

# QLH-S02E01: The Babadook

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## SPEAKERS

Jessi Chartier, Jen Myers

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**J** Jessi Chartier 00:04  
Welcome to Quiet Little Horrors. Here we talk about the films that creep under your skin and take up residence in the dark.

**J** Jen Myers 00:18  
Reminder there are spoilers ahead as we will be exploring the nooks and crannies of the plot theme and characters. Hi, Jesse.

**J** Jessi Chartier 00:28  
Jen, it's a new year and I am excited about this movie. In The Babadook widowed Amelia lost her husband in a car accident as they drove to the hospital during their son's birth. Now six Samuel The boy has begun acting out and gets kicked out of school straining Amelia is already stressful life to a breaking point. A found book appears introducing Amelia and Sam to the Babadook a malicious creature who haunts the sleep deprived Amelia and terrifies the highly imaginative Sam. But what is real and what is just a story? Samuels behavior becomes increasingly violent as Emilio's mental state deteriorates, blurring the lines of where the danger is coming from.

**J** Jen Myers 01:14  
This feels like this is a another one of the kind of new classics of psychological horror that we had to get to

**J** Jessi Chartier 01:23  
100% 100% The Babadook was on my list for a while, but I constantly was really scared to

watch it because I heard it was very psychological. And those are the films that tend to haunt me the most. Yeah. But I'm really glad we got to it. What about you?

**J** Jen Myers 01:38

Yeah, no, I was the same way where I didn't see it when it first came out. But I think I saw it within the past year or something. But yeah, I actively avoided it for a while because I knew it was intense. And I knew that it specifically dealt with the main character as a single mother going through difficult times. And I've had that experience in my own life. And so there's part of me is like, that seems like something I don't know if I want to dive into right away, but I did. And yeah, no, I mean, and we'll talk about this. So that's one of the things that I think can give some extra power to films, obviously, if you can connect with it in that way, but that's kind of something to think about being scarier before you. You watch it you like you want to be prepared for it. And that was definitely the case of this film for me.

**J** Jessi Chartier 02:23

Yeah, I agree. I think that there I mean, I'm not a single mom, but I there are, that's the horror films, right? Like you, you you want to connect with them. But sometimes it's almost that uncanny valley where it's you don't want to connect too much.

**J** Jen Myers 02:37

Yeah. Character. Yeah. It's like an emotional uncanny valley. That's a good way of putting it.

**J** Jessi Chartier 02:42

Yeah, you're like, Ah, this is I'm far enough away from it. This is not me. Yeah, I love this movie a lot. And I want to talk a little bit about as we always do, kind of the stated horror versus the subtext. And it's one of the reasons I think you and I really like this type of genre is that there is the direct metaphorical side of everything. It's like, well, yeah, there's monster. But what does the monster represent? What is it actually doing all that good jazz? So I feel like in this film, The stated horror, of course, is the baba Duke, which is that monster person thing that lives in the house? And, you know, what is interesting to me, is that his intention or his needs like are they shift? Like the stated intention at one point in time is give me the boy is you can you can bring me the boy. But I don't know if that's really what his intention is the monsters intention because he's possessed, he possesses, Amelia, but he also I don't think he possesses Samuel in the car. I think more attacks him.


**J** Jen Myers 03:58

Yeah.


**J** Jessi Chartier 04:00

 Jessi Chartier 04:00

Then I don't know what the stated desire is.

 Jen Myers 04:04

I'm not entirely sure that he has it or they have it whatever gender The Babadook is, I don't know. But I felt like I interpreted it just kind of more as a threatening presence. And I think part of the the threat or the the horror of it is that it doesn't have a clearly stated want. In a way I think that in a way that makes it even scarier where it's like lurking and you don't quite know what it wants from you.

 Jessi Chartier 04:31

Yeah, and it does retreat a bit. Once it's recognized. Like once Amelia said, it's recognizes it and says what do you want? Then it starts to try and threaten her or just be even more menacing. But she approaches it and doesn't ever get rid of it. But tames it I guess to the best that it can be.

 Jen Myers 04:58

Yeah, I think tames is a perfect word for it?

 Jessi Chartier 05:01

I don't know, I feel like it's maybe it's just recognition is what it wanted? Yeah.

