

Podcast 38 - An Australian Film - The Castle

by Rob McCormack - Friday, April 11, 2014

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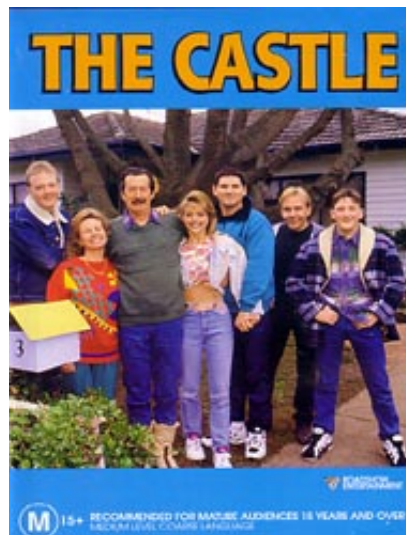
Hi,

Do you know any Australian films? Or maybe you know some famous Australian actors or actresses. The Australian film industry started in 1906 with the production of the first Australian film. Since that first film, the Australian film industry has had some ups and downs, including a period in the late 1950s and early 1960s where it almost came to a halt. In the early 1970s the Australian government offered funding assistance and created the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. From there Australian films and Australian film making has gone from strength to strength. When I was a teenager, I can remember thinking that Australian films were not the same quality as films from Britain and America. We were used to hearing British and American accents from the actors and actresses. The Australian accent seemed strange and almost out of place in a film. But that has changed. Since that turning point in the early 1970s, the quality of Australian films and our performers has improved steadily and is now recognized as right up there with the best from other parts of the world.

What's more, Australians now want to see Australian films. I'm sure you've heard of great Australian film performers like Nicole Kidman, Cate Blanchette, Heath Ledger, Hugh Jackman, Mel Gibson, Naomi Watts, Russell Crowe, Eric Bana, Toni Collette and Geoffery Rush – just to name a few. And I wonder if you have seen such great Australian films as Mad Max, Crocodile Dundee, Muriel's Wedding, Shine, Moulin Rouge, Australia and Animal Kingdom – again, just to name a few.

I still love to watch movies from abroad. In particular, American and British films continue to be very popular with Australian audiences. However, it's great when I can watch a film where the actors speak in an accent just like my own and where the stories and places are about things that make sense to me as an Australian. I think most Australians feel the same.

There is one Australian film I would like to tell you about.



[Click here to view the trailer](#)

For me, it somehow captures what Australia is about. To me, Australia is about giving everyone a fair go. That's really what this film is about. This film is called *The Castle* and it was made in 1997. The film had a low budget of only \$750,000. It was very successful in Australia and New Zealand, grossing more than \$10 million in ticket sales, although it was not widely distributed outside of Australia. \$10 million is a fantastic return for an investment of only \$750,000. What's more, the film was written in just two weeks, filmed in only ten days and ready for final editing in another 2 weeks. That compares with big films today which can take years from idea to completion. I think because of the speed in which it was made and its low budget, it somehow produced a simple but very powerful story which captured something typically Australian – the idea of a fair go. I absolutely love the film and have watched it many times. It makes me laugh and it has sad parts as well. It has a happy ending and it always puts a big smile on my face. Somehow it makes me feel good about being Australian.

It was written by Santo Cilauro, Tom Gleisner, Rob Sitch and Jane Kennedy, and was directed by Rob Sitch. In my opinion, they are very talented people. Here's a synopsis of the plot. Darryl Kerrigan is a tow truck driver who lives with his wife and two older teenage children in a blue collar suburb right next to the airport. Darryl also has two older children, one a girl who has just got married and the other an older boy who is in jail for robbery, a fact that Darryl is very sad about. Their home is a very modest home with somewhat tacky styling and furnishings. None the less, Darryl and his family love their home and all the wonderful memories it holds for them.

