

The Little Kidnappers

Canada TV : 1990 : dir. Donald Shebib : Disney : 100 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
 Leo Wheatley; Charles Miller
 Charlton Heston; Bruce Greenwood; Patricia Gage; Leah Pinsent

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	KBytes	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5315	1½	5	0	-	- - - - -	No	Unseen

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"Heston's the embittered grandpa to two Scottish orphans, sent to live with him in Nova Scotia, who discover an abandoned baby and are accused of being kidnappers. Agreeable remake of 1953 British film. Made for cable. **Average** "

Excerpt from **The Moving Picture Boy** entry on Jon Whiteley:

"...An attractive remake of "**THE KIDNAPPERS**" – now called "**THE LITTLE KIDNAPPERS**", which had been the original film's US release title anyway – was shown in 1990, with two very similar-looking children (Leo Wheatley and Charles Miller) as the two boys."

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times reviews:

"Charlton Heston gives one of his most creditable, robust TV movie performances as a solitary old grouch forced to take in his two orphaned grandchildren. This is a captivating remake of a highly praised 1953 children's film, and director Donald Shebib provides just the right combination of lightness and pathos. The performances are uniformly excellent, but this is Heston's film, proving once again

what a consistently underrated, versatile screen actor the old charmer really is. *** "

"A splendid family drama set in Nova Scotia at the turn of the century – a remake of the 1953 British film. In this version, made for the Disney TV channel in America, it is fresh-faced Leo Wheatley and Charles Miller who discover an abandoned baby and are accused of kidnap. As their brooding, belligerent grandfather, who presses on them his prejudices but eventually succumbs and learns how to love again, Charlton Heston displays a compelling conviction. *** "

"Charlton Heston plays the grandfather of two Scottish orphans who come to live with him in Nova Scotia in this moving Canadian TV remake of the 50s British children's classic "**THE KIDNAPPERS**". Sturdy, lushly filmed family entertainment. *** "

"An updated version of the classic children's drama about two Scottish orphans who themselves adopt an abandoned baby."

"Family drama starring Charlton Heston. At the turn of the century, two Scottish orphans are sent to join their strict grandfather in Nova Scotia. When they find an abandoned baby they are accused of being kidnappers. *** "

"Family drama. When a pair of Scottish orphans are sent to live with their grandfather in Nova Scotia, they discover an abandoned baby and decide to "adopt" it. *** "

"Remake of the 1953 Oscar-winning children's film about a pair of Scottish orphans."

What's On TV listing:

“Drama. Charlton Heston is the grandpa in this modern remake of the 1950s classic about a pair of orphans who adopt an abandoned baby – only to be branded as kidnappers.”

“Charlton Heston is grumpy grandpa in this remake of the Fifties classic about orphans who adopt a baby.”

Sunday Times listing:

“ Stars Charlton Heston, Bruce Greenwood and Leo Wheatley. A pair of Scottish orphans are sent to live with their grumpy old grandfather in Nova Scotia.”

No further information currently available. Beware of “updated versions”. One wonders what that could possibly mean, since this film, like the original, is set in 1901. It presumably means that Disney’s screenwriters have messed about with the original story, as they are wont to do. The baby in question is not abandoned, of course, and in a technical sense the elder boy, Harry (Leo Wheatley), who is 8 in the original story, does indeed kidnap it. He finds it temporarily unaccompanied, and claims it for his own, unaware that the baby’s parents are his grandfather’s mortal enemies.

Nothing else is known of Wheatley or Miller (Davey MacKenzie is 5), but Charlton Heston gave a surprising account of himself as Long John in the 1990 cable remake of “**TREASURE ISLAND**” (with Christian Bale a disappointment as Jim), not to mention his long-cherished remake of “**A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS**”.

See the 1953 original for more detailed comment, and subject index under **DISCRIMINATION / PREJUDICE, DISNEY, FARMS & FARMING, GRANDPARENTS, KIDNAPPING** and **ORPHANS / ADOPTION**.