 Jen Myers 05:07

And that's something we could probably dive into a little bit more about, like, what's there? Or, you know, how do you tame it? Or how do you tame something of that nature is confronting it and even goes back to kind of old stories about like, threatening, you know, fairies or other monsters that if you name them, you have a power over them?

 Jessi Chartier 05:27

Yeah.

 Jen Myers 05:28

So if you can name this, this danger or and face it, you automatically gain a power over it.



**J** Jessi Chartier 05:35

Yeah. And maybe that's why the Babadook didn't have as much power over Samuel because it really wasn't Sam. After Samuel really wasn't Samuel's monster. It was really Amelia's monster, right, which is just fascinating. And I love the relationship between the kids and his mother, that constant sense of I'm going to protect you from the Babadook, I'm going to make sure it doesn't get you. So it was almost like a role, typical role reversal, where in a lot of horror films that there's kids, it's almost like the parent has to be the one protecting the kid. But this was kind of the other way around. And I found that really interesting. Right.

**J** Jen Myers 06:15

And I will I think that the as we start digging into what the monster may or may actually be, it starts to become clear that Amelia is the one that kind of needs help. And there's no one else to step up and help but Samuel, and he, there's something really great in him that is able to recognize that.

**J** Jessi Chartier 06:40

Yeah, yeah. Well, let's talk about the subtext. So I mean, obviously, the stated horrors, this Babadook monster. But I, you and I were talking a little bit before about what the actual monster is, in the subtext form, we couldn't really pin it down. Like we got a lot of, excuse me, a lot of the internet will say things like grief or depression, but we think it's like, we're not sure if that's it. And I think that's one of the coolest parts about this movie is that you can kind of see whatever resonates with you. Maybe like your own Babadook coming out. But I'd love to hear kind of what you thought in regards to what the subtext was, you know, I mean, the subtext is obviously something that possesses the mother that the boy can recognize, and steals his mother away and makes her evil, so to speak. So what what do you think it is? Where do you think some of this comes from? Yeah,

**J** Jen Myers 07:35

well, you know, I'm not sure if I believe it's 100% one thing or another, either, I think it's probably a combination of things. But on the note of kind of recognizing what you bring to it. For me, the thing that definitely stuck stuck out as, like I mentioned earlier, is just this kind of plight of struggling, single motherhood, which is a pretty tough gig on a lot of fronts. And you definitely see that in Amelia story, too. And there's definitely she became a single mother through like this horrific accident. And so there's all that grief, and just the fact that her husband died on the way to the hospital to get for her to give birth to their son, and that her the son's birthday is tied to his father's death day. And I mean, that's, that's awful. And there's so many layers of difficulty there that that would follow you. But then, you know, years later, she's just in a really kind of simply difficult life situation where she's raising a kid on her own, and she has to work. And she is just kind of surrounded everywhere. She turns by judgment, there's interactions with her sister who has a much simpler life and her husband and I don't think has a job or doesn't seem to have to work in the same way that Amelia does, if I'm not mistaken. And just just kind of like, again, having been through that, too, like, there's so much

judgment involved with this. And so it's just a difficult situation to kind of navigate all of those things. So I kind of interpret the monster as being a combination of, of the, all of those factors and the stress that's created from it. It's kind of both internal and external.

J

Jessi Chartier 09:18


Yeah, I see that too. And I think but for me, I think that the monster that manifests, manifests because of a variety of things that happen. Things like she's the repressed grief is a great example. Like she's never had a birth date birthday for her son on his birthday, because it's too grief stricken, and it's been like that for seven years. You know, this is not a short amount of time. This isn't like the kid is only three he is seven. And the fact that she is I don't want to say passive because she's not passive, but she fills the role of caretaker and then some, I think she's, she's overwhelmed. That's the word I was looking for. She is just over whelmed to the point of where she cannot take care of herself, you know she neglects. Well, it's not even that she neglects. It's just that the her life, and the world is so demanding that she can't take care of herself. That's a better way of saying it. Like she it's not that she's not taking care of herself. It's just that she can't. I mean, a great example is the evening where she's trying to masturbate and her son breaks into the room, you know, just ruining the moment, if you will. And she immediately, she just immediately tends to him, right? Like, she immediately is like, oh, there's nothing wrong. There's no monster blah, blah, blah, like, totally disregarding I mean, obviously, that would be I think, any of us in that situation, right. But I think that's a that's a great example of, you know, she's unable to, to care for herself. And even when it comes down to asking for help her sister who has zero empathy, by the way, or at least, that's what we see. Because remember, this is all told from the perspective of the mother. So the sister appears to have no empathy says to her, I can't help. And immediately, Amelia is like, Well, I'm not calling to ask for help. And it's like, why not, you should, like you should be calling and asking for help. And, but she can't, she just doesn't have the fortitude to be able to do that, because she's super sleep deprived. She has a son who is getting kicked out of school, because he's acting out like she does not have the resources internally to be able to do what she needs to do. And it's like, eating her from the inside. And I feel like that is a great example of what the babba Duke grows into. Because in the book, it does say if you ignore me, I grow. Right. If you dismiss me, I grow. And that's a perfect description of trauma. You know, if you are not dealing with trauma and working through trauma, that's exactly what happens. It just overtakes you, and it may turns you into something else.

