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## Kam Dostace Ranni Ptace

( translation unknown †)

Czechoslovakia : 19 : dir.

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Cast unknown

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[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

[ † its German title - "**Morgenstunde Hat Guld im Munde**" is an expression roughly equivalent to "The Early Bird Catches the Worm", or "Early to Bed, Early to Rise.."]

Not listed in any source, which is perhaps unsurprising of an Eastern bloc children's film, but it is precisely to record the existence of titles like this one that the archive was created. I saw it in dubbed form on West German children's TV. It's an SF comedy in which a rascal of about 12, only child of a single mother who works in a government chemical research laboratory, steals a handful of goo from his mother's lab, hoping it will furnish mischief of some sort. Some of it is left on his windowsill during an overnight rainstorm, and he wakes to find an identical twin beside him in bed. Physically identical, yet with the reverse of his own personality - thus scrupulously honest and polite, to the horror and dismay of the prototype. Later in the film the remainder of this dangerous goo, which he has safely stashed at the beach while he goes swimming, is soaked during another downpour, and rascal mark III emerges from the sand - stark naked of course - to pursue his prototype through the rain. The latest model knows no fear, and pitches into battle with boys twice his size, again much to the discomfiture of mark I. A timely warning on the perils of cloning, then.

Mother is at her wit's end wondering how to manage her unpubertised mischief machine. One day she marches back from the shops with a cane under her arm to instil some discipline in the household. She chases errant son round the kitchen table until she collapses in tears of frustration. Taking pity on her, he climbs onto the table, presents his posterior, and hands her the cane co-operatively, but she doesn't want to play anymore. When one of his pranks messes up the car of his best friend's dad, he quickly makes himself scarce, leaving the friend to take the flak for it. Next day at school his goody-goody clone hears from the friend how he

caught a major spanking for it, and promptly volunteers to report to the friend's dad to take his fair share of the punishment. The friend stares at him in appalled incredulity. As the story progresses, the original boy is distracted by the strictures of his clones, while struggling to conceal their existence from his mother. But in the final scene the triplets join forces to give the school bully a long-deserved pasting, and become the heroic trinity of their/his class.

A likeable romp very characteristic of Czech children's cinema, it has more energy and anarchic humour than an equivalent English-language production would think to muster. What a pity then that British television's reluctance to screen foreign language material for kids (which has not already been horrendously dubbed) prevents titles such as this being glimpsed amid the barrage of worthless American cartoons and imitation American pop magazines. ***Recommended.***

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