

Sometime in August

UK TV : 1990 : dir. John Glenister : BBC Scotland : 70 min
 prod: Norman McCandlish : scr: Bernard MacLaverty : dir.ph.: John McNeill
[Craig Lorimer](#) [d]; [Paul Witherspoon](#); [Alison Calder](#)
 Mary Morris; Jo Cameron Brown; Tom Wilkinson; Elspeth Charlton; John Ramage

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His class is itching...

Source: Radio Times

Radio Times review:

"A new BBC film by Bernard MacLaverty. "Nobody's going to force you to swim." - Neil's beach holiday with the Middleton family turns sour over his refusal to bathe. The situation is resolved by an old woman and a cat."

"When an Edinburgh lad wins a scholarship at a fee-paying school his skin disease causes a rift with his new middle-class friend. But an eccentric old lady persuades him that he shouldn't allow himself to suffer from more than the disease. Two cherishable performances, from young Craig Lorimer making his TV debut and Mary Morris in her final role, light up director John Glenister's film from Bernard (Cal) MacLaverty's tender tale. (BBC film 1990)"

Still Caption:

"Under the skin: Neil (Craig Lorimer) has an embarrassing secret - can Mrs Wan (Mary Morris) help him bring it into the open?"

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Neil lives with his widowed mother, a cinema usherette, in one of the poorer districts of Edinburgh, but has just succeeded in winning a scholarship to a prestigious public school where he'll join best friend Michael (Paul Witherspoon), a doctor's son. Michael's father invites Neil to spend the summer holidays with them at a house they've rented on the coast. Neil is less than overjoyed at the idea, but his social climbing mother leaps at the opportunity on his behalf.

Neil, it transpires, has a nervous skin disorder similar to urticaria, and is deeply ashamed of its unsightliness, so he evades any opportunity for discovery – by being excused games at school, by only undressing when he's alone, and by avoiding swimming.

MacLaverly was evidently using the boy's skin problem as a metaphor for his social discomfiture, moving from a working class to middle class milieu – he carries his poor background with him like a physical stain. One friend suggested a subtler, deeper buried, metaphor – that Neil could be gay, and petrified of social discovery. His reaction to Michael's older sister would in that case read, not as the obvious mild "crush", but as physical unease on a more fundamental level. In either case, the worldly wise Mrs Wan persuades him to let it all hang out, and the film's final freeze shot shows an expression of pure ecstasy as Neil washes his away his guilt in the cool night surf.

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