J


Jen Myers 12:19

Yeah, I think what's really going on is like you said, yeah, there's this untreated trauma and grief that gets exaggerated by the difficult external circumstances, which some of which are kind of societal, like, you know, in, in the whole paradox of not being able to ask for help when you need it the most. That's kind of like laden with judgment to about like, not being able to, and then when you need it the most you feel the most guilty about it, and the most like a fearful of judgment, which makes it even harder to ask for help. And you know, and then it turns into this spiral. And I think that Amelia definitely is going through some of that, of where I mean, look, I know, again, I have a personal bias in this, but we are really hard on single mothers. And, you know, there's there's a certain amount of perfection, I think that our society puts on all mothers, but single mothers have this whole level of judgment that is is beyond that, honestly. And I think that that is definitely a factor in what Amelia is having to deal with


here where Yeah, even her own sister is not very empathetic for what Amelia is going through, and not very helpful and makes it even harder for Amelia to ask for help. And like, like your point is, it's a completely reasonable thing to ask for. But it turns into something that she can't that isn't reasonable to ask for. So yeah, I think that there's there's all these kind of legitimate external factors that are making the internal monster also grow. It's it's that as well. And then again, it sets up that paradox. Well, the more difficult it gets externally to do anything about it, the more you're unable to do anything on the inside about it either.

 Jessi Chartier 14:03

You know where this shows the the best, I think is in the scene at the police station. Where she's asking for she comes in. It's the first time we've ever seen her actually asked for help. And again, remember, this is from her perspective. The officers are very dismissive of her. And it's not direct, dismissive, it's subtle, dismissive. It's just people are laughing and

 Jen Myers 14:33

it's just like an automatic. We're not even considering those real. You're just an overworked, overwrought woman,

 Jessi Chartier 14:41

correct. Yeah, I think that that's a great example of it. And also the scene where she kind of snaps at the guests at the birthday party, where she's just, that sounds really hard, right? Like that's just socially kind

 Jen Myers 14:57

of laid that scene in a like a genuine way. Like it's not a healthy thing are good thing that it happens. But there is definitely something a little bit satisfying about that where she finally is just like, come on. But you know, it is it is interesting. I do want to throw in there too. And I think that I totally understand the kind of like, like her sister's perspective, I do understand kind of where she's coming from. And this is something that, like we mentioned, Amelia really should have been finding ways to deal with her trauma and grief. And it's not her fault that she hasn't necessarily, but that is something that would have been the solution to this right. And so I think that's where people feel justified in judging, because it's yet one more thing that she hasn't taken care of, you know, whether she can or not, it's not something they factor into it. But I do think that in the judgment there's there's a clue there's a hint that there's something that's going on attended. And ideally, people who see that would not react with judgment, they would react with help price. But the judgment, I think is also kind of the sign of like, something is wrong, there's something really wrong here. And it it needs to be handled. And like I said, ideally, somebody would help her handle it. But when you just react with judgment, and she can't handle it, it just gets worse.

