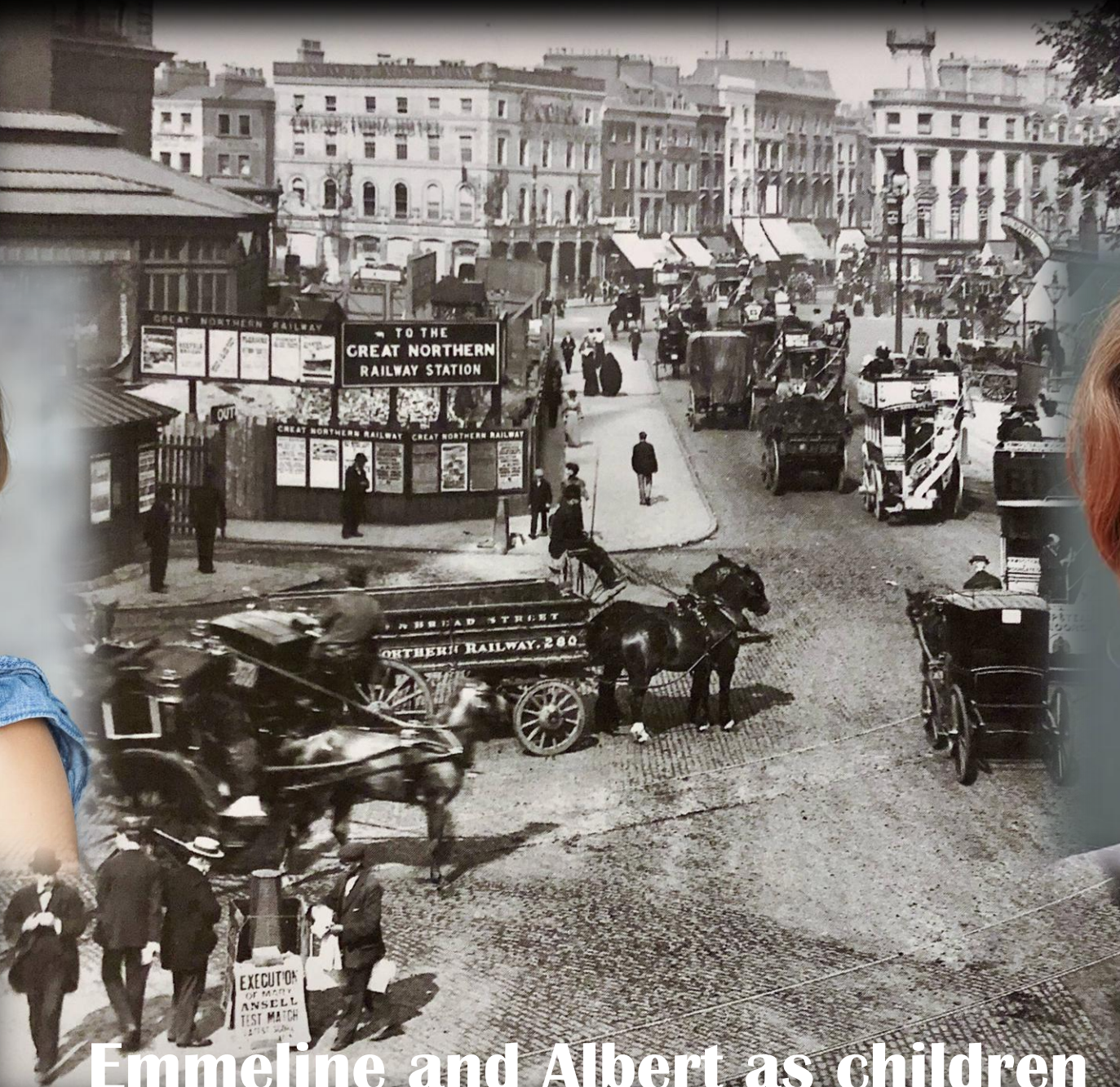
With her first few years in London more of a struggle than she'd hoped, Celia's confidence is low. Publishers aren't picking up her debut novel and ideas for her second have proven elusive. Her love life is no better. Emmeline's mournful tales of missed chances and poor decisions cause Celia to reflect on her own relationship with her coercive boyfriend, Tom. On the night the old woman passes, Celia finds her courage to step away from Tom's lackluster love and into the arms of her colleague and best friend, Nish.

