

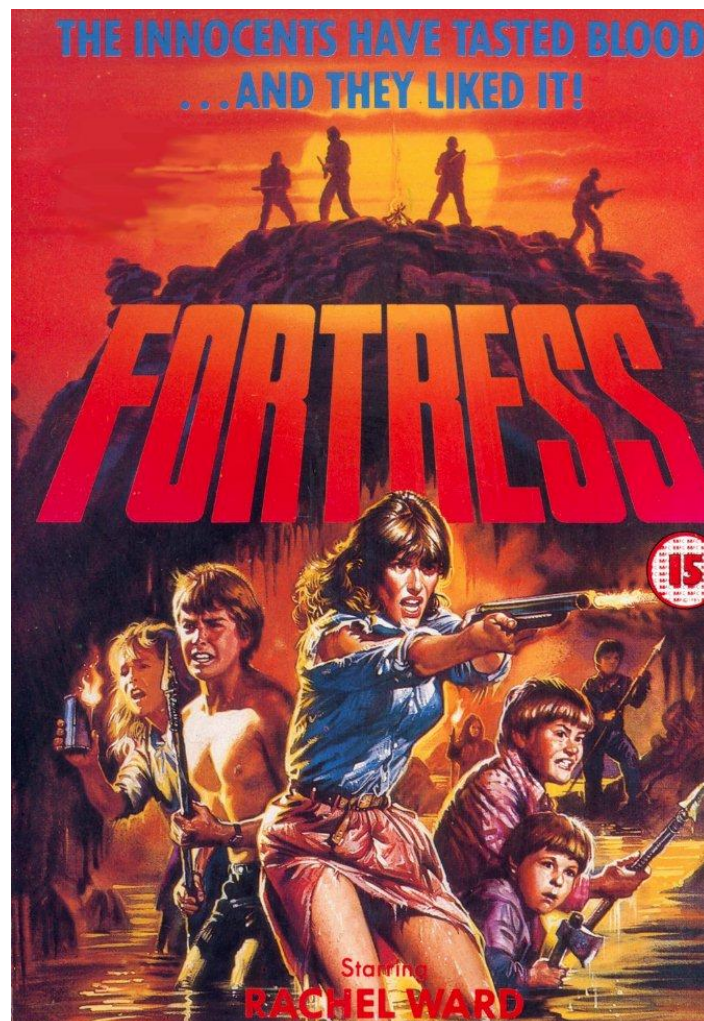


Fortress

Australia TV : 1985 : dir. Arch Nicholson : Crawford Productions : 86 min
prod: Raymond Menmuir : scr: Everett De Roche : dir.ph.: David Connell
Sean Garlick [d]; *Rebecca Rigg* [d]; *Robin Mason* [d]; *Marc Gray*; *Beth Buchanan*;
Asher Keddie; *Bradley Meehan*; *Anna Crawford*; *Richard Terrill*
Rachel Ward; Peter Hehir; David Bradshaw; Vernon Wells; Roger Stephen; Elaine Cusick;
Laurie Moran; Ray Chubb; Wendy Playfair; Ed Turley; Nick Waters; Terence Donovan

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω 8 € M ♂	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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“ The innocents have tasted blood
...and they liked it! ”





Source: videocassette sleeve CBS FOX VHS 3859-50

Videocassette - CBS FOXVHS 3853-50 - sleeve notes (but what imbecile wrote them?):

"They were just children. Little innocents, terrified to the point of madness. And when four shotgun-wielding maniacs kidnapped them and their pretty teacher from a remote school in the wilds of the Outback, they seemed the ideal prey: helpless, obedient, scared witless.

But the wilderness is a savage, lawless place and the survival game - played to the hilt - has no rules. So when the prey escaped and the hunters gave chase, events took a surprising, sinister turn. Because to become a true savage you need a touch of innocence - childlike innocence - and bloodlust is twice as deadly when experienced as a young, fresh emotion. This time the prey hit back. With tooth and claw and nail - and a killer instinct all the more chilling for it sprang from the minds of children..."

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

"Teacher and her students¹ in Australia's Outback turn the tables on vicious gang that has kidnapped them in this exceedingly violent but gripping tale. Made for cable. *Average*"

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"Specious rubbish about a schoolmarm who must teach her charges how to survive in the wilderness after they've been kidnapped. *½"

¹ Or pupils, as we (used to) say in English...

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

"In this drawn-out story of a mass kidnapping in the Australian Outback, Rachel Ward is passable as a teacher in a one-room school. She is abducted along with her students, ranging in age from about 6 to 14. The story centres around their attempts to escape. **1/2"

[no listing in "Australian Cinema 1970-1985", "The Australian Film Book 1930-Today"; "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

From a novel by Gabrielle Ward. Not to be confused with the 1993 SF film of the same title with Christopher Lambert. Risible made-for-cable junk, it starts weakly and descends from there. Uniformly poor performances are compounded by trite dialogue and wafer-thin plot development, so that what purports to be a spin on "**LORD OF THE FLIES**" is actually no better than a by-the-numbers TV kidnap thriller, with an offensive leery undertone that promises the gang-rape of schoolmistress and schoolgirl, but delivers neither.

Chief liability is Rachel Ward as shepherdess of her brood of "innocents". Established as a petulant young schoolma'am who says things like "For *your* information, animals are *not* put on this earth expressly to be mutilated and spat upon by capricious young boys!", her transition to Ripley-style action heroine is flatly unconvincing. The children, as usual in kidnap stories, are thumbnail sketches – "Yeah, what do they think we are? A bunch of kids?" – and the masked marauders who bottle them up in a remote cave are mere gibbering fiends marked for violent deaths. The story, indeed, would have been moderately more interesting if the "**LORD OF THE FLIES**" motif had been properly adhered to, and the children had to contend with their abductors without adult supervision. Instead, the final showdown with the kidnappers recalls the pirate battle scene in Disney's "**SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON**", and the escape from the cave recalls "**THE ADVENTURES OF TOM SAWYER**". In short, it's neither as grim and frightening as it hopes to be, nor does it involve the audience in the fate of its cardboard cutout captives. A worthless exercise.

Beth Buchanan was also seen in the TV serial "**The Haunted School**". Nothing else is known of the other child cast members.

See subject index under **AUSTRALASIA, KIDNAPPING, KIDS OUTWIT THE CROOKS** and **SCHOOL**.