 Jessi Chartier 16:14

Jessi Chartier 16:11

Yeah. Oh, that's That's true. I mean, she has to resort to lying to everybody. You know, she lies to work about being sexualized to the school about her son being sick, or she lies to her work about her son being sick, like she is deflecting the reality in order not to deal with it, which is total human behavior, by the way, like, that's classic denial, one on one, you know, but it is,

J Jen Myers 16:42

or even Can I just slip into real quick, like, I'm gonna say this, I have definitely called in, quote unquote sick to work when I just needed a mental health break,

J Jessi Chartier 16:52

right? Because our society doesn't really support mental health. Right,

J Jen Myers 16:55

exactly. And it's like, you know, even I say that I feel like I'm guilty. I'm admitting something. Although I have to say like, I've had some employers, I feel like more recently, who would be very understanding of that, and I don't need to feel guilty about it. But you know, yeah, I don't think that everybody is set up with that, that luxury of being like, Oh, I actually just need some, some time to deal with something. Can I just have that and I feel like, in a way, the Amelia is also just trying to get that. Obviously, this isn't a point where it's like, you know, it's past the point of things being, it's really awful. She needs more than that, I guess, is my point. But there is there is this thing of like, I almost would think she's okay, and saying, Hey, could you just get off my back a little bit while I try to deal with things and we just don't give people any resources for doing that.

J Jessi Chartier 17:41

100%. And she says that at the end to where she, you know, they said, whether the caseworkers are there at the house? And they said, Oh, you know, two weeks is a long time to be out of school, which, by the way is is kind of true, but it's really not. But the her response to that was, well, we just had a few things to sort out. And it was like, yes, yes, that's exactly what needed to happen. Like, all of this needed to be confronted. All of this needed to be here and even. I love the talk about the repression piece of it, because there's so much great imagery used to visualize it, right to illustrate it. And the examples are, you know, Sam, at the end is telling his mom, you have to get it out, you have to get it out. And so she vomits up this black bile. And suddenly, she can deal with it. You know, it's that sense of you have to get it out. You have to not only get it out, but you have to confront it. You know, you have to approach it and take on the monster.

J Jen Myers 18:56

Yeah, it almost makes me this isn't something I hadn't thought much about until now. But it always makes me wonder how much of Sam is almost like the anti monster in a way where he

becomes the hopeful character that tells her the things that she needs to hear whether it's literally or not, but he does. And I think kids to a certain extent, maybe sometimes are better at that more straightforward dealing with things. I don't think we give them credit for that sometimes. But I think that there is kind of this simple logic of like, Hey, you can't deal with something until you face it and know what it is. And I think that's something that kids can actually maybe latch on to better sometimes than then adults are

**J** Jessi Chartier 19:35

present. And it's a typical literary device to to have children or those who are blind, be the ones who see the most and can see most clearly. So it makes total sense that Sam was able to see the reality around him that she was not willing to see. Because she had she had this very clearly perspective of what she thought life should be. And that she was going to hold all things together because that's what was expected of her. And that's what her family expected. It's what her employers expected. And again, I keep coming back to that a good horror movie, you have to remember that the entire story is told through the eyes of the protagonist. So she was assuming that in her mind and her reality and her story, her employers were not helpful. Her sister was not helpful. The police were not helpful. She was the one that was giving help. She was the one that was taking the rubbish out for her neighbor. She's the one who's the caretaker, she's the one who's supposed to protect her son. And so for her to reach out for help, is just not something you do. And when she does do it, she she's dismissed in her world, you know. And it's not until she

**J** Jen Myers 20:54

actually confronts her son is able to help her. Yeah, yeah. And her son is able to help her do that, which is also a little bit of a turnaround, because in the beginning part of the movie before it really settles on the fact that this is something within or more connected to Amelia, I think it kind of tries to lead you down the path of this is the son's fault, or this is this is something of Samuels that at least that's the impression I kind of got because he does this whole thing starts with the book that he finds, and he wants to read and he becomes kind of obsessed with the Babadook. And he also is there's the acting out a little bit and he gets somebody he you know, he's violent with his cousin the one time and stuff like that. And so I think in the beginning, it's a little bit of a mystery act where you you think like, oh, this is this is one more thing on top of Amelia's plate that she has to deal with? And I think, because that's how she perceives it at the time, right. Like you said, it's through her lens of what's going on. And so it's less about like his internal world, and more about how it affects her. And then I think as it goes on, it becomes clear that he's actually a more active component in that story. Yeah.

**J** Jessi Chartier 22:04

And I, it's interesting that you perceived it that way. Because from my perspective, I was always under the assumption that the one that that Sam was the one that was grounded in reality. And he, all of his acting out, was very typical of a child that is in a high stress environment. You know, he is constantly reminded that his dad died on the way to birth him,



never able to celebrate on his birthday. And he just is at a point where he he confronts it faster than Amelia does. Like, he's the one that pushes her pushes his cousin out the Treehouse, which no one deserves violence, but she kind of deserved to get hit like she was.

