

TV review: **Raining in my Heart; The Delivery Man**

Chloe, 3, is in remission after groundbreaking treatment

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Children fighting cancer featured in a dignified and sun-dappled film — but sometimes the cure did not come quickly enough

Raining in my Heart

ITV

The Delivery Man

ITV
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Despite its MOR title, **Raining in my Heart** was a dignified documentary about three children fighting cancer with experimental therapies. It did, however, briefly raise the undignified question of how much obvious artifice a film-maker is wise to employ when dealing with a story of heartbreaking seriousness. As Richard, the father of three-year-old Chloe, who was suffering from a rare cancer of the nervous system that had spread to her bones, put it, when the bad news comes you go on auto-pilot pretty much straightaway: “How do we get Chloe better?” Brian Woods and Jess Stevenson’s film never went on auto-pilot.

As if to emphasise that Chloe, and her fellow immunotherapy students, 11-year-old Sophie and Fabian, also 11, had not been robbed of their childhoods, the film set out to be an elegy to childhood. Fabian and his sister Cassia, who had shared with him her bone marrow, conducted dawdling conversations in the grass and threw apples in a river. Sophie span through the hospital wards on roller skates. Chloe’s oxygen tube was held in place by a Peppa Pig plaster. Visually, these young lives were sun-dappled (although nothing illuminated the screens like their smiles). Unlike Woods’ powerfully optimistic *Curing Cancer* last year about research at University College London, *Raining in my Heart* was not in the business of explaining the science of the immunotherapy. Its mood was nevertheless determined by the thought that a cure is coming. What to do, however, when it does not come fast enough?

Towards the end, Christmas approached. Fabian’s implanted immune cells had expanded in his blood. His mother wept with the relief of not having to break bad news at Christmas. We cut to the home of Fabian’s fellow leukaemia sufferer Sophie. Her mother appeared to be preparing for Christmas, talked of cards and glitter. She climbed the stairs, entered Sophie’s room, cried “Hi baby girl”. Only then did we see she was talking to a coffin.

It was a sickening narrative twist, yet the artfulness was probably justifiable. As viewers we had got close to Sophie. This made us share (at whatever degree of refraction) the sudden shock of her death. Fabian, outrageously, died too. We were told he had “brought the end of cancer one step closer”. Let there be for delightful Chloe, now in remission, only the furthest distant of endings.

In an unfortunate scheduling coincidence, ITV introduced us to another children’s ward in its new sitcom (that must make three!) **The Delivery Man**. Twenty years ago there might have been a fantastical gender-challenging comedy to be made about a cop who hung up his truncheon to retrain as a midwife. Gene Hunt meets Sheila Kitzinger. Foetal Attraction. Unfortunately, the police are more politically correct than nurses now, and all that survived of the canteen culture in our hero Matthew was a wit not so much ever ready as drum-poundingly Duracell. He is played by Darren Boyd, a gifted hurler of one-line irony, but at 44 surely too old still to be single and living with a flatmate or to be of such tremendous allure to the female staff. I smiled a few times. They were smiles of indulgence.

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