

Chernaya Kuritsa ili Podzemniye Zhiteli

("The Black Hen or: The Dwellers Underground")

U.S.S.R. : 1980 : dir. Viktor Gres :

: ? min

prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

[Vitali Sedletski](#)

Adult cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ ≠ Z ☠	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Apprentice sorcerer – Vitali Sedletski turns to the Black Arts at boarding school

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Sedletski:

“ **"THE BLACK HEN"** is a 19th-century children's classic by Antoni Pogorelski, who wrote it for his little nephew, Alexei Tolstoi. It's about a boy called Alyosha Lanskoï, whose kind parents send him away – for his own good, of course – to a posh boarding school where he is bewildered by the rough-and-tumble. To bolster his somewhat tottering morale, he dabbles in a childish kind of magic, and suffers pangs of conscience.

Viktor Gres, who directed this film, remembered the book as one which had touched him deeply when he was a child, but which he now saw as too didactic. He played this element down, and chose an angelic little boy from Murmansk, Vitali Sedletski – who was eight when the film was shot, and a newcomer to acting – as its hero.”

[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"]

No further information currently available. Sedletski has the appearance of a dyspeptic Little Lord Fauntleroy cut adrift from his "Dearest". A glimpse of life in a 19th century Russian boarding school would certainly be interesting, even by way of a 1980 makeover (film-makers feel perennially obliged to reshape the past to suit the present), and I'm curious to know more about this magic Alyosha dabbles with.

See subject index under **BOARDING SCHOOL / PUBLIC SCHOOL, EASTERN EUROPE / SOVIET BLOC, HISTORY** and under **WITCHES & WIZARDS** for other junior necromancers.