

# Summer

I2A UK / Germany 2008 82 min

## Crew

Director	Kenny Glenaan
Screenplay	Hugh Ellis
Cinematography	Tony Slater- Ling
Editor	Kristina Hetherington
Production Designer	Jane Levick

## Cast

Shaun	Robert Carlyle
Daz	Steve Evets
Katy	Rachel Blake
teen Shaun	Sean Kelly
teen Daz	Jo Doherty
teen Katy	Joanna Tulej
Janice	Kate Dickie
Mr Turner	George Costigan

## Synopsis

*Derbyshire, the present. Shaun is a permanent carer for his old schoolfriend Daz. He thinks back to a summer in the 1980s when everything changed in their lives, and to his first love Katy, who moved away to become a solicitor in Sheffield.*

*As kids, Shaun and Daz were inseparable, skipping school, racing bikes, knocking about down by the lake with Katy. Full of life, Shaun came up against an education system that couldn't contain him. He was squeezed and eventually spat out, taking Daz down with him as he self-destructed.*

*Twenty years later, Daz is in a wheelchair and has eight weeks to live. Shaun is left to reflect on one gilded summer of love, sex and loyalty that marked the end of his innocence. His memories lead him to track down Katy, to inform her of Daz's worsening condition and in a bid for personal redemption.*

*This is a story of bright lives unfulfilled, of hopes that are snuffed out and then, finally, rekindled.*



## Review

The plot of *Summer* sounds like it's going to be an overly worthy yawn-fest - oh, look, it's Robert Carlyle being a working class hero again, looking after his crippled, dying, alcoholic friend. Mourning the passing of his youth and the way that love slipped through his fingers. Great. However, the brilliant performances from all involved manage to elevate this into one of the most powerful films of the year.

Shaun and Daz are the village bad boys and have been best friends forever, through thick and thin. As children they tear around on bikes and continually get themselves into trouble, usually with Katy, Shaun's girlfriend, in tow. What follows is the story of their lives together and, later, apart, focusing on crippled Darren's terminal cirrhosis, told through Shaun's eyes with flashbacks to better, younger times, explaining exactly why Shaun is so devoted to his dying pal. It's a simple tale of loss and regret for a life that's been frittered away, but is filled with excellent natural performances from all the leads, especially from Carlyle who gives his best performance since *Trainspotting*.

*Summer* is set in three time periods of Shaun's life - the innocent childhood of riding bikes and scraping knees, the adolescence spent drinking cider and stealing kisses in the woods, and the comedown of a thirties spent as an ex-alcoholic carer. They're inter-woven in such a way that the true reason for the strength of the bonds between the central characters remains hidden until near the end, a secret that makes the film exceptionally compelling. It also allows plenty of time for the characters' relationships past and present to be fully examined and understood - making the conclusion's emotional payload all the more affecting.

The plot is as gritty as real life - there are no punches pulled and no implausible reconciliations here, simply people acting as they do in the world. Favourable comparisons can be drawn to the films of Ken Loach and Shane Meadows; this falls somewhere between them in tone - it's bleaker than *This Is England*, less depressing than *Sweet Sixteen* - but easily as good. This film further cements Kenny Glenaan as one of the best young British directors working today - *Summer* is sublime.

**George Williamson, [www.eyeforfilm.co.uk](http://www.eyeforfilm.co.uk)**

Here's a well-directed British film, with glorious cinematography and some excellent acting, but which is severely hampered by a downbeat script which seems to think it is saying a lot but in fact says nothing at all. The whole thing plays out like a sub-standard mix of Shane Meadows and Pawel Pawlikowski. ...quite what the point of it all is is unclear. It fails as a social commentary, with its black and white and rather naïve attempts to blame Shaun and Daz's problems on the failures of their schooling. As a drama its ponderous tone is certainly weighty but never all that powerful. Some audience members are likely to find all of this very moving, but for most it will be slight at least.

**taken from a review by Paul Hurley, [www.tiscali.co.uk](http://www.tiscali.co.uk)**