

What we did on our holiday – Review

Andy Hamilton and Guy Jenkin's 2014 British comedy is a curious film. Inspired by the pair's BBC sitcom *Outnumbered* - in which the adult couple at its centre are "outnumbered" by their three children - it deals with some heavy, **sensitive** themes. **Death**, divorce and intense sibling **rivalry** drive the story, which really **belongs** to the children in the film more than their parents (**former** Doctor Who David Tennant and *Gone Girl* star Rosamund Pike as Doug and Abi McLeod).

The sitcom took an **unusual** approach regards its child actors: while the adults learned the **scripts**, the children were only given **brief** summaries by the **writer** and director. This encouraged a loose, natural feel, which resulted in more spontaneous performances from the **infant** cast. *What We Did on Our Holiday* works in a similar way.



Doug's **father** Gordie (played by Billy Connolly) is dying of terminal cancer, so Doug's **brother**, Gavin, has organised a huge party for what is likely to be his final **birthday**. Doug and Abi's marriage is about to disintegrate as a result of Doug having had an **affair**, but they decide - with the help of their children Lottie, Mickey and Jess - to pretend that they are a happy family and that **everything** is fine in order not to upset Gordie.

Much of the comedy present is thanks to the children, who **struggle** with the **deception** involved ("I need a list of the lies we're going to tell!" insists Lottie, nine years old), and, in some hilarious scenes, paint a **clear** picture of their parents' failing relationship. Something completely unexpected occurs around halfway through the film, and its ramifications can be felt in what follows.

Despite all the discord, the film is both funny and **moving**, and features some fine work by the whole cast - especially Billy Connolly, who is as brilliant and **charming** as ever.