Celia's story





Amelie Bea Smith



Jacobi Jupe

Emmeline and Albert as children

Emmeline and Albert as young lovers



Chloe Stannage



Noah Jupe

Mature Albert and Emmeline – their final decade together



Aidan Turner



Theo James



Sally Vanderpump



Rachel Weisz

Alone – the ageing Emmeline

Although weathered by age and disappointment, there is still a light in Emmeline Harding's eyes – and a fire in her soul. She is an unwitting feminist, having spent her later years fiercely independent, politically vocal woman. Many would think her blunt and dislikeable, but those who understand her quick wit and respect her longevity admire her hugely – Celia being one.

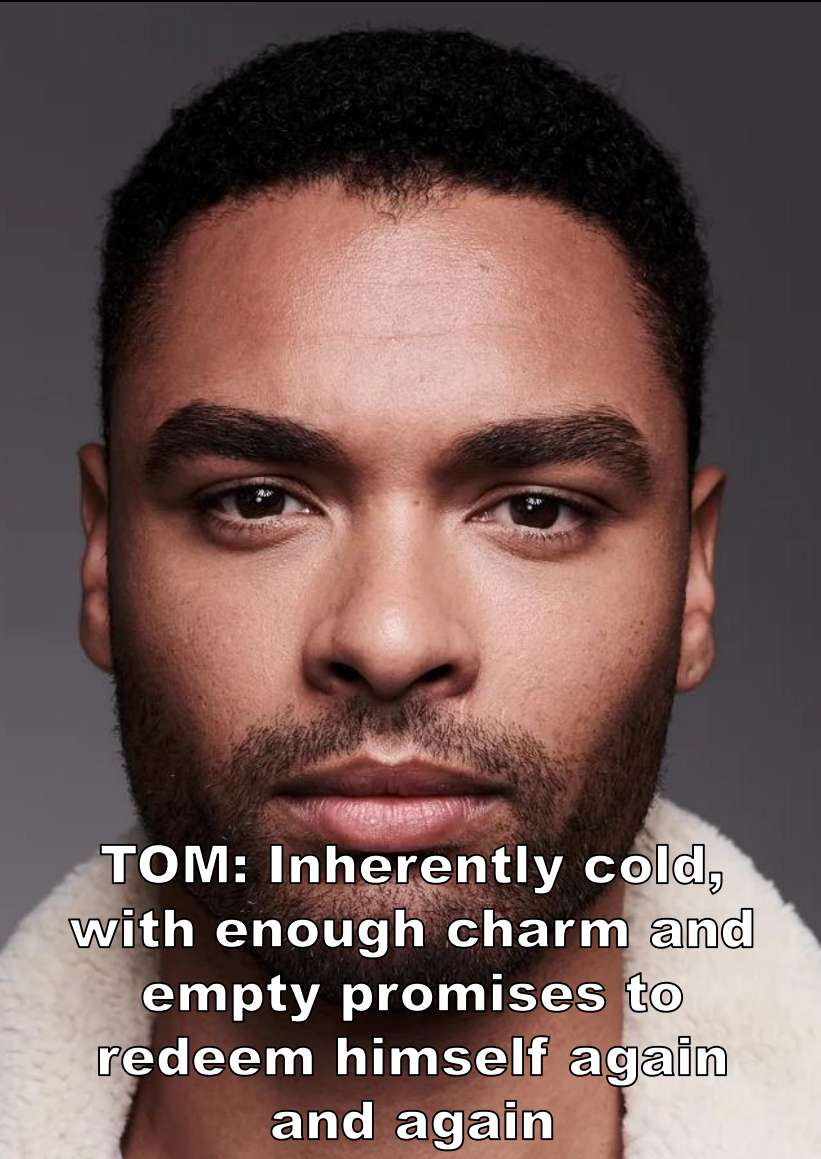


Emma Thompson

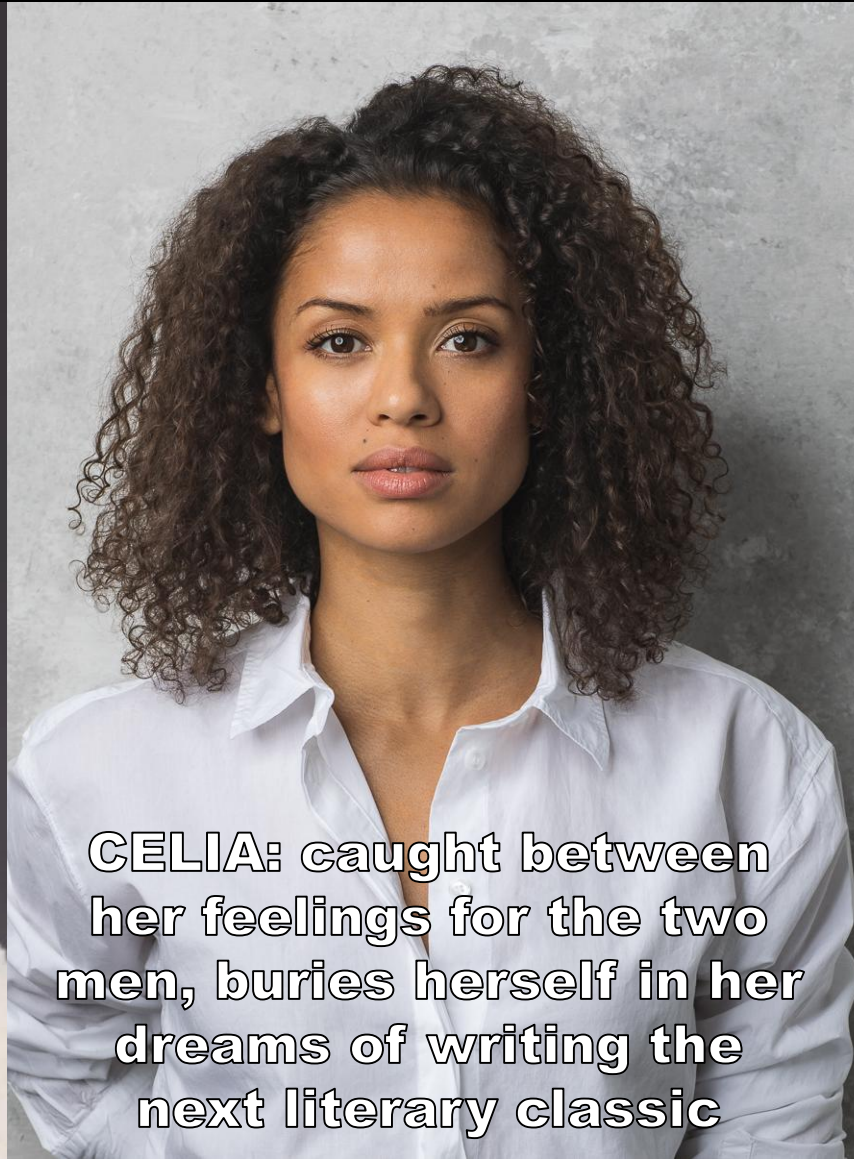


Sally Vanderpump

The present-day love triangle: Celia, her boyfriend and her work colleague



TOM: Inherently cold, with enough charm and empty promises to redeem himself again and again



CELIA: caught between her feelings for the two men, buries herself in her dreams of writing the next literary classic



NISH: Kind but awkward around himself. Lacks confidence in most things but a fountain of knowledge on books

Other Characters



Albert's father,
Augustus Powell

Harding Family: Edward, Dorothy, Charlotte & Edward Junior



Emmeline's
husband, Harry



Episode One...

