



untouchable

Autumn
Season
2012

Release: 2012

Cert (UK): 15

Runtime: 112 mins

Director: Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano

Cast: François Cluzet, Omar Sy, Audrey Fleurot, Anne Le Ny

This irreverent film about disability has broken box-office records across the world and is the French National Cinema Centre selection as the nation's entry in the 2013 foreign language Oscar race. It has struck a chord with the public perhaps because we live in a time of global crisis, says Eric Toledano, who wrote and directed *Untouchable* with Olivier Nakache. He says that the film redefines our heroic image, from yesterday's "superhero" to "two simple people who can accept the fragility of their lives". He adds: "We just tried to make love with this story ... the humour saves these two people. It's a kind of British humour. The British can joke about everything, even misery."



In France *Les Intouchables*, as it is known there, is the second-highest-grossing domestically produced film of all time and one of its stars, Omar Sy, beat *The Artist's* Jean Dujardin to the 2012 César award for best actor. François Cluzet, perhaps best known here for the muscular thriller *Tell No One*, plays Philippe, an eccentric Parisian millionaire and quadriplegic. Tired of being surrounded by be-cardiganed milquetoasts, he advertises for a new live-in carer and hires Driss (Sy), a strapping black immigrant from a broken home in the banlieues who only applied for the post to keep the benefits office sweet. Almost instantly, the two men strike up a mischievous camaraderie.

Inevitably much of the humour is built on stereotypes, and one sequence, in which the servant boogies to *Earth, Wind & Fire* while his master looks on approvingly, has caused disgruntlement in some quarters. (One normally even-tempered American critic furiously characterised Driss as a "performing monkey".) But *Untouchable* is not really a film about race, or disability, or anything other than friendship: my (perhaps generous) reading of this scene is an older man who cannot dance looking first enviously, and then joyously, at a younger man who can.

We hope you enjoy the film.