

THE FANTASTIC THREE
LES TROIS FANTASTIQUES
Original version: French / English subtitles



Director: *Michael Dichter*
Release Date (France): *May 15, 2024*
Genre: *Drama*
Country of origin: *France*
Run Time: 87 minutes

AGE APPROPRIATENESS: OPINIONS

As shown by Allociné website, the press agrees to classify the film:

General public with warning

The film is aimed at teenagers with all precautions taken about language, violence, realism, psychological impact analysed below.

The Children's Film Festival specifies:

Young heroes for children or teenagers, films for everyone

Audience: From 12 years old

SYNOPSIS

East of France, today. Max, a witty and brave 12-year-old, feels like he has two families instead of one. In and after school, he spends all his time with his two best friends Tom and Vivian, who are always there to make life easier for each other. Together, they are The Fantastic Three. His real family on the other hand, is messy, with a depressed single mother and a brother in jail. When Max's brother returns home, more trouble arises. To save his brother from his own downfall, Max drags his friends with him into a seemingly inevitable spiral. (*Imdb*)

LES CRITIQUES

BFF's Charles Bin describes the film as "*Stand By Me* meets *Stranger Things*" and says it "brings back the thrill of early teenage years."

Rebecca Leffler – Screen Daily

It starts in a bucolic way like a film about childhood friends. But things get out of hand and betrayals follow one another until tragedy strikes. Excellent 1st film by DICHTER, premiered at Cannes at the RCC, with a range of amazing young actors. Not to be missed.

Michael H. CLAES – MUBI

Fantastic Three stands out for its focus on friendship and family from the perspective of adolescence. **Michaël Dichter**'s direction, coupled with charming performances and a narrative steeped in nostalgia, delivers a cinematic experience that is both poignant and thoughtful.

It is a film worth watching for its ability to capture the essence of childhood and the importance of emotional connections. Through its warm narrative and endearing characters, the film invites the viewer to reflect on the true meaning of family and the importance of chosen friendships.

Pablo Veiga Carpenter – Cinemagavia (translated from Spanish- Imdb)

DETAILS

LANGUAGE

WARNING: the coarse language in the film fits the protagonists age as well as their social class and the plot

Max, Vivian and Tom are 13 years old. Their colloquial/slang language in French is integral to their age and their milieu. Sometimes the translation does not express the level of language and other times it exaggerates. For example:

« Qui est-ce qui vous a *fumés* aux Olympiades (*battus*)? » - *Who beat you at the Olympiads?*

« Puceau de l'eau » - *swimming virgin*

« Beau gosse » - *handsome kid*

« Qu'est-ce que tu fous encore? » *What are you doing?*

« On s'en fout » *We don't care*

« On emmerde la CPE » *Screw the principal*

« Tu nous casses les couilles avec tes brownies » *You are busting our balls with your brownies*

« Faites pas de conneries! » *Don't screw up!*

- Corentin, Tom's bully, calls the three friends *dickheads* (têtes de bite). He orders them to *shut up* ("Ferme ta gueule") that is heard many times in the film.

In one of his bullying actions in the school dining hall (he pours the content of a chocolate yogurt on Tom's head) Corentin says: Il s'est fait chier dessus - *He shit himself*

« T'as cru que tu allais me niquer comme ça? » *you thought you'd f**k me like that?*

Corentin says to Tom before he seeks revenge.

- The language spoken by the characters is paced by the repetition of the word "putain" that can express a range of different reactions: anger, surprise, ... For example,

« Remets-le putain! » *F**k, put it back!*

« Oh putain, comme il est chiant! » *Oh, Shit pain in the ass*

« Toi non plus putain! » ... *dammit!*

Etc.

- The school principal warns one of the teens not to mess up his school year [« bousiller » son année scolaire (gâcher/compromettre)]

Max and Seb's mother asks Seb to *not give stupid ideas* to Max or *get him into some shit*

« Tu lui mets pas de la merde dans la tête »

- The teens sometimes use the verlan language like when Vivian is teased by his friends for liking Anna.

« Il va la pécho » ...*he'll land her*

- When Seb comes home after being released from prison, the language becomes coarse, vulgar and violent. Here are some examples:

Seb affectionately calls Max *Shithead* - "Merdeux"

Seb gets angry after he shows signs of having been beaten up. He voices his frustration :

« ...Ce fils de pute » *Scumbag/Son of a bitch*

« Je vais enculer sa grand-mère » *I'll get that motherf**ker*

« Trou du cul » *Asshole*
« Il m'a déchiré ce chien » *That bastard got me good*
« Je vais le défoncer » *I'll kick his head in*

VIOLENCE

Violence manifests itself both in language (see above), psychological pressure, actions, and the presence of weapons

PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE: SCHOOL BULLYING

Corentin harasses Tom with all kinds of threats: he ridicules him by calling him "dickhead", belittling him because he doesn't believe in his musical gifts.