**J** Jen Myers 22:53  
Yeah, I see.

**J** Jessi Chartier 22:55  
I am there. I don't condone the, you know, but whatever. But he's the one she was very awful. But he's the one who he doesn't really read the book. She does. He may choose it, but she's the one that's reading and halfway through it. He's like, does he get the boat? Does the boy die? Does the boy die? Does the boy die? And he's the one that freaks out at the book. Fast, and then starts to confront. Now he says things like, okay, the rabid Lucas here. We got to do something. And mom is the one that's like, no, no, no. It's fine. And he's like, no, no, really. Right. So he's the one that's able to actually confront it faster.

**J** Jen Myers 23:44  
No, and it is interesting to think about, like, how the difference and how that's taken. And it's probably again, revealing of my own background where Yeah, initially I was kind of like, is the kid doing stuff? Well, and then there's the the bit to where she finds the glass in her food. The broken glass. Yeah. And so I yeah, I definitely got this thing of like, oh, shit, there's something wrong with this kid. And we need to, and which is also very understandable. It wasn't like in a necessarily credibly judgmental way. It was kind of like, oh, this kid's been really messed up by his life. And it's coming out in this way. And then yeah, that is kind of how I took it not in kind of like, oh, this kid is evil, not like that, or this kid is bad, but just in a oh, this poor kid is being raised by this completely overwhelmed mother. That is tracing back to this really traumatic events around his birth. Of course, it's super understandable that that there would be these issues with him but yeah, I kind of initially assumed that it was him that he was manifesting a lot of the problems going on.

**J** Jessi Chartier 24:52  
I you know what, and that's interesting, because maybe that is it emphasizes how stressed out she was because remember, the movie is told from her perspective. So like, there's this great image, where I think it's when they're driving back from the playground. And he got in trouble because he was standing on top of the swings. And he's in the backseat, and he's screaming. And the way that shot is set up where he's out of focus, but Amelia is in focus. And I don't know, I don't know if this was done intentionally. But man, I kind of hope it was because it was genius, where he looks like the screaming babba Duke. Like, he has the facial features, rounded teeth, open mouth, dark eyes, you know, dark circles under his eyes. Like, he looks demonic. And when I think about it, if it's told from her perspective, and she's already super stressed out, I can totally understand how any parent, especially a single parent, would sometimes think that their child is the devil. Because they are so demanding, and it takes and

they should be their children. Like that's, that's not a slight on kids. But I can imagine, I can understand how some parents, there are moments in their brains where they're just like, I can't, this is a little monster. Like I just I can't, that's what I felt was more of the the imagery is that it was this was just an additional added stress for her. Right?

**J** Jen Myers 26:43

I mean, yeah, again, I feel like this is just kind of revealing. But I definitely personally went back to that part of like, yeah, just being so overwhelmed. And like, I can't deal with this. And that's not ever really a judgment call on a kid. It's just kind of the nature, I feel like even parents who have partners who have like really stable environments have, like you said, at some point, we'll feel that. And even with good kids, I had a really good kid, my kid was not in any way demonic at all. Um, but it's just like the nature of parenting is sometimes it's going to be too much. And then when you start adding in all those extra factors, and it just gets, you know, more than that, which is awful. But yeah, I think it does kind of maybe speak to what that that experiences like that when I watched this, I immediately went back to assuming that there's, there's something with this kid that needs to be fixed. That is your responsibility to fix, because that's what I was used to and kind of used to just interpreting from people that that's what the situation is. And I assume that that's that's something else that's going on here too, is the the guilt and shame that Amelia is feeling not being able to fix what she perceives as being wrong, right? A kid,

**J** Jessi Chartier 28:00

right? Oh, totally. No, I totally agree. Well, I mean, even though that sense of fixing and caretaking ties perfectly in with the ending. So let's talk about the ending. And then we can talk a little bit about how this particular movie fits into our podcast from a cinematic standpoint, but from the ending, you know, she feels the need to take care of everything. And at the end, she becomes the caretaker of the Babadook you know, she is the one that is feeding it. She's the one that's tending to it. She's the one that soothe it, which is a totally untraditional horror movie ending. But I love it. I love this ending. Yeah, it's really because it's exactly how it goes. It's exactly what it is. So let's assume that the Babadook is some form of trauma or grief or just raw emotion. Let's just assume it's not even bad. Let's just assume it's raw emotion and self. Like that's exactly what has to happen. Like, if you've experienced trauma, which she clearly has, if she has experienced grief, which for you clearly has none of those things go away. But you learn to fold it into your life, and it becomes part of you. It's just part of your everyday. And I love this ending because that's exactly what she does.

