

# Life Is Beautiful (1997)

{La Vita è Bella}

**Country:** Italy

**Release Date:** October 23, 1998

**Genre:** War, Drama, Comedy, Foreign

**Director:** Roberto Benigni

**Writer:** Vincenzo Cerami, Roberto Benigni

**Cast:** Nicoletta Braschi, Giorgio Cantarini, Giustino Durano, Sergio Bini Bustric, Marisa Paredes, Horst Buchholz, Lidia Alfonsi, Giuliana Lojodice, Amerigo Fontani, Pietro De Silva, Francesco Guzzo, Raffaella Lebboroni, Claudio Alfonsi, Gil Baroni, Massimo Bianchi, Jürgen Bohn, Verena Buratti, Robert Camero, Ennio Consalvi, Giancarlo Cosentino

**Studio:** Miramax Films

**Running Time:** 122 minutes

**Rating:** Rated PG-13 for holocaust-related thematic elements



Roberto Benigni's LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (La Vita E Bella) is a daring departure for one of the world's most acclaimed comic filmmakers. Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at the 1998 Cannes Film Festival, the Best Jewish Experience Award at this year's Jerusalem International Film Festival and the recipient of 8 David di Donatello Awards (the Italian Oscars) including Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Director, and Best Screenplay along with Vincenzo Cerami, the film is a Chaplinesque fable about the power of imagination set against the stark reality of World War II Europe. LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (La Vita E Bella) combines satire, physical comedy, social commentary and a touch of the surreal into a uniquely moving story of love.

At the center of the fable is Guido (Roberto Benigni) - an enchanting individual with childlike innocence and grand dreams of owning his own bookshop. It's 1939 and he has come to the Tuscan town of Arezzo with his poet friend Ferruccio (Sergio Bustric). With unabashed humor and joy, the two seek fortune and romance, ignoring the growing anti-Semitism and Fascist government that surrounds them.

Guido falls in love with Dora, a beautiful young school teacher (Nicoletta Braschi, the Italian actress who has starred in most of Benigni's films). Unfortunately, the woman he calls his "Princess" is already engaged. Worse, she is engaged to the local Fascist official with whom he has had a run-in. Guido, however, is not deterred and a fairy tale romance ensues.

Several years later- Guido and Dora are married and have a son, Giosue (Giorgio Cantarini), and Guido has finally opened the bookshop of his dreams. But now, the occasional bigotries Guido once ignored have become Racial Laws with which he must come to terms. Throughout it all, Guido determines to shield his son from the brutal reality governing their lives. This determination becomes a matter of life and death when Guido and his son are sent to a concentration camp three months before the war's end. Of her own accord, and out of her love for them, Dora departs herself on the same train.

Now, in this unimaginable world, Guido must use his bold imagination and every ounce of his indefatigable spirit to save those he loves.