

The Angels' Share

Great Britain, France, Belgium, Italy 2012, 97 min.

German certification: minimum age 12,
recommended for 14 years and older

Director	Ken Loach
Script	Paul Laverty
Cinematography	Robbie Ryan
Editing	Jonathan Morris
Music	George Fenton
Featuring	Paul Brannigan, John Henshaw, William Ruane, Gary Maitland, Jasmin Riggins and others

What THE ANGELS' SHARE is about

Robbie is on trial in Glasgow for brutally beating up a young man, Mo has stolen a parrot, Albert has been caught staggering around blind drunk in a railway station, and Rhino has urinated on a monument. All of them get off lightly: instead of a prison term, they are sentenced to community service, to be carried out under the supervision of Harry, a good-natured whisky connoisseur. When they learn, on a trip to Edinburgh with Harry, that a barrel of the best and most expensive whisky in the world has been found in a small Scottish distillery, Robbie, Mo, Albert and Rhino devise a plan. They want to steal four bottles of the precious drink – and then use it to pave their way to a new life. To make themselves as inconspicuous as possible, they set out for the Highlands in disguise: in kilts.

With great sympathy for his protagonists, Ken Loach tells a story about four social outsiders which is both humorous and serious. He achieves this without any hint of exaggeration, making their weaknesses clear, but showing at the same time that it would be wrong to give up on them because of these. Lastly, Loach depicts the trip to the Highlands partly as a confrontation with Scottish tradition and culture. The fondness for whisky, traditional kilts, the Highlands, a hit by a Scottish band, and even a clan feud lasting for generations – all this can be found in THE ANGELS' SHARE, although Loach ultimately takes pleasure in ironizing these clichés.

The following worksheets deal with

- Ken Loach's typical style, focusing on people from the working classes and depicting their problems
- the mixture of genres: social drama, comedy and caper/heist movie
- the way the characters' relationship with traditions and Scottish culture is presented, and the way the film plays with clichés

Publishing information

Publisher:
AG Kino – Gilde deutscher Filmkunsttheater
Rankestraße 31
10789 Berlin

Author:
Stefan Stiletto
stiletto@filme-schoener-sehen.de

Photo credits:
Prokino

(All the stills are from the DVD THE ANGELS' SHARE, released in Germany by Prokino. They serve as image quotations, to enable study of the film's content, and not as illustrations.)

Ken Loach

Director Ken Loach is known for his warm-hearted, serious social dramas, which always focus on people from the working classes and their problems. Loach has great sympathy for his outsider characters, and often casts amateurs in his roles. He also achieves authenticity and immediacy by dispensing with elaborate tracking shots and staging: natural light and a hand-held camera give his films a life-like feel.

To what extent can these characteristics also be found in THE ANGELS' SHARE? Give examples.

Outsider characters	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
People from the working classes and their problems	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Realistic presentation	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Fact and fiction

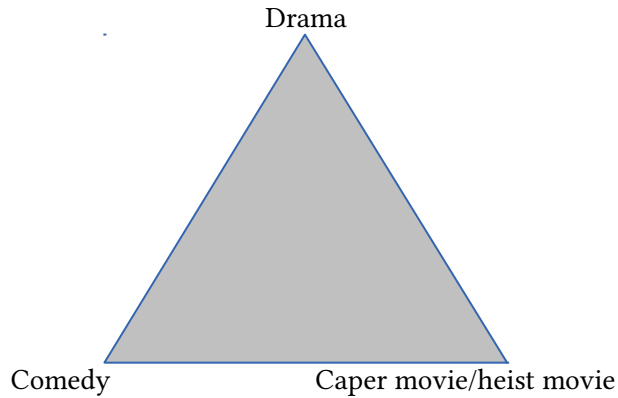
THE ANGELS' SHARE was Paul Brannigan's first appearance on camera. He plays the part of Robbie.

Search for interviews with Paul Brannigan on the Internet, and make notes on the similarities between his life and his role in THE ANGELS' SHARE.

Find out about Paul Brannigan's film career. Compare the parts he has played since then with his role in THE ANGELS' SHARE.

Between drama, comedy and caper movie/heist movie

THE ANGELS' SHARE combines elements of drama, comedy, and the caper movie or heist movie. Identify scenes from the film that exemplify each of these elements.



<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------------	-------------------------

The director's attitude

Describe the attitude Ken Loach takes towards his characters in THE ANGELS' SHARE. Also describe what you believe to be the central message of the film.

Culture and tradition

Robbie, Mo, Albert and Rhino set out for a whisky presentation with Harry. In Edinburgh the following dialogue takes place.

ALBERT

What is that?

MO

What's he talking about?

HARRY

I don't know.

ALBERT

That there. What is that?

HARRY

That big thing on top of the hill?

ALBERT

You can't miss that. What is that?

RHINO

That's Edinburgh Castle, Albert.

ALBERT

Is it? What did they put it up there for?

HARRY

Are you taking the piss?

ALBERT

No, why did they put it up there?

RHINO

Why did they put it up... How the fuck do I know?

HARRY

You don't recognise Edinburgh Castle?

ALBERT

No. I wouldn't have been asking you.

HARRY

Have you been living your life in a cupboard or what? Is there no shortbread in your house? Next time you go home, check all the tins.

Use this piece of dialogue to discuss what relationship the different characters have to Scottish culture and tradition. Also talk about what attitude the director is humorously criticising here.

Cliché and irony

Describe what clichés about Scotland are being shown, and ironically overturned, in the following stills from THE ANGELS' SHARE.



1



2

What do you think is typical of Scotland as a setting? List examples from the areas of clothing, food and drink, places and regions, music and history.

clothing	
food and drink	
places and regions	
music	
history	

Discuss what part these play in the plot of THE ANGELS' SHARE, and how Ken Loach simultaneously confirms and lampoons them.