**J** Jen Myers 29:29

It's just great. Yeah, she finds a way to live with it. I like how you're kind of pointing to this as like, what if this creature isn't even really bad, it's just kind of raw. It's like a wild animal. It's not inherently bad or evil. And if for some reason you had a wild animal that you were responsible for, you can just like let it loose and let it you know ravage the countryside. But you can't let it eat you either. So you know the the way you live with it and deal with it and be responsive. For it is keeping it, you know, captive and you're not even captive protected in your basement and feeding it and taking care of it so that it's content in that place and it doesn't

escape. It doesn't harm you, it doesn't hurt anyone around you. And that's like the best possible outcome. And I don't think it's a bad outcome. Like, I don't think the movie would feel realistic. If there were this great release and ababu Baba disappeared. And I don't know, I don't feel like that would be authentic to the film, this feels a lot more authentic to kind of the the emotions of the film that this isn't about, like an easy, magical solution. This is about figuring out how you live with difficult things.

J

Jessi Chartier 30:41

Mm hmm. Exactly. Alright, so let's talk about how this fit into the podcast. I, I think this fits in perfectly here, because it's not your traditional horror film, right? There's very little jumpscare, everything is much more psychological. And one of the things that stood out to me was the power of the use of audio here, because we never really see the babba Duke in its full form. We just see images of it, which makes it even more creepy, because it could be lurking anywhere, then at that point.

J

Jen Myers 31:17

It's kind of funny, because I feel like outside of the movie, like on the internet, and everything the baba duck has become this kind of visual motif. It's even like a gay icon, you know, which I think is great and funny. But within the film itself, it doesn't have that same experience. It's not you have the visuals in the book. But you're right, so much of what's going on, I feel like is perceived by senses other than visual. I mean, obviously, the audience don't get it. Also like what she's sensing and feeling. And the whole two thing, which is like one of the most genuinely unnerving threads in the film, at least for me. So yeah, I think that with the audio, there's just this kind of an interesting reliance on reliance on on senses other than what you see.

J

Jessi Chartier 32:04

Yes. And I love the tooth piece is another great example of her never having time or resources to take care of herself. It's never mentioned, she never talks about it. It's just clear, just know that she's got a tooth problem that she is doing something that is painful, she's got something going on, that's painful in her mouth. That's it. That's it. That's all you know, and you know that she's not going to take care of it, because she's got other things to do. Oh, it's just so good. Well, and I think, for the audio piece, too, I, you know, good horror films do leave a lot to be wanted, right? When it comes to the monster themselves, you never really actually want to see the monster. But you want the urge to see the monster. And I think that this does a really good job of that of constantly using sound to make you wonder what you're actually hearing. And there are a handful of really cool psychological pieces that fall into this category. The tooth is one of them, where it's like, what's really going on? Is she rotting from the inside out? What is what's happening, and one thing I wanted to talk about too, and I'd love to get your perspective on this is the scene where she burns the book. So she burns the book uses gasoline to light it on fire. The very next scene, go back and watch it if you for those of you who haven't seen it and go back and watch this one scene. The very next scene, she's on the phone and we see her back. We see Amelia is back to the camera. And she's talking with her sister. And when she turns around, you can see her hands are black as if she's been digging in Sut. And it's never

explained. It's never addressed. She just happens to be ashamed of it when she goes to the police station. And it was the first indication for me that she might be the Babadook itself. That somewhere at some point in time. She dug the book out of the ashes and is saving it somewhere. Because wild sword her hands be covered in soot.

**J** Jen Myers 34:20

Yeah, you know that's interesting. I don't know if I'm remember thinking that immediately in the film, but I do remember noticing it later maybe at the police station because she still has some on it right then. Um, and yeah, it's almost kind of like even if you don't go deep as Oh, she dug through the site, just this kind of like visual connection of like, Oh, she's turning into a dark figure like the baba duck. You know, it just connects them.

