

Member and guest feedback for *Small Things Like These*

Absolutely loved this film with its powerful depiction of an adult so immersed in his own childhood, that he is barely present in his life with his wife and five daughters.

An understated yet heart-rending film. Excellent cast convey what life must have been like in a small town in Ireland in the Eighties. A more subtle treatment of the same theme as The Magdalene Sisters. Ultimately, Bill does not do what everyone else does - pretend it is not happening and keep quiet but very few are like that as those speaking out of turn risk their own income and family's security. Moral questions abound as they did in last season's The Zone of Interest, though of course there the stakes were higher.

Slow-paced but engrossing story depicting community poverty, dignity and the search for justice. Excellent performances, especially Emily Watson as local Magdalene mob-boss, Sister Mary. Another film that definitely benefits from being watched on a big screen - great choice.

The film was a bleak depiction of Eighties Ireland. The parallels between his mother's plight and that of the young girls in the laundries was staggering. Doing the right thing but at what cost was set out well with the wife and then in turn the landlady. Strong women themselves keeping their head well below the parapet. Excellent film but could have done with some light to contrast the suffocating shade.

Shot in the dark too much. The cold of Christmas got through to me as I watched in horror the nun's goings on with regard to Sarah and the coal hole. What a nice dad - too nice - as his wife had to stop him raising the issues as they needed to have their daughters enrolled in the best school and who runs that ... the nuns of course.

A thoughtful, moving film. I would have given it an Excellent if the dialogue had been more audible!

Not an easy film to watch, apart from the subject matter I found the incessant gloom and mumbled dialogue proved very testing just to follow what was going on (please can we have subtitles even for English language films?!). Having forgotten what the film was about, the slow reveal through the eyes of Bill was very effective, if a little too slow and drawn out, although I was confused by his mother's graveside scene which I thought had the name of the young girl on it?? Most shocking was the hold which the nuns and the Church had on society. So much so that veiled threats and bribes employed by the Mother Superior (excellently played) were sufficient to keep all questions and prying eyes away from the abuse of women by women. We were left with the implied question of what we, the viewer would have done. How many of us would have been as brave as Bill in his actions, at the cost to his family and reputation? An excellent choice of film - I have now ordered the book from the library!

Cillian Murphy doesn't speak many words in his role for this film but says it all with his expressions and demeanour. In some ways, he has a small, simple and good existence with his work and home life on repeat. But he can't sleep knowing what he knows. In the end, he is not silent. And what a beautiful small thing that is.

I had read the book and thought the film OK but not brilliant. For me it's just about a 2.5, so a reluctant OK. I really wasn't that impressed.

My husband is more generous but then because he is deaf and even though he wore his hearing aids, the sound was so muffled and perhaps accented that he found it hard to work out what was going on. Because of that it only gets an OK.

Story told sensitively and slowly but I had enjoyed the book more. Tea with the Reverend Mother a real highlight.

Sound was a bit 'Jamaican Inn' like; muzzled and sometimes hard to understand. Liked the cinematography yet still a bit puzzled about the connection between the lead character's mother and the nunnery henceforth the storyline felt a bit disconnected.

A film that really leans into what's unspoken: people's shame, fear, complicity and the weight of institutions. It doesn't go for sensationalism but makes me sad and angry against the Church and Irish government. Also follows the book really closely, great film and brilliant book.

*A deeply moving story that unspools steadily, to devastating effect. On the strength of this film and the equally fine *The Quiet Girl*, I shall read more Claire Keegan.*

An almost too subtle film - the long silences, darkness and sometimes unintelligible dialogue didn't make for an easy watch but it was skilfully put together and effective in its storytelling. So much left hanging at the end!

A most definite Excellent.

Powerful and moving with superb acting and beautifully lit to create the mood of despair felt by the main character. Claire Keegan really writes from the heart and her books translate beautifully to the screen.

I would like to give this enjoyable film a score of Excellent. Thanks for all your hard work at the RFS.

Thank you for screening this film. I think it deserved an Excellent. I loved the book by Claire Keegan and was very keen to see how it was adapted by Enda Walsh. The film did not disappoint. Beautifully shot and directed, a masterpiece of exquisite acting by all, with standout performances by Cillian Murphy and Emily Watson, quietly devastating in its impact. I found it very moving, harrowing and truly important.

I so loved the book, the film fell rather flat for me. Cannot take away Cillian Murphy's performance, his face alone told the story! One of inner turmoil swimming against a widespread conspiracy of silence, allowing the scandal of the Magdalene Laundries to go unchecked for years.

Powerful and thought provoking! Cillian Murphy delivers a masterful performance! What a brilliant actor! The film reminded me of *Philomena* as it deals with the same topic i.e. the cruelty of the Irish nuns. I liked the flashbacks to the main character's childhood which allowed us to understand why he felt so strongly about saving the young mum. It made me wonder how his family would react at the end when he brings her home and especially what I would have done in his situation.

Actually, preferred the film to the book.

It was well acted and had strong atmospheric direction. Plus, the photography and setting was excellent. I thought the end was a bit simplistic and abrupt though.

Not being able to hear a word of what's being said rather spoils the enjoyment of the film! Wouldn't you agree? My second complaint is: Why was it necessary to shoot a great many of the scenes in semi-darkness (or with poor lighting)? Trying to imitate a Dutch painting? My third: The storyline - haven't we heard all this before? Bearing the above in mind, what would your rating be?

