

# SA actress Jessica Sutton stars in *Motherland: Fort Salem* series; just renewed by Freeform

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- Exec produced by Will Ferrell and Adam McKay, who produced *Succession*
- Already renewed for a second season
- Starring Cape Town actress Jessica Sutton as one of the three leads
- 96% audience rating, Rotten Tomatoes
- "A riveting supernatural drama" Den of Geek
- "Ridiculously entertaining" AP
- First on Showmax



The first season of fantasy drama *Motherland: Fort Salem* is now available to binge first on Showmax.

More than 300 years ago, Sarah Alder made a deal to stop the slaughter of her kind. She pledged her people to the service and defence of America for generations to come. In return, the persecution and the killings stopped. The Salem witch trials ended, and the country gained a powerful new weapon – an army of witches.

*Motherland: Fort Salem* is a young adult dystopian fantasy that follows three young women – Tally, Abigail and Raelle – from basic training to deployment, as they learn to fight terrorist threats with supernatural tactics and the potent magic of their voices. Thrown together in their unit, the three come from very different backgrounds, but they have one thing in common: they are witches, born and raised for battle... whether they like it or not.

## Tally

Among the three leads is Cape Town actress Jessica Sutton, who was in *The Kissing Booth* and also stars in the upcoming Showmax Original *Rogue*, opposite Megan Fox.

Her character, Tally Craven, is the innocent of the group. Wide-eyed and enthusiastic, she sees the army as her calling, a chance to save lives. When her conscription paper arrives, it's the moment she's been waiting for for 18 years. All she has to do is say the words.

“This is the pinnacle moment,” says Jessica. “For Tally, she’s already decided that this is what she’s going to do. She’s going to conscribe, *against* her mother’s wishes.”

## Raelle

Raelle is played by Taylor Hickson, who was Petra, aka Goth Girl, in *Deadly Class*, and Meghan Orlovsky in *Deadpool*. Like Tally, Raelle has been anticipating this moment, but to her, it’s a suicide mission. Seething with pent-up fury at the injustice of her fate, Raelle sees no way out.

“A medal drops from out of the ceiling and we have to speak the words to basically conscript ourselves into the military,” says Taylor. But in that moment, “Raelle’s mainly thinking about her mother and how she lost her mother to war, and now she’s being condemned to essentially the same fate.”

## Abigail

Newcomer Ashley Nicole Williams plays the A-type Abigail, for whom the army was never a choice. It’s a matter of honour, of destiny, and failure is not an option.

“I come from a long lineage of generals,” the actress says of her character. “That’s really big for Abigail. She *has* to. She *has* to go through basics, she *has* to go to war college and she *needs* to fight and be the very best she can.”

## A matriarchal militia

While there’s plenty of action, confrontation, brutal basics-training, unit pressures and barracks shenanigans, *Motherland: Fort Salem* has something other rookie-soldier shows don’t: magic – fierce and female.

“Right off the top you can see it’s a lot more female driven,” Taylor explains. While that does mean less testosterone-fuelled bonding rituals, the competition and conflict gets plenty ugly.

“It’s no longer the boys fighting on the frontlines, but the girls,” says Jessica. “We’re not the cackling old crones around the cauldron. We are the protectors. We are the warriors. We have these immense powers, and that’s coming from language and sound, as well as sex.”

“The world of *Motherland* is basically our world flipped upside down,” says Ashley Nicole. “And we’re the powerful ones, kicking ass and taking names.”

*Motherland:Fort Salem* has a 96% audience rating on *Rotten Tomatoes*. *Associated Press* calls the Freeform show “ridiculously entertaining”; *Den of Geek* says it’s “a riveting supernatural drama”; and *ComicBook.com* says it’s “inventive and ambitious.”

Directed by the likes of Steven A. Adelson (*Riverdale*), Emmy nominee David Grossman (*Desperate Housewives*), and BAFTA nominee Haifaa Al-Mansour (*Wadjda*), *Motherland: Fort Salem* is exec produced by the team of Will Ferrell and Adam McKay, who’ve brought us shows like *Succession*.

*Motherland: Fort Salem* was recently renewed for a second season. Series creator Eliot Laurence (*Claws*), says he was “blown away by the love we’ve gotten from our fans, whose excitement and passion played a massive part in this renewal,” adding, “Thank you, witches!”

Watch the trailer:

Watch *Motherland: Fort Salem* on Showmax: <https://www.showmax.com/eng/tvseries/mqrluhv6-motherlandfort-salem>

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