One day, a valuer knocks on the door and says he wants to value Darryl's home. Darryl is not aware that a very big company wants to 'compulsorily acquire' their home and land, along with those of the people who live around Darryl, in order to expand the airport. 'Compulsorily acquire' means that Darryl and his family will have no say and no choice. The big company will take their home and they will be forced to leave. They will be paid 'compensation', which means they will be paid an amount for the house which the company thinks is fair. But Darryl doesn't want their money, not even when they increase their offer, their compensation. He wants to stay in the house where he and his wife raised their family and lived happy lives.

Darryl obtains help from a local lawyer called Dennis Denuto. The problem is, Dennis is not a very good lawyer. He helps Darryl go to two different courts, including the Federal Court, to try and get the compulsory acquisition stopped. But each court rejects the request. Dennis's argument is that it is unfair on Darryl and his family, and that Australia's constitution says it is unfair. He argues it is 'the vibe' of the constitution. This is a hard word to explain but it means the theme or real meaning of something. The problem is, Dennis doesn't really understand this area of law or the constitution. So Darryl's request gets rejected. However, while at the Federal Court, Darryl meets an older man called Laurie who is actually a retired lawyer, a QC or Queen's Counsel. Being a QC means he is a lawyer who is very highly skilled, very experienced and who charges very high fees. In other words, he is one of the best lawyers in Australia. He hears about Darryl's problem and offers to help Darryl, free of charge. But they have to go to the highest court in the land, the High Court in Canberra. The film shows how they argue their case in front of 3 High Court judges and how Darryl's case is finally won. What a victory, a victory for the small person over a big company, which proves that even if you are large and powerful, you must still treat others fairly. I can highly recommend this film. Be aware however, that it does have some explicit language and is not suitable for children.

If you have a question or a comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. Perhaps you could suggest a topic for a future podcast. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

[WpProQuiz 21]

Vocabulary

abroad = overseas, from another country

absolutely = completely

accents = how you sound when you speak. For example, British English sounds different from Australian or American English

actors = a male person who performs in a film. For example, Mel Gibson

actresses = a female person who performs in a film. For example, Nicole Kidman

airport = where airplanes land and take off

assistance = when you help someone else

audiences = the people who watch performers

blue collar suburb = a part of the city where ordinary workers live. Blue collar means they usually wear blue work clothes and use their hands to work

captures = to represent something

completion = when something is finished

constitution = a document which rights down how a country will work

courts = a place where a judge makes a decision about what is right and wrong

created = when something is made

editing = to make small changes which improve something

expand = to increase

explicit language = to speak words which some others find very bad

fair go = when each person is treated the same

few = a small number

funding = to do with money

furnishings = the things in your house such as chairs, tables, carpets, furniture, paintings

grossing = all of the money a person or company receives from their job or business

halt = stop

industry = a group of people and businesses which make a product or service

investment = when you pay some money and expect the amount of money to grow

jail = where you are locked up because you have done something bad

judges = a person who decides what is right or wrong

modest = when something is not expensive

offer = when you are willing to do something for somebody else

opinion = what you think about something but you may not be able to prove it

performers = people who act in a film or a show so that other can watch and enjoy

plot = what the story is about, what happens in the story

powerful = when something is strong

production = when something is made

quality = how good or bad something is

recognized = when you know that something is true

rejects = to say no

request = when you ask for something

return = something that is earned

robbery = to take somebody's things, to steal

sense = when something is correct or a good idea

simple = when something is easy to understand, not complicated or difficult

strength = when you are strong, when you are at a high point, when you are better than someone else

suitable = when something fits or is good

synopsis = summary

tacky styling = when something is not in good taste or does not look good

talented = highly skilled, when you are very good at doing something

tow truck = a truck used to pull cars or other trucks which have stopped because they are broken down

valuer = someone who decides how much something is worth

victory = when you win

What's more = as well or in addition to. It is short for 'what is more'

widely distributed = when something is sent to many places

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