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Ilsa The Wicked Warden (Cheezy Flicks)

By

[Upchuck Undergrind](#)

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I was tickled from my slowly ceasing to function pores atop my head all the way down to my gnarly toenails. I was veritably tingling. I was holding in my hands a Jess Franco film. Not only that, a Franco Women-In-Prison (WIP) film. Not only that, but it was one of which I'd long heard but never seen: ILSA THE WICKED WARDEN (1977). Now, sure, this isn't the classic "Ilsa She Wolf of the SS" (1975) and it isn't even technically a sequel. Both have the same actress, the famous/infamous Dyanne Thorne, and while in WICKED it isn't technically a prison, but a reform school/psyche ward kind of thing, but a rose is a rose. Thanks to www.1000misspenthours.com, btw, for being a helpful research resource. I've been aware of the trio of Ilsa flicks for years but was rusty on the exact order/relationship, etc. I knew there were distributor shenanigans afoot, but said shenanigans pepper the vintage outsider cinema world with interesting little twists and turns. And it isn't as though the practice has ceased. But anyhow ... WICKED was originally titled something else and was released under multiple titles but is most widely known, I think, as ILSA THE WICKED WARDEN. The queen bee she bitch here, played by Thorne in a role very similar to the other Ilsa. I say "other" loosely since she wasn't "Ilsa" in WICKED WARDEN until the distributor's canny name change. But rather than a straightforward prison, she's running a tough lockdown home for problem women. Or something. And she naturally abuses the shit out of her authority. Lesbianism abounds. Breast scars shock the eye. Male prisoners, long having lusted without outlet, somehow or another (*innocent whistle*) getting into the women's dorm, or whatever the hell you call it. Point being, Ilsa manipulates prisoners and employees with equal nimbleness, creating a singularity of sadism for her wicked satisfaction, as well as for the enjoyment of us cinema sickos out here. Way out here. Franco's usual signature sleaze art is stamped all over this one, with beautifully composed shots presenting images of ruthlessness and violence. Sexuality and sexual horror are naturally central themes, and they are ones with which Franco plays well. David Cronenberg, too, but that's a whole other style. Franco is in a league all his own, even when he's digging into an established genre. Besides the typical catalogue of the sadistic, this particular Ilsa weaves in plotlines involving intentional incarceration under false pretenses- you know, the determined sort breaks INTO jail to try to break a loved on out; a girl should know better than to sneak ON FUCKING PURPOSE into an institution of this sort in a film of this sort. To make matters worse, all the lusty fucking behind bars is getting recorded and sold as porno. Smut metatext? Regardless, let Ilsa get wicked on you.

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