**J** Jessi Chartier 34:47

It does connect them and another way that it was connected to her that I saw is that his costume? Right was that of her husband's? Yeah, that was hanging on the wall. That's when

**J** Jen Myers 34:58

it starts getting a little bit more literal. Rule, not necessarily in a bad way. Yeah, but it does. That gets a little bit more to the I think the heart of the trauma that's happening.

**J** Jessi Chartier 35:08

Yeah, that's a really good call. And I think one of the we talked a little bit about this earlier. But the ending is also one of the reasons it really fits into this quiet little horror real nicely is because it's not a monster to overcome. It's not a horror to survive. It is a piece of ourselves that we have to face, and tend to continually tend to. And I think that that is so different than some traditional horror films, where it's finite ending, you know?

**J** Jen Myers 35:45

Yeah. And in fact, like, the, the fact of it is almost kind of like going against a lot of what, what a horror film might feel like, Oh, we've killed the monster, the dangers over that kind of structure, which is how a lot of horror movies operate, except for like sequels and things like that. But this is explicitly like, no, that's not how it works. In the real world. You don't actually ever kill these things. You just learn how to live with them. That's the best outcome. That's the happy ending. And I think it's also interesting that correct me if I'm wrong, but I'm remembering that Samuel knows, the baba duck is down there, right? Yes, like he is. He's aware of the situation. So I think it's actually that's another interesting thing that I really like about the ending is that it's very evident to him how his mother is dealing with that now, like, I think it's a good thing. To be clear, I don't I don't think it's a bad thing at all she is, as a parent, moderate modeling, healthy behavior, at least, you know, within the context, as much as she can have like, this is what you do with your demons, you recognize them, and you confront them, and you find a way to live

with them. And that's what you can do. And I think that it's actually really significant that Sam is aware of that and sees it. And that's probably something he'll be able to take with him as he gets older,

**J** Jessi Chartier 37:08

you know, that right on the head, because there's a scene at the end, where she's taking the worms into the basement. And Sam says, Can I see it? And she says, Not yet, when you're older. And I think that's just such a beautiful, a beautiful way to explain how everyone has their own Babadook in the basement. And that it is just something that is not to be ashamed of.

**J** Jen Myers 37:41

And it's also just like, again, from like a parenting perspective, I think it's a really nice way of describing how it's appropriate to let your kids know that you have things that you deal with without having to overburden them with what exactly those things are. And that's, that's a tight walk. I think for you know, parents who might have issues of mental illness or even just like, you know, anxiety or stress or anything of that nature, I think it is important for you to be honest with your kids about the fact that you are dealing with a thing. But if you put too many details on them, then it becomes a trauma for them. And that's not responsible behavior. So I think that she actually handles that so perfectly in the sense of, you know, this is this is mine, like you said, you'll probably have others now. And you don't need to know the details of mine, you just need to know that I have figured out how to live with it. And that is the thing that's possible. That's the thing that you can do as well.

**J** Jessi Chartier 38:33

It's so beautiful, such a beautiful ending. I think the last thing I would want to say is to give a really big shout out both to Jennifer Kent, who is the writer, director of this film, and to Essie Davis because first off the story is amazing. So thank you, Jennifer Kent, for giving us such a great story. And thank you Essie Davis because holy crap, like her range of acting in that film. And her ability to have that range while creating a solid believable character was just outstanding like she hit so many different peaks and valleys of emotional trauma and mothers and sisters and neighbors and like she just had everything. And it was all believable.

**J** Jen Myers 39:26

Oh yeah, she's phenomenal. This is this is one of those cases where this movie might not have worked without a performer in the center like her. And I say that with all loves to Jennifer Kent, who I think does a really great job with this film. And like you said, it's written so well, but I think just the nature of it if it didn't have the right person at the center of it, it could so easily fall apart and yeah, Essie Davis is really really great.

