

# PLACE DES VICTOIRES

*Original version: French / Subtitles: English*



**Director :** *Yoann Guillouzouic*

**Genre :** *Dramedy*

**Country of origin :** *France*

**With :** *Guillaume De Tonquédec , Piti Puia*

**Length :** 1h 43 min.

**From 16 years up**

## SYNOPSIS

*Place des Victoires (Victorious Square)* is the story of an improbable and life-saving encounter between Bruno, a forty-year-old man marginalized by professional and family setbacks, and Gagic, a little, light-fingered and mischievous street kid. Bruno will slowly resurface, guided by this bright little boy, full of street smarts and poetry.

<https://cineuropa.org/film/380583/>

## REVIEWS

For his first feature film, *Place des Victoires*, Yoann Guillouzouic signs a tender and emotional drama. ( *CNews (translated from French)* )

A touching film about distress on the streets and the difficulty of overcoming it. (*Femme Actuelle (translated from French)*)

There's a bit of *Une époque formidable* in this *Place des Victoires*. Not just because these two films share the actor Richard Bohringer, whom we are happy to see again as a grumpy man with a big heart. (*Première (translated from French)*)

Good feelings permeate this encounter in the form of a double rescue, which makes a nice nod to Charlie Chaplin's *Kid*. (*Télé 7 Jours (translated from French)*)

## DETAILS

### LANGUAGE

Bruno, one of the two main characters, is on a downfall. He is socially isolated, he is unemployed and he is emotionally fragile.

He expresses his frustration with a familiar language with, in French expletives like “Putain!” “Merde” “bordel” that can sometimes be translated over the top with the “F” and the “S” words. Bruno also uses very familiar language bordering on slang like “Casse-toi” [Piss off] “dégage” (get out!), “garde tes merdes” [keep you rubbish], “t’es con” [You’re stupid, dumb].

Gagic also uses that language as well.

However, from his bourgeois background, Bruno also knows how to speak proper French. He encourages Gagic to read in French and explains words to him like “homogeneous” or “harmonious” or “anarchic”.

As described below, there are verbal references to violence.

Some slurs can be noticed in the film:

- When Bruno calls Gagic “Romano” he is referring to the Gypsies in a pejorative way.
- Gagic does like Japanese cuisine nor Chinese food, he strangely turns his hands on each side of his head as to say these people are crazy
- Gagic also laughs at Bruno: “You always cry like a girl” which is a sexist remark

## VIOLENCE

As Bruno is withdrawing money at the bank machine, a group of young children and teenagers proceed to rob him. The scene has no bloodletting, no close-up of tissue damage. It is briefly filmed as it is the trigger of the whole film.

As Gagic is taken away by his Rom family, two Rom teenagers push Bruno away so that he does not try to lure Gagic back to following him.

When Gagic and Bruno go to sell the stolen goods to two men in a garage, their imposing build creates a threatening atmosphere that does not seem to affect Gagic.

Verbally, some characters speak of their experience involving violence in a therapy group dealing with anger and violence management.

Bruno has to attend the group as it is understood that he may have caused domestic violence during a heated argument with his ex-wife to be.

A member of the group stands up to tell how she hit a man on the face as he was bothering her, and how he profusely bled.

## NUDITY

No nudity

## SEXUAL ACTIVITY

None to speak of.

It is alluded that Bruno's young neighbour was a prostitute. She appears from time to time entering her apartment with a different man.

At the near end of the film, she is seen on a stretcher with some blood on the side of her face (no close-up/brief image). The owner of the building tells Bruno she was attacked by one of her customers as she was a prostitute. He had no idea about her activity.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

Bruno is a **destitute man**: because he could not control his anger, he is now deprived of seeing his children and about to divorce from his wife.

His sister and her husband reject him with contempt as they see him as good for nothing and a liar. Bruno had to steal money out of their grandmother's wallet while she was sleeping or perhaps in a coma. As Bruno lost his lucrative job, he can't pay the rent of the downtrodden apartment he lives in.

Gagic is a little boy (11 years and half) who **steals** cell phones and anything he can put his hands on. He lives in a slum near Paris. From the youths he is hanging with, Gagic must have a tough life.

They are both trapped in their **poverty and loneliness**.

The film shows how two down and out people are going to meet and comfort each other.

The film deals then with the themes of **compassion, care and hope**.

When Bruno withdraws his own €60, he takes Gagic to the restaurant and to the movies like a father would.

Gagic gives Bruno all the money he steals.

Paralleling the closeness between Bruno and Gagic, the young neighbour also feels compassion for Bruno. She hands him a Kleenex as she sees him weeping. She tries to comfort him by saying: we always get up.

When Bruno was robbed and left with no money, a man offers him a coffee for his own karma.

However, there is an ethical and moral problem in the film: both characters live from stolen goods and money which is reprehensible.

Although Bruno condemns stealing and lying, he continues living off what Gagic brings him from his robberies, **which can make the film viewers very uncomfortable**.

It is very hard to give a positive spin to Bruno and Gagic's actions: Why does Gagic steal from the bourgeois apartments? Is it for social justice to compensate the have and have not?

The film captures some realistic moments of the life of the hungry and poor people. When Bruno runs after Gagic, he briefly finds himself outside of a Paris soup kitchen.

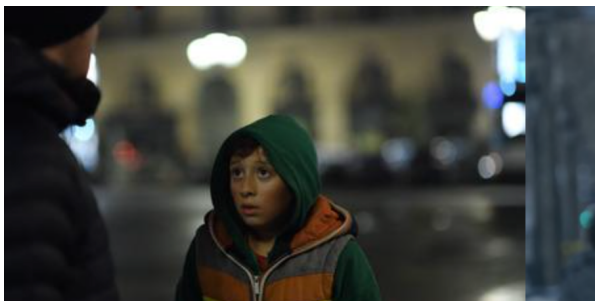
As he waits for Gagic, the camera lingers on a sitting "clochard" [vagrant], smoking a cigarette and about to open a bottle.

Bruno smokes a fair bit in the film. He quickly gives up drinking white wine by emptying a bottle in the kitchen sink.

In spite of the fact that Bruno and Gagic live off stolen money and goods, the film is about compassion, hope and the comfort the two characters bring each other. Bruno is often seen struggling with his emotions and crying.

Gagic gives Bruno the humour and affection he needs to survive. Gagic gets very attached to Bruno.

## FILM PHOTOS



Bruno catches Gagic at the Place des Victoires in Paris



In order to get to the slum where Gagic lives, Bruno and Gagic have to walk through woods



Bruno takes Gagic to a Japanese restaurant for a treat



Gagic and Bruno are selling the stolen goods to Gagic's contacts: two men with an impressive build.



Bruno is counting the money Gagic stole. In spite of the fact that he finds stealing "dangerous" and "disgusting", Bruno still takes advantage of it.



Bruno and Gagic become very close. They are strolling in Paris