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# Summer

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**83 minutes, 2008, UK**

**Director** Kenneth Glenaan

**Cast:** Rachael Blake, Robert Carlyle, Steve Evets, Michael Socha

Scottish Bafta Awards 2008 for Best Director and Best Feature Film

## Synopsis

Shaun and Daz are vibrant kids, wasted by their experience of education. All they have is their friendship and for Shaun his first love Katy. From the moment Shaun steps into our world he is bound to lose. Years later, Daz's imminent death forces Shaun to go on a journey to confront his past. This is the story of a man full of intelligence and promise struggling to reclaim his life.

## Review: Neil Smith, Channel 4 film

Three former school friends reunite in rueful middle age in a low-key British drama from director Kenny Glenaan, featuring Robert Carlyle. Whether saving London in *Flood*, battling zombies in *28 Weeks Later...* or fighting African warlords in *24: Redemption*, Robert Carlyle is no stranger to big-budget spectacle. Given the choice, though, you suspect he'd always opt for small-scale indigenous filmmaking over the expensive Hollywood variety.

No surprise, then, to see him in *Summer*, a gentle piece from fellow Scot Kenneth Glenaan that saw him win the Best Actor prize at the 2008 Edinburgh International Film Festival. Set and shot in the economically disadvantaged mining town of Bolsover in Derbyshire, this story of two friends inextricably linked by a childhood tragedy almost consciously harks back to *Riff-Raff* from 1990, *The Full Monty* from 1997 and the rest of the modest, socially aware British films on which the *Trainspotting* star built his career and reputation.

Shaun (Carlyle) spends his nights working at a petrol station and his days caring for Daz (Evets), a childhood friend now confined to a wheelchair. When Daz is given eight weeks to live, the news compels Shaun to confront his difficult, dyslexic childhood, his part in his friend's crippling injury and his youthful romance with the beautiful Katy (Blake), now a solicitor in nearby Sheffield. By facing up to the mistakes he made in the past, can he build himself a better future?

With nine different leads spread across three separate time frames, Glenaan - director of the well-regarded TV movies 'Yasmin' and 'Gas Attack' - certainly hasn't made it easy for himself. By keeping the nature of Shaun's guilt such a dark secret, meanwhile, he risks a certain amount of bathos when the precise circumstances of his life-changing event are revealed.

In the end, then, it's left to the actors to give *Summer* the poetry, emotion and resonance it undoubtedly has. Carlyle and Evets make an enjoyable, Beckettian double-act, while Rachael Blake - the English-born, Australian-raised star of *Lantana* and TV's 'Clapham Junction' - makes the most of her few present-day scenes. There's also not a bad apple in any of the unknowns plucked from obscurity to play their younger selves