I found the plot a bit muddled/confusing in places and couldn't always follow who was who in the flashbacks. But a very good, restrained performance from Cillian Murphy and a brilliantly terrifying one from Emily Watson as the Mother Superior.

Purity and darkness were traits of old Ireland. This film of small things took us to the lands of Wexford, where an iron man goes around with a noisy truck transporting coal and a face and words of a possible saint. Surrendered by the absolute love of his many daughters and wife, he tries with his dirty hands to save a girl interned with soulless nuns. How did the film give to a man the task to break the submission of that side of the Catholic Church? I have Mary Robinson as the first who changed the roles of women in 20th century Ireland. With a man as a hero, the script could have added even more moral darkness with an authority of the Christmas Brothers sorting the schism between coalman and the nuns driving a better car. I perceived quietness in the audience. Perhaps for the sufferings that regularly provides the Irish contaminated committee or for the suspense that a film so slow gave in the end.

I was impressed by the emotional depth of this atmospheric, trenchant film on a vital subject, with its symbolism of the Christlike figure bringing the source of warmth to his community and bearing their burdens on his back. We left him with his crucifixion yet to come.

I sometimes thought there could have been a little more impetus but that might have detracted from the sensitive quality of the film.

I found this film totally engrossing. A thoughtful well-paced production, impeccably acted, if somewhat visually dark. The softness of Bill's character drew me in to his difficult world full of compromises, pain and joy. Whether the girl's rescue was real or imagined was a clever twist at the end. Ultimately, Bill's dilemma is also ours as we watch crimes being perpetrated across the world by those in power, thinking only of preserving wealth or influence.

Interesting how the main actor was almost made a ghost in how he silently observed the poverty and Irish Catholic life and suffering of the times. And his heart felt humanity overcame everything despite his family having very little themselves. I am reminded that in the UK around that time many girls were forced to give up their babies for adoption too.

I enjoyed the themes a lot and the film was very atmospheric but it left me with too many questions. For example, for such a thoughtful man with the childhood he had, was he really not already aware of what was going on inside the convent?

A troubling story well presented in an impressionistic style. Cillian Murphy was amazing, conveying so much while saying so little.

Intense and moving. Very well acted and a different take on a very dark period in Ireland's history.

A dark and foreboding atmosphere was wonderfully captured on film: -the ritual scrubbing of hands on return from work; the busy household of girls congregated round the table every evening. All these sequences conveyed a life of routine and like the record on the record player- continually going round and round in a set groove. These sequences were well done. I felt the film didn't quite hold together in places, especially the flashbacks to childhood of the main character and that the film was not as good as the book.

Small Things Like These is a brilliant film. It was shot imaginatively, fully immersing the viewer in the dark, damp, claustrophobic world of a small Irish town in winter. Cillian Murphy gives a convincing portrayal of a hardworking coal merchant and devoted father facing a difficult moral dilemma. I found the film interesting and absorbing. Thank you RFS.

Quietly devastating. Ironical that the only person showing any Christian charity was not one of its Sisters of Mercy.

Bleak - but so well acted.

Brilliant atmospheric film. Acting so sensitive, conveying cruelty under the guise of religion. The film was so well constructed and led the audience through family life and power of the Church so misguided. Subtle corruption could have led to deeper destruction of the soul. It takes one person to stand up to bullies and show integrity in humanity. Greatly missing in our society today. A question of saving your soul or get sucked into mammon! Thank you for all that you do.

Sorry, this was a complete waste of my life and probably a fair number of other people in the audience too. It was impossible to understand the Wexford accents. I 'got' about one word in ten, which made it difficult to follow the storyline: was that William's father or elder brother? Why did the older lady take him in? What was the conversation with his daughter about? Cillian Murphy was nice eye-candy but the rest of it was hopeless. You do a great job, but the issue of accents has been raised before (Where the crawdads sing or the guy visiting his brother on a ride-on lawnmower - as I remember), please pay attention and include them.

A truly wonderful film. Great acting and great writing and a story that has to be told. Second time I've seen it and I loved it both times.

Of course, the actors were fantastic! Yet another depressing topic. Let's hope there are some uplifting films coming up!

A very dark picture.

A harrowing film but one so many people should watch as that was what happened - nuns always being believed and yet they were cruel and evil. A true picture of parts of Ireland in the Eighties. Thank you.

This is a film that rams home the point that evil prospers when good people do nothing. However, it seemed set in 1965 not 1985 so I wasn't sure that it accurately reflected the time period it sought to represent. Also, was it necessary that it was shot almost entirely in the dark? Finally, much as I love Murphy, he does not look like your local coal man.

Really enjoyed this film. Beautiful and so sad.

An adaptation that did justice to Claire Keegan's excellent novella and her powerful, economic style.

A tender, disturbing, thoughtful film. Very atmospheric with great acting.

A dark, quiet reminder of such a recent, appalling practice. Grateful I was an unwanted baby in London, in a Protestant environment.

I know it had rave reviews but I felt Cillian Murphy was miscast as Bill Furlong. I think an actor with more physical and taciturn presence such as a younger Ciaran Hinds would be more believable. The younger Bill was absolutely charming and it was hard to see a link between him and the older Bill who seemed so downbeat and intense.