



Local Hero

1983 certificate PG

Directed by Bill Forsyth

Starring:

Burt Lancaster

Fulton Mackay

Denis Lawson

Jenny Seagrove

What this film is about

Eccentric American oil billionaire Felix Happer wants to buy up a large amount of land in Scotland for a refinery and sends his man to negotiate with the people who live there to buy them out. His other dream is to have a comet named after him. The people are keen on the money, but a strange hermit called Ben lives on the beach in a shack and it turns out he not only owns the beach, but isn't interested in selling. Village business is handled by Gordon Urqhart, a man who seems to be everywhere and do everything in the village. The proxy buyer Mac who is used to doing business in America is utterly at sea in this strange place, but starts to be charmed by its beauty and strangeness, wildness and eccentricity. Slowly the buyer and his mate become absorbed into the town and its people in ways they definitely didn't expect. When Happer meets Ben he discovers a kindred spirit and they come to an arrangement that suits everybody. Mac goes home to put the scheme into effect and finds himself changed forever.

Major themes of the film

Dreams, environment, money, nature, friendship

Excerpts from the film to watch

The meeting between Happer and Ben

Mac's return home

Mac and Danny's arrival in the village

General issues for discussion

What does the film tell us about greed?

What does the upset about the rabbit tell us about urban and rural attitudes?

Why do you think Ben and Happer get along so well?

What is the role of friendship and love in this film?

What do you think the film tells us about the beauty of nature and the destruction of the environment?