

Slumdog Millionaire

Charisma editor picks best movie of the year! *Slumdog Millionaire*, which was nominated in 10 categories, won eight Oscars, including Best Picture and Best Director. Below is J. Lee Grady's review of this rags-to-riches story.



Fox Searchlight Pictures

Directed by Danny Boyle

Rated R for some language and scenes of violence

It's not a Christian film, but *Slumdog Millionaire* gets my vote for the best movie of 2008 because it deals so honestly with the issue of exploited children.

Set in modern India, it is the story of Jamal (Dev Patel), a low-caste boy raised in the slums of Mumbai amid religious violence and cruel poverty. Orphaned and with little schooling, Jamal and his brother eke out an existence by begging in the streets, riding on top of trains and giving bogus tours of the Taj Mahal to naive tourists.

Amid this chaos, Jamal learns a few seemingly trivial things about his world—from who starred in India's biggest movies to who is pictured on an American \$100 bill. These facts come in handy when Jamal, at age 20, ends up an unlikely contestant on India's version of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*. He competes not to become rich but to find Latika (Freida Pinto), his childhood sweetheart who has been abducted by an Indian mafia boss.

Through flashbacks, we learn how this kid at the bottom of society learned the answers to a game that changes his life forever. Was it just coincidence—or destiny? The film is

painful to watch at times, but American audiences need to be reminded that children in developing nations are beaten, enslaved and even blinded with acid by their slave owners. The moving climax of *Slumdog Millionaire* will have you cheering in the aisles.

The film is in English and some Hindi with subtitles. It already won the Golden Globe award for Best Picture, and last weekend 8 Academy Awards including Best Picture, Best Director (Danny Boyle), best adapted screenplay (Simon Beaufoy) and best original song and musical score. (Don't leave the theatre before watching the closing credits—which offer a musical surprise.)

This review was published in January in Charisma's Buzz e-newsletter. Slumdog Millionaire went on to win the Oscar for Best Picture on Feb. 22. You can subscribe to The Buzz from Charisma by clicking here.