...opens at the hotel in 1927, on one of Albert and Emmeline's secret rendezvous, from their staged meeting in the lobby to their love-making in one of the rooms. We jump to 2002 and Celia, first, at home with her boyfriend, Tom. Later, colleague, Nish, asks after 'the old homeless lady' Celia has befriended but not seen in weeks. On her journey home, Celia spots the woman sneaking into an abandoned building (the once Midland Grand). Celia follows her and, in an upper story room, the two women share tea while Miss Harding relates her first childhood encounter with Albert Powell in 1912. Her tale unfolds with the two young teens' friendship continuing the next year in Emmeline's home town. Flicking between the two women talking in the present and Miss Harding's reliving of the story, we return to the hotel in 1917 as the Harding family gathers for the elder daughter, Charlotte's wedding. Coincidentally, Albert is in London on the premise of business on his father's behalf. Emmeline and Albert's first passionate kiss in one of the hotel bathrooms is soured by his unexplained departure the next morning. Only as the family are about to depart for Yorkshire does Albert return – in uniform as an enlisted soldier, shortly to be shipped out. He and Emmeline share a final moment in secret before her departure and his slipping away, mysteriously eluding two local constables.

Episode Two...

...opens in 1918. Emmeline has gone to London to stay at her aunt's and attend secretarial school. We jump briefly to 2002 with Celia and Miss Harding tells her of the letter that sealed hers and Albert's fate. His brief encounter with a French village girl had left her pregnant and, rather than abandon her, Albert had conceded to marry the girl. Miss Harding tells Celia that, a year later, she received a letter from him begging her to meet him at the hotel. We are transported back to their meeting and, despite everything that stands between them, the two begin their affair. Celia goes to a party with Nish where, drunk, he reveals his feelings for her. On her return home it's clear that Tom has slept with someone in their bed.

On her next visit to Miss Harding, Celia learns of the old woman's work with the suffragists and meeting her husband, Harry Mitchum. We move between past and present, the succession of illicit meetings narrated by the old woman. She admits letting Harry, now her husband, believe that the boy she conceived with Albert was actually his. After Robert dies in WW2, Harry takes to drinking and dies in a car accident.

Celia is on her way home when she gets a message from Tom saying he's gone out and not to wait up. Bottle of wine in hand, Celia turns up at Nish's house instead.

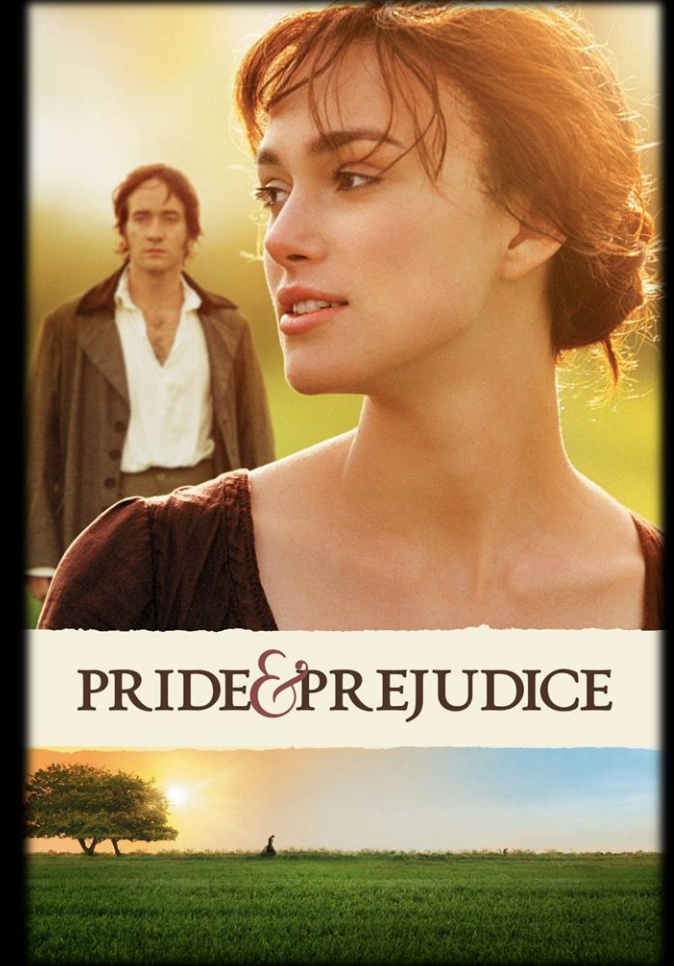
Episode Three...

