

Agnes Browne

Agnes Browne is Anjelica Huston's valentine to a little bit o' the old sod-- and a sweet one 'tis. Huston, who directed and stars as the eponymous heroine, plays a recently widowed Dublin woman who, in 1967, must keep her life and that of her seven children together. She does it by selling fruits and vegetables on Market Street, bolstered in her grief and diverted from her money troubles by her fellow vendors, especially best friend Marion Monk (Marion O'Dwyer). There are trials brought on by a loan shark and a hint of romance from a French baker, while Agnes' greatest dream is of attending a Tom Jones concert.

Sentimental, yes; a treacly denouement, for sure; a put-upon *hausfrau* who looks way too much like a movie star, OK, OK--these are all valid critiques of *Agnes Browne*. Yet overall, the film works because of the charisma of its star (who, born in Ireland of father John Huston, has an impeccable accent) and the genuine humanity of the story. The essence of that story is the wonderful rapport and easy humor between the two women, and it is heartwarming to watch Huston and Monk pull it off. Their interplay is the chief reason to see the movie.

(March 2000)