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The Boy Who Could Fly Cast

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Remembering the Magic: A Deep Dive into The Boy Who Could Fly Cast

In the landscape of 1980s family films, few movies capture the delicate balance between childhood wonder and real-world sorrow as beautifully as **The Boy Who Could Fly**. Released in 1986, this touching story directed by Nick Castle tells the tale of Milly, a young girl who moves into a new neighborhood and discovers a mysterious, mute boy named Eric who seems to possess the ability to fly. Much of the film's enduring emotional resonance stems not just from its screenplay, but from the remarkable performances delivered by **The Boy Who Could Fly cast**. Understanding the actors who brought these beloved characters to life offers a deeper appreciation for a film that continues to inspire audiences decades later. This article takes an in-depth look at each key member of **The Boy Who Could Fly cast**, exploring their roles in the film, their careers, and the lasting impact they have had on cinema.

The Core Trio: Heart of the Film

At the center of the story are three essential characters: Milly, Eric, and Milly's younger brother, Louis. The chemistry among these young actors formed the backbone of the narrative, and their performances elevated what could have been a simple fantasy into a profound meditation on grief, resilience, and the power of imagination.

Lucy Deakins as Milly DeWitt

Lucy Deakins was cast in the pivotal role of Milly DeWitt, the film's protagonist and emotional anchor. As the teenage girl who loses her father and subsequently has to navigate the challenges of a new school and a new home, Milly is the audience's entry point into the story. Deakins brought a remarkable sense of grounded authenticity to the character. She wasn't simply a passive observer of Eric's miracles; she was an active participant in his world, driven by empathy and a shared sense of loss.

Deakins' performance is subtle and mature. She effectively communicates Milly's internal struggles—the pain of her father's suicide, the frustration of moving, and the cautious hope she finds in Eric. This was Deakins' first major film role, and she delivered it with a naturalism that impressed critics. Following **The Boy Who Could Fly**, she appeared in a few other notable projects, including the television series *The Equalizer* and the film *The In Crowd*. However, she largely stepped away from the spotlight to pursue a legal career. For many fans of the film, Lucy Deakins remains the definitive Milly, and her performance is a cornerstone of why **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** is so fondly remembered.

Jay Underwood as Eric Gibb

The role of Eric Gibb—the boy who could fly—was entrusted to Jay Underwood. This was a challenging part for any young actor: Eric is a character who has been rendered mute by the trauma of his parents' deaths and who expresses himself almost entirely through his eyes and his physicality. Underwood had to convey profound

sadness, hope, and a transcendent joy without relying on dialogue.

Underwood's portrayal is hauntingly beautiful. His wide, expressive eyes communicate a depth of feeling that words could barely touch. He makes Eric's isolation palpable, but he also sells the sheer wonder of flight. The scenes where Eric soars through the air, often set to James Horner's iconic score, feel genuinely magical because Underwood embodies the character's longing for freedom. After his star-making turn in **The Boy Who Could Fly**, Jay Underwood continued to act in films like *Uncle Buck* and several television movies. He later transitioned into a career in ministry. Underwood's performance remains a high point of 80s fantasy cinema, proving that sometimes the most powerful performances are the quietest ones.

Christian Bale as Louis DeWitt

Long before he became Batman, won an Oscar, and transformed into one of the most respected actors of his generation, Christian Bale played Louis DeWitt, Milly's younger brother. Louis is a whirlwind of energy and mischief, a stark contrast to Eric's silent stillness. He provides much of the film's comic relief, with his obsession with junk food, his skeptical quips, and his hyperactive antics.

Even at this early stage in his career, Bale displayed the immense charisma and commitment that would define his later work. He is hilariously authentic as the annoying little brother, but he also brings a warmth to the role. He is fiercely protective of his sister, even when he is driving her crazy. Watching Bale in **The Boy Who Could Fly** is a delightful experience for any film fan, as you can see the budding talent of a future star. His inclusion in **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** is a fascinating piece of cinematic history, offering a glimpse of the incredible range he would later develop.

The Adults: Anchoring the Reality

The adult members of **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** provided the necessary grounding for the film's more fantastical elements. They represent the world of practicality, skepticism, and hidden grief that the young characters are navigating.

Bonnie Bedelia as Mrs. DeWitt

Bonnie Bedelia plays Charlene "Charlie" DeWitt, the widowed mother of Milly and Louis. Bedelia was already an established actress by the time she joined **The Boy Who Could Fly cast**, having appeared in films like *Heart Like a Wheel* and the original *Die Hard* (as John McClane's wife, Holly Gennero).

In this film, Bedelia portrays a mother who is struggling to keep her family together while dealing with her own grief. She is trying to be strong for her children, but she is also overwhelmed by the practicalities of life—working, paying bills, and moving on. Bedelia brings a weary but determined tenderness to the role. She represents the adult perspective that has forgotten how to believe in magic, but she is never portrayed as a villain. Her journey in the film is one of reconnecting with hope and wonder, largely through her daughter's experiences. Bedelia's performance adds a layer of realism and emotional depth that balances the film's more whimsical elements.

