



Millions

98 minutes, 2004, UK

Director: Danny Boyle

Screenwriter: Frank Cottrell Boyce

Cast: Alex Etel, Lewis McGibbon, James Nesbit, Daisy Donovan, Christopher Fulford

Synopsis

A fantastical tale of two British brothers and the large sack of cash literally dropped onto them from the sky, is just that--a multi-layered, majestic feast for both the eyes and the mind. Young brothers Anthony and Damian Cunningham, whose initial response to their unexpected fortune is a Robin Hood-esque spree of charity, have only one week to spend their 265,000 British pounds before their nation switches over to the Euro. Though the premise may seem trite or predictable, unexpected details--including Damian's ability to see visions of saints and the recent death of the boys' beloved mother--add complexity to the story. As the 7- and 9-year-old Cunningham brothers, lead actors Alex Etel and Lewis McGibbon prove to be those exceptional child actors who are appealing without being precious and their understated, mature performances

Reviews:

This is a film to show the versatility of some directors and writers. Directed by Danny Boyle ten years after *Shallow Grave* and *Trainspotting* and released in 2004 it won Frank Cottrell Boyce Best Screenplay at British Independent Film Awards and netted £millions at the Box Office.

Films starring children live or die by the performances of said children, and lots of child actors are, sadly, absolutely terrible – stiffly over-elocuted stage school brats. *Millions* is even more demanding in that the central role, Damian, is very young and is on screen about 80% of the time. Thankfully, newcomer Alex Etel is wonderful, completely natural and angelic without being sickening, and he and Lewis McGibbon as Anthony are totally convincing as brothers. Frank Cottrell Boyce knows kids, and his script is marvellous at capturing the odd, and very funny, things they say and do – both Damian's innocent otherworldly quality and Anthony's slick, incongruous, regurgitation of estate agent/accountant patter.

Danny Boyle brings all his experience to bear on what could have seemed like a made-for-tv movie and gives even the most insignificant moments visual flair and interest. In one scene, where Damian moves through his house, rather than tracking him at eye level, the camera peers down from the rafters, following him from room to room. As a schoolboy recounts the story of the robbery, we cut abruptly to the robbery, then back to the kids. Working with cinematographer Anthony Dodd Mantle (*28 Days Later*, *Dogville*), Boyle creates a vibrant colour palate for the film which goes against the 'grim oop north' stereotype – the sky is always a glorious blue, the houses on the new estate cheery with bright paint – even the kids's school uniforms are cheerful primary colours.

The sunny look of the film contributes to the magical atmosphere that is conjured up, but the film does have its darker moments. The Poor Man (Christopher Fulford), one of the robbers who has come looking for his money, is, shot from Damien's perspective, terrifyingly larger than life. It also feels magical, because we're told that it's Christmas, but the film was shot in summer, the grass is Shire-green, the sky is blue, the rape is flowering, no-one wears a scarf, or gloves – this is not grey, blustery England as we know it.