

MASTERPIECE

Enter the dollhouse of mystery

The Miniaturist

**Anya Taylor-Joy, Romola Garai and Alex Hassell
star in an adaptation of Jessie Burton's gripping bestseller
on MASTERPIECE**

Sundays, September 9 - 23, 2018 on PBS

Golden Age Amsterdam comes alive in all its opulence and repressed sensuality in an adaptation of Jessie Burton's bestselling novel *The Miniaturist*, starring Anya Taylor-Joy (*Split*, *The Witch*), Romola Garai (*Churchill's Secret*, *The Hour*) and Alex Hassell (*Genius: Picasso*, *Suburbicon*). Gorgeously filmed on location in The Netherlands and the U.K., the three-part drama airs Sundays, September 9 - 23 at 9pm ET on MASTERPIECE on PBS.

Taylor-Joy plays a young bride who receives mysterious packages from a reclusive maker of miniatures—tiny objects that appear to predict the future. *The Miniaturist* also features Paapa Essiedu (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Utopia*), Hayley Squires (*I, Daniel Blake*; *Call the Midwife*) and Emily Berrington (*Humans*, *The Inbetweeners 2*).

Critics were captivated when the miniseries recently aired in the U.K. *The Telegraph* (London) applauded it as “an evocative, spellbinding drama big on atmosphere,” and in another review compared the production to “a Daphne Du Maurier potboiler as painted by Vermeer.” *The Guardian* (London) praised *The Miniaturist* as “mesmerizing.”

Set in 1686, when the Dutch Republic was one of the world's richest and religiously zealous nations, *The Miniaturist* captures the paradox of extreme wealth combined with puritanical abhorrence of the pleasure that riches make possible.

Petronella Oortman (Taylor-Joy), called Nella, is the unwitting victim of this clash of values. A naïve eighteen-year-old from a bankrupt aristocratic family in the provinces, she is wooed by Johannes Brandt (Hassell), a handsome and prosperous merchant looking for a wife. The two wed, but he dispenses with nuptial intimacies to depart immediately on a business trip, arranging for her to join him at his mansion in Amsterdam a few weeks later.

When Nella arrives, Johannes is still away, leaving her in the care of his grim and overbearing sister, Marin (Garai), and the household's two controlling servants: the housekeeper Cornelia (Squires) and Otto (Essiedu), a former slave who was freed by Johannes. So begins Nella's virtual imprisonment in the residence where she had expected to be in charge.

After Johannes returns, he remains emotionally cool to Nella, giving evasive reasons. Nonetheless, he shows his affection by presenting her with a singular wedding gift: an exquisitely crafted cutaway model of the very house where she is now living, and he instructs her to furnish it as she likes by calling on the services of one of the local makers of miniature objects—a miniaturist. With nothing else to do, Nella embraces this odd amusement.

The miniaturist that Nella selects (Berrington) communicates only by letter and with the first order includes items that Nella didn't request: a tiny cradle, a replica of Johannes' dog and a miniature upholstered chair exactly like the one where Nella is sitting as she unwraps the package. Without direction, the miniaturist keeps sending new creations, including dolls replicating Johannes, Marin, Cornelia, Otto, and others, with details that hint at closely held secrets.

Amsterdam is a city full of secrets, which Nella proceeds to unlock thanks to clues from her unseen artisan. In a community where authorities regard sugar as sinful, gingerbread men as idolatrous, and certain sexual behaviors as grounds for execution, secrecy can be a life-or-death matter.

Published to wide acclaim in 2014, *The Miniaturist* is Jessie Burton's debut novel, inspired by her visits to the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, where an elaborate 17th-century dollhouse is on display. One can't help but admire the artistry of this antique cabinet—and wonder at the hidden obsessions, incidents, and secrets that spawned its creation.

The Miniaturist is a Forge production for the BBC co-produced with MASTERPIECE. Adapted by John Brownlow and directed by Guillem Morales, Gethin Scourfield is the producer. The executive producers are Kate Sinclair and George Faber for The Forge, Elizabeth Kilgarriff for the BBC and Rebecca Eaton for MASTERPIECE. Filming took place in both Holland and the U.K. It is distributed internationally by all3media.

About MASTERPIECE

Winner of 86 Primetime Emmys® and 16 Peabody Awards, MASTERPIECE has been essential Sunday night viewing for millions of fans since 1971. Rebecca Eaton is the executive producer of the series. Funding for MASTERPIECE is provided by Viking and Farmers Insurance® with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. Presented on PBS by WGBH Boston, MASTERPIECE is known for recent hits such as *Sherlock*, *Downton Abbey* and *Victoria*, and beloved classics such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga* and *Poldark*.

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