Fred Savage as David (Uncredited)

A piece of trivia that many fans appreciate is that **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** includes a very young Fred Savage in an uncredited role. Just before he became a household name as Kevin Arnold on *The Wonder Years*, Savage appears as a boy in Milly's class. It is a small, blink-and-you'll-miss it part, but it is a fun detail for keen-eyed viewers. Savage would go on to have a hugely successful career as an actor and director, and his early appearance in this film is a charming bit of 80s cinema trivia.

Supporting Cast: Painting the World of the Film

The Boy Who Could Fly cast created a relatable world. From the skeptical authority figures to the neighborhood kids, these actors filled out the film's community.

Colleen Dewhurst as Mrs. Sherman

The legendary Colleen Dewhurst plays Mrs. Sherman, Eric's alcoholic and neglectful aunt. Dewhurst was one of the most respected stage and screen actresses of her time, known for her powerful, no-nonsense presence. In **The Boy Who Could Fly**, she plays a deeply flawed woman who is ill-equipped to care for her traumatized nephew.

Dewhurst's performance is crucial because she could have easily made Mrs. Sherman a one-dimensional villain. Instead, Dewhurst adds layers of pity and tragedy to the character. You can see the exhaustion and the sadness of a woman who has been broken by life. While she is a source of conflict in the story, Dewhurst ensures that Mrs. Sherman is a human being, not a monster. Her presence in **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** lent the film a significant amount of prestige and gravitas.

Mindy Cohn as Mrs. Sherman's Friend

Mindy Cohn, best known for her role as Natalie Green on the hit TV show *The Facts of Life*, makes an appearance as one of Mrs. Sherman's friends. Cohn brings her familiar, warm comic sensibility to the role, appearing in a few scenes to interact with Mrs. Sherman. For fans of 80s television, seeing her in **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** is a delightful Easter egg.

Nicholas-Jason Paulk as Milton

Milton is the school bully who torments Eric and, by extension, Milly. Played by Nicholas-Jason Paulk, Milton represents the cruelty of the outside world. He is the antagonist of the schoolyard, embodying the lack of understanding and compassion that Eric faces. Paulk plays the role with the right amount of sneer and menace, making him a satisfying foil to the gentle heroism of Eric.

The Director and the Score: The Invisible Cast Members

While not technically part of **The Boy Who Could Fly cast**, the contributions of director Nick Castle and composer James Horner are essential to understanding the film's success.

Nick Castle: More Than a Shape

Nick Castle is perhaps best known to general audiences for playing Michael Myers in the original *Halloween*. However, he is an accomplished director and writer in his own right. With **The Boy Who Could Fly**, Castle showed a remarkable sensitivity for character and emotion. He drew incredibly nuanced performances from his young cast, particularly Jay Underwood and Lucy Deakins. Castle's direction focuses on close-ups and quiet moments, allowing the actors' faces to tell the story. He understood that the "magic" of the film was rooted in emotional truth, not special effects.

James Horner: The Wings of the Film

James Horner's score for **The Boy Who Could Fly** is one of his most beautiful and evocative works. The music is soaring, melancholic, and full of hope. It perfectly complements the visuals and the performances. Horner, who would go on to score *Titanic*, *Braveheart*, and *Avatar*, had a gift for capturing the emotional core of a story. In this film, his music literally lifts the narrative. The main theme is instantly recognizable to anyone who grew up in the 80s, and it plays a critical role in making the flying scenes so unforgettable. The synergy between the cast's performances and Horner's score is what makes **The Boy Who Could Fly** a classic.

The Legacy of the Cast

Nearly four decades after its release, **The Boy Who Could Fly** continues to be discovered by new generations.

The Boy Who Could Fly cast was a carefully chosen ensemble of talented actors who brought depth, heart, and authenticity to a film about the power of belief and the healing nature of friendship. From the breakout performances of Lucy Deakins and Jay Underwood to the early work of Christian Bale and the seasoned craft of Bonnie Bedelia and Colleen Dewhurst, every member of the cast contributed to the film's magical atmosphere. They created a world that feels real, which is precisely why the film's moments of fantasy—the soaring flights, the silent understanding between two lost souls—feel so genuine. Decades later, these performances continue to resonate with audiences. The film's quality is proof that a well-assembled cast can elevate a simple story into a timeless work of art. Lucy Deakins became a lawyer, and Christian Bale became one of the most celebrated actors in Hollywood history.

What makes the film special is that it never talks down to children. It deals with heavy themes—suicide, grief, disability, and social isolation—with honesty and grace. The cast handled these themes with extraordinary maturity. They made the audience believe in a boy who could fly, not through special effects, but through their own conviction and emotional openness.

For many, the film remains a touchstone of childhood. It is a reminder that imagination and empathy can overcome even the darkest of times. The performances by the actors who brought these characters to life are the primary reason for that lasting impact. The film is a perfect example of how a well-assembled ensemble can elevate a simple story into a timeless work of art.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **The Boy Who Could Fly cast** was a carefully chosen ensemble of talented actors who brought depth, heart, and authenticity to a film about the power of belief and the healing nature of friendship. From the breakout performances of Lucy Deakins and Jay Underwood to the early work of Christian Bale and the seasoned craft of Bonnie Bedelia and Colleen Dewhurst, every member of the cast contributed to the film's magical atmosphere. They created a world that feels real, which is precisely why the film's moments of fantasy—the soaring flights, the silent understanding between two lost souls—feel so genuine. Decades later, these performances continue

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