

## Introduction and Preparation

*Petits Frères*

Jacques Doillon (1999)

**NB:** English synopsis is not a translation of the French text.

### French Synopsis

La seule amie de Talia, c'est Kim, une chienne pitbull douce comme un mouton. Lorsqu'elle **fugue** et part à la recherche d'un copain dans une cité de banlieue, la jeune fille l'emmène avec elle. Mais la chienne se fait immédiatement voler par quatre garçons... Encore un film sur la banlieue? Avec des jeunes **blacks, blancs, beurs** et des cités ghettos? Oui, mais cette fois, il n'est pas question de violence à l'école, d'éducateurs lancés dans des missions impossibles, de témoignages sur une société **défaillante**. Le dernier film de Jacques Doillon, *Petits Frères*, nous invite juste à faire un tour du côté des jeunes mineurs – à moins de 15 ans, on est encore un **enfant** – **sous la coupe des** "grands frères". Le scénario étant centré sur "une fille de 13 ans" qui n'a peur de rien et quatre teenagers **roublards** et turbulents. Thèmes et décors, bien sûr, commencent à nous être familiers: frictions avec les "**keufs**", vols de **mobs**, business et drogue... Mais les jeunes héros de Doillon, s'ils cherchent tous à "**faire de la thune**", font surtout "**les quatre cents coups**", comme d'autres, en d'autres temps...

Accessed at [http://www.cndp.fr/tdcmag/tdc\\_774/pages/2ecrans/cinema\\_.htm](http://www.cndp.fr/tdcmag/tdc_774/pages/2ecrans/cinema_.htm)

#### **fugue**

Think of words of the same family in English. Can you guess the meaning?

#### **Blacks, blancs, beurs**

This is a reference to the French *Bleu, Blanc, Rouge* denoting the people of various skin colours that make up the current French population. 'Beur' is an interesting word. It is actually ARABE pronounced backwards. It is an example of Parisian slang called verlan (l'envers – backwards). Can you think of a British equivalent to this form of speech? Try to find out why such words are used in contemporary French.

#### **Défaillante**

Think of words of the same family in English. Can you guess the meaning?

**Sous la coupe de** is an idiomatic expression in English roughly equivalent in meaning to the English phrase: *under the thumb of*

**Roublards** is a very colloquial term. Look at the following adjective: *turbulents* and try and guess what *roublards* is likely to mean.

**Keufs** is 'verlan' again – from the word *flics* (another colloquial word which you may want to look up)

**Mobs** is short for *mobyette*

**Faire de la thune** is popular contemporary slang meaning 'to make money'

#### **Faire les quatre cents coups**

An idiom meaning 'to get up to no good / make trouble'; also the name of an autobiographical cult-film by François Truffaut (1959) about his childhood antics

## English Synopsis

Talia, a thirteen-year-old girl living in one of the poorer districts of Paris, is not happy when her stepfather returns home after a year away, suspecting him of molesting her younger sister. When he orders Talia to get rid of her beloved dog, she leaves with her pet, aiming to stay at a nearby housing project. She becomes acquainted with four boys who are all friends, and who work for older gangs in the area. Eventually, Talia becomes involved in their schemes of petty thievery.

Accessed at <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/614885?view=synopsis>

## Viewing Task

You are about to view the film *Petits Frères*. While you are watching it, pay particular attention to the following aspects and make some notes:

### Urban Setting

### Soundtrack

### Social and racial issues

### Gender relationships