



ILO ILO

**Autumn
Season
2014**

Release: 2013
Cert (UK): 12A
Language: English
Runtime: 99 mins
Director: Anthony Chen
Writer: Anthony Chen
Cinematographer: Benoit Soler
Cast: Yann Yann Yeo, Tian Wen Chen, Angeli Bayani



Ilo Ilo tells a deceptively simple story with a lot of care and heart. The film is roughly set in the middle of the Asian financial crisis of 1997. It tells of a friendship which grows between a young and rebellious boy who has just lost his beloved grandfather and his maid who arrives from Philippines to help his pregnant mother with her hectic

schedule.

Ilo Ilo demonstrates that the role of a nanny and domestic servant is very special. The tightrope that both employer and employee walk in balancing "you are a paid servant" with "you are a part of the family" can be so tight and the casualties so subtle that we don't notice the injuries until much later. The director says the film was based on his personal experiences and how he felt that it's very cruel for parents to allow maids to become like surrogate mothers and suddenly sack the maid for some inexplicable reason. This can be a huge emotional trauma for the child who is unable to appreciate the reasons. Ilo Ilo frames a thought-provoking argument for considering the human cost to everyone involved in this situation.

One reason to watch the end credits is to see the photographs of the actress who plays the pregnant mother with her child. Her actual pregnancy was built into the film and she gave birth shortly after its completion. One other lovely touch is that following the success of the film, Anthony Chen – the film's writer, producer and director - was driven to re-establish contact with the Filipino nanny who had looked after him during the time the film is set and who inspired much of the storyline.