

Liten Ida

("Little Ida"; aka: "Growing Up")

Norway / Sweden : 1981 : dir. Laila Mikkelsen : Norsk Film / Swed. Film Institute : 79 min
prod: Harald Ohrvik & Sven Johansen : scr: Marit Paulsen & Laila Mikkelsen
: dir.ph.: Hans Welin & Kjell Vassdal

Sunniva Lindeklev
Howard Halvorsen; Lise Fjeldstad; Arne Lindtner Ness; Ellen Westerfjell; Roennaug Alten;
Minken Fosheim; Anna Toft Olsen; Hildur Solberg; Bernt Lindeklev; Gunnar Olram

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Source: 26th LFF programme

26th London Film Festival programme review:

"From **"BREAKFAST WITH BABY"** to "E.T." childhood belongs to the movies: **"POIL DE CAROTTE"**, **"SHOESHINE"**, **"THE QUIET ONE"** and many more. To the list we can now add Laila Mikkelsen's unsentimental, atmospheric and superbly made film known variously as **"LITTLE IDA"** and **"GROWING UP"**. Based on an autobiographical novel and co-adapted by author Marit Paulsen and its director, the film's setting is a small Norwegian town. Ida, barely seven, is plunged into the war. Her mother, alone, except for two burdensome

children, cooks for the occupying Germans. She has an affair with an officer, while Ida suffers the taunts of her contemporaries. At the war's end, the mother is head-shaved as Ida watches. Life goes on and the child "grows up". The movie bathes most especially in the light of **"LES JEUX INTERDITS"** and other masterpieces about innocence [sic] and its spoiling. Yet it is never second hand. Rather, it is warm, compassionate, magnificently acted and almost unbearably truthful."

– Brian Baxter

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

“The 7-year old daughter of a woman who has a relationship with a German soldier during WW2 becomes, like her mother, the target of rejection and insults from the Norwegian villagers. She is sent to an old farming family until D-day. Although she had longed for peace, when she returns home she is the victim of an unrestrained lust for revenge. This debut film, from Marit Paulsen’s autobiographical novel, manages in a remarkable way to avoid any false sentiment and to make of the introverted central figure a “survivor in spite of everything”. Splendid performance from Fjelstad as the mother torn between embitteredness and vain hope. *** ”

Halliwell’s Film Guide review:

“A seven-year old girl is ostracised because of her mother’s relationship with a Nazi soldier. Unsentimental, excellently acted account of childhood suffering. ** ”

Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide review:

“During the Nazi occupation of Norway in 1944, seven-year old Ida (Lindekleiv) has to endure an incomprehensible agony of loneliness and malicious abuse because her mother takes up with a German soldier. Based on writer Paulsen’s own memoirs, this grim tale of survival is filmed in authentically chilly landscapes, and offers an astonishing performance from Lindekleiv. Director Mikkelsen, telling her dreadful tale with absolute fidelity to truth, avoids the pitfalls of maudlin sentimentality to achieve a moving

document of childhood and of an aspect of World War II.”

The Time Out Film Guide review:

“A return to the theme of childhood innocence [*sic*] spoiled by the rigours of war which has recently seen distinguished service in “**SPIRIT OF THE BEEHIVE**” and “**MUDDY RIVER**”. Here the setting is Northern Norway, 1944-5, and the child seven-year old Ida, cruelly ostracised for her mother’s liaison with a German soldier. Mikkelsen mostly stays the right side of the line between sensitivity and sentimentality, delicacy and dullness, supported by Sunniva Lindekleiv’s winning performance as a mercifully un-cute child, and by some stunning cinematography, all in muted tones of grey and brown which suddenly explode, in the final victory procession, into a proud flurry of red Norwegian flags. In its own unassuming way, a small gem of miniaturist observation.”

[no listing in “Leonard Maltin’s Movie and Video Guide 2001”, “The Critics’ Film Guide”, “The Good Film and Video Guide”, “Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89”, “Rating the Movies (1990)”, “TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995”, “Variety Movie Guide 1993”, “Video Movie Guide 1993” or “The Virgin Film Guide”]

No further information currently available.

See also “**BADKONAK-E SEFID**” and “**BASHU**” - both recent Iranian films, and subject index under **ARAB WORLD / MIDDLE EAST**.