



UK

Cert 15

120 minutes

Director	Danny Boyle
Co-director	Loveleen Tandan
Director of Photography	Anthony Dod Mantle
Composer	A R Rahman
Editor	Chris Dikcens
Sound editor	Tom Sayers

Cast:	<i>Jamal Malik</i>	Dev Patel	<i>Police Inspector</i>	Irfan Khan
	<i>Adele</i>	Mia Drake	<i>Salim</i>	Madhur Mittal
	<i>Latika</i>	Freida Pinto	<i>Security Officer</i>	Imran Hasnee
	<i>Prem Kumar</i>	Anil Kapoor	<i>Newscaster</i>	Anand Tiwari

Judging from the above poster and overall coverage of the film, one could be forgiven for not spotting that the film was awarded a certificate 15 as it features orphans, organised crime, poverty, enslavement and violence in its crowd-pleasing repertoire of suffering and renewal.

In America it was awarded an R certificate which meant that any teenager could only see the film if accompanied by an adult. Despite that restriction, the film's taking at the North American box office at the end of March 2009 was \$139,341,484.

Thankfully it is a movie that is both harrowing and touching without going over the top on both whilst bring India to life, and audiences and the film which won a total of 92 awards, including 8 Oscars.

The script by British screenwriter Simon Beaufoy, best known for *The Full Monty*, was based on a novel by Vikas Swarup called "Q and A", and he did make a number of changes, including the name of the protagonist.



It's a testament to Danny Boyle's skills as a director that in setting a film in a sprawling metropolis such as Mumbai he doesn't dilute its devastating poverty or fall into the trap of romanticising the life of the underprivileged like the worst kind of cultural tourist. Nor does he wallow in depravation in a solemn attempt to empathise with his characters. Instead he does something much smarter and more ambitious: he lets the energy and vibrancy of the city infuse the film with a kind of chaotic splendour that not only drops us right into the action but ensures that any uplift is hard-earned. It's an underdog story with bite, which is always the most

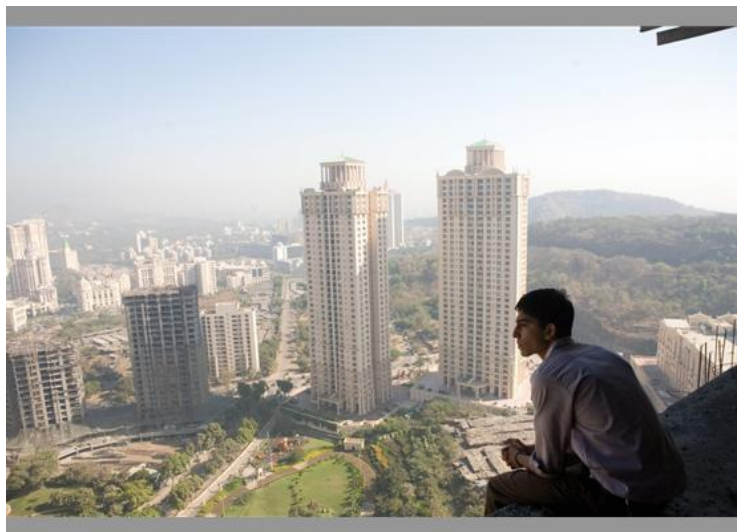
satisfying kind.

Through Jamal's experiences, we see a panorama of a vibrant India undergoing traumatic changes. Everything is here, from the slums and brothels to the booming call centres and palatial homes of the super-rich. The transformation of Mumbai, where slums are being razed to make way for skyscrapers and luxury homes,

The film's Dickensian hero is Jamal (played by British actor Dev Patel who starred in Channel 4's teen based drama *Skins*), a kid from the slums who now works as a lowly tea boy (or chai-wallah) for a mobile phone company call centre.

Unfolding with a perfectly judged pace that balances forward momentum with the ability to elaborate and enhance our understanding of the main characters and what motivates them, the film has a strong undercurrent of social commentary and insight that only adds some grit to the more fairytale qualities of the story.

As moments of misery are leavened by moments of comedy, and Anthony Dodd Mantel's stunning cinematography (one of his previous films was *The Last King of Scotland* which we have shown) bounces from gutter grittiness to Bollywood-style frivolity, the film manages to be both thrillingly modern and comfortably old-fashioned, allowing us to accept some of its clunkier plot contrivances and go with the frantic flow.



Incidentally, the promotional material for the film included a tag line which read:

"What does it take to find a lost love? A. Money B. Luck C. Smarts D. Destiny"

which highlights the fact that it was co-produced by the film branch of Celador, the company that became famous for creating *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* One could argue therefore that the film is one of the biggest examples of product placement in recent history!

Mr Iain McGlashan