**J** Jessi Chartier 39:52

It's just there were so many spots that God you could you just felt this character was at her

It's just there were so many spots that God you could you just felt this character was at her rawest, like just so vulnerable and so, stripped down to the bare bones, right? It's just so good. I can't I can't speak highly enough of se Davis's acting in this because it is haunting to use just like a I know, that's such a trite word these days, but it really is quite haunting. And I think what's haunting to me about her acting is that she swings between this really caring and gentle woman to the lashing out so the scenes where character is lashing out because she's either sleep deprived, or she's possessed, or whatever it is, but were the even those nuances like you can tell when a character the character Amelia is either lashing out because she's severely sleep deprived. Or, and the difference I say between that and when she's possessed, like the, the nuance of how se Davis brings different emotions to the forefront, and facial expressions, and gestures and glances and everything is just so masterfully done, that you start to as she progresses in her deterioration, you can you start to see when the lines are starting to blur of when it's like wait, is she just that sleep deprived? Or is this the baba Duke coming out? And the editing there are times where it's obviously the baba doop because of the audio editing. But in those times where it's that in between phase, God, I don't know how, how she did it to be able to do it with such smooth transition and consistency so that as a viewer, when I'm watching the story in order, which I'm sure it wasn't filmed in, that movement is just flawless that that sliding into deterioration, mental deterioration is just so believable and so smooth that I got to give credit, because it's, it's just brilliant.

**J** Jen Myers 42:20

Yeah, it really is. This is a movie that really turns on that that nuance, like you said, so much of it is the liminal is in the in between. And it's difficult to pull that off. And I do think the direction, like holds her in that. Like, I think that the the rest of the film is so well done and made, that it is, you know, gives her the foundation to be able to take those risks and to hold those nuances and things like that. So it's really such a great example of those aspects coming together.

**J** Jessi Chartier 42:53

I hope they do more work together, because I'd watch anything those to do.

**J** Jen Myers 42:58

Yeah, no, it's really great. So if you liked the Babadook, we put together a list of some things that reminded us of it that you might be interested in checking out. So in the film realm, there's films like Hereditary, and The Others, which we covered in our first season. And also, we added, We Need to Talk About Kevin, and the Fall of the House of Usher the 1928 version, and Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. So beyond the first two, which I think are just kind of really relevant to the Babadook for their discussions of motherhood and things of that nature. I put, we need to talk about Kevin in this list for similar reasons, like it deals with motherhood. I think it's interesting. It's almost kind of like the shadow version of the Babadook, where, as I was talking about earlier, where I kind of felt that at some point, Samuel the sun actually was kind of the root of the problem. And it was something that the mother was not being believed in, when she talked about there is this problem, which is kind of what's at the heart of We Need to Talk About Kevin, except it doesn't take the turn that The Babadook does it actually, without getting too much into spoilers. The kid kind of is the problem there. And the mother is all of her ambivalent

feelings about motherhood are completely dismissed when she sees something wrong. And it erupts pretty horrifically in the end of that. So it kind of called to mind things of that nature. How about some of the other things on the list? Jessi, what did you connect to The Babadook?

**J** Jessi Chartier 44:31

Well, I added fall the House of Usher for two reasons. One, just the storyline of mental deterioration is a great example. In Poe, you know, it's just a wonderful piece, but specifically the 1928 movie because of a Jennifer Kent used a lot of or was inspired by I should say that that movie in regards to German existentialism in regards to cinematography, so check that out if you're both interested in kind of a similar field. have mental deterioration and have a look and feel for the movie. And then I always love to add Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, anytime we talk about internal demons kind of coming to surface because it's just a great classic. And it's just a if you haven't read it, it's it's a good read.

**J** Jen Myers 45:19

I actually have not read it. So I should do that. It's a good book.

**J** Jessi Chartier 45:22

It's a good classic. Just no, it's a classic.

**J** Jen Myers 45:25

It's funny how sometimes that happens. You know, there's, there's some books that are like people talk about and you're like, I wonder if it's really that good. And then you read it. And it's like, oh, yeah, it actually was like, good.

**J** Jessi Chartier 45:34

Yeah, as long as you remember the historical nature of it, right? Like it's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. So it's, it's a classical piece. Sure. If you'd like to learn more about quiet little horse, you can find us at quiet little horse calm. We're also on Instagram at quiet little horse. And on Twitter at quiet horse, you can email us at Hello at quiet little horse.com Make sure you check us out on all your favorite podcast services, and make sure you subscribe to get updated.

**J** Jen Myers 46:08

Next up, we are going to tackle the work of Shirley Jackson, which I'm very excited about. She's a particular favorite of mine. So our next full episode is going to be on the film The Haunting. And in between that we're going to start a new mini episode format. And so we'll have smaller episodes in between our full episodes that has some usually related content or some other topics that we want to talk about in between.



Jessi Chartier 46:33

Well, Jen, this has been a lot of fun. Thanks for joining me today. Thank you. We'll see you next time. Bye.