...opens on Celia, waking up at Nish's, who has spent the night on the couch. She picks up a birthday present for Miss Harding at the market then runs into Tom with his friends. After making love, he tells her he's going back home to see family, asks her to cover his rent and reveals that he'll be travelling with the friend Celia suspects he's sleeping with.

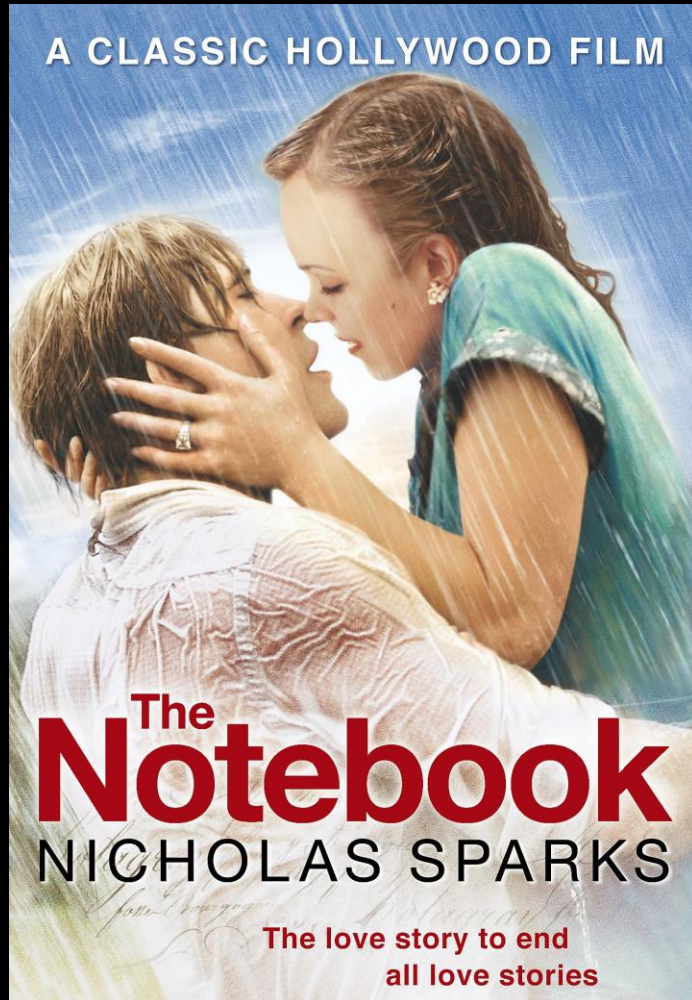
Back at the abandoned hotel, Celia overhears developers discussing the building's refurbishment. Finding Miss Harding, she gives her the present (a vintage set of hat and gloves in a hat box). They talk about Celia's dilemma with Tom and Nish, then the old woman relives her final meeting with Albert and learning through a letter from his aunt in Bath that he had died on his way to her the following year. Miss Harding explains her ongoing ties to the building, finding work there through its various incarnations, first as a typist and then a cleaner. Whilst there, Celia gets a call from Tom who is clearly sleeping with the girl he claims is just a friend.

With some urging from Emmeline, Celia's mind is decided; she heads out to meet Nish nearby but returns after leaving her mobile. Emmeline appears to be asleep when she retrieves the phone but as Celia departs, she hears a man's voice calling Emmeline. Our last image is a young Albert and Emmeline through the hazy glass windows, in the dining room as it once was, dancing to a string quartet.

What does Midland Grand's yesteryear feel like?



Whilst its contemporary plot line bring us...



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