He pours on Tom's head the contents of a chocolate yogurt that looks like droppings in front of all the students in the dining hall, which forces Max and Vivian to pour the yogurt on themselves to support their friend. Corentin laughs: "Il s'est fait chier dessus" *He shit himself*

Corentin wants the money the three friends collected and continues to torment Tom by all means.

The supreme humiliation occurs when Corentin forces Tom to undress (strip naked) to film him with his mobile phone and broadcast the images to the whole school.

Corentin's vexation to Tom gets back at him when Tom forces him to undress at gun point with a real gun.

THE ACTS

-The fall from the roof: Max and Vivian who just robbed a man are fleeing to the rooftops, chased by their victim who falls from the roof while chasing them.

No graphic details – the image: the man lying on the ground

-Seb's physical confrontation with Franck: Franck pushes Seb and grabs him by the collar roughly. Once Franck retrieves the bag of drugs and gets into the car to start, Seb grabs a stick...

It looks like Franck is going to run over Seb who gets out of the way and hits the car window on the driver's side. The window shattered without anyone seeing the impact of the blow on Franck.

Violence is an integral part of the story and is not the subject of precise graphic details.

-Max breaks down the door of the hut: he uses a large stone to destroy the padlock.

-The presence of a weapon: the gun

Max grabs his brother Seb's gun to save him from Franck's grip

Tom steals the gun to get revenge on Corentin. He shoots in the air to intimidate him.

The stick is used as a weapon by Seb to attack Franck.

NUDITY

Seb goes to take a shower after being attacked by Franck (off-screen). We see him take off his clothes but only the top of his body is shown.

Tom appears shirtless in the scene where he is forced to undress.

Corentin also undresses, we can only see his bare torso and his leg

SEXUAL ACTIVITY

There is nothing to report except the allusion to the fact that Vivian likes Anna.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT/ MESSAGES

- **The social context of the film sets the realistic tone**

The Fantastic Three is in the Ardennes in the Grand Est region, between Charleville-Mézières and Revin. The people of the city depend on **the factory** for their livelihoods. But because of **deindustrialization**, the factory will close, Workers are **striking to protest the layoffs**. Viv's mother, who is a member of the union, is taking part in negotiations to try to avoid the closure of the factory.

- **Friendship and its bumps**

The friendship between the three teenagers ends in adventures and misadventures that lead to loyalty, devotion and betrayal.

- **The family: "family is the best support" (Seb)**

As surprising as it may seem, it is Seb who praises the good of the family. However, the tensions between Max, Seb and their mother are gaping. It is to save the family that Max will steal.

- **Being cast aside**

An absent father – a factory that closes – Vivian moving away – Max leaving dry his friends by stealing money...

- **The thefts committed by Max and his accomplices**

The film shows that theft is reprehensible: the victims are elderly or if they try to defend themselves, misfortune happens to them.

The theft of the money stolen by Max marks the end of the friendship of the three teenagers.

Seb's debt is the bag containing drugs worth a lot of money to Franck, a bag that Max threw over the water to protect his brother he thought.

- **Social media: its power over young people**

The messages and pictures in social media can be the trigger for shame, hatred, injustice, even suicide.

- **The genre of the film: suspense**

The Fantastic Three presents a mix of genres that include drama, comedy, thriller with all the tensions that it implies.

The scene where Max goes to get Seb's bag is full of suspense: the soundtrack increases the tension supported by the dark image of a labyrinth.

When Viv. goes to fish out Seb's bag, for a moment, we think he drowned.

When Franck starts the car, he gives the impression that he is going to run over Seb but the sudden blow that the latter gives to the driver's window startles.

The use of tobacco: Seb's mother and Seb smoke, among other characters.

Mention of drugs that are a source of large amounts of money when sold.

FILM PHOTOS

The city in the Ardennes where the film takes place



The three friends : Vivian in the background, , Max in the middle and Tom in the foreground
The teenage friends are often seen bicycling.



Brothers Max and Seb love each other in their own way: Max wants to protect Seb and prevent him from going back to prison. Seb is a hothead who also wants to protect Max



Vivian and Max are working on a plot at school

Max and Tom at the friends' cabin

Friends in front of Corentin (who we don't see) during the fundraiser for the summer camp

