

QLH-S02E04: The Wailing

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SPEAKERS

Jessi Chartier, Jen Myers

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 00:17

Before we get started as a reminder, when we talk about movies, we need to talk about everything in the movie. So there will be spoilers involved. If you haven't seen the movie or want to refresh your memory before you listen, you can stop now and do that before coming back. Let's talk about The Wailing. In The Wailing, a film from 2016, a police officer investigates a strange illness overtaking a small village in South Korea. As he's drawn deeper into the mystery, his daughter's life hangs in the balance while he struggles to comprehend what is happening.

J Jessi Chartier 00:56

This movie, this movie, it's a lot. I have never seen The Wailing. So this is the first time I saw it for this podcast, it had kind of like popped up and down on some lists of mine, but never really caught my attention. And I'm really glad we decided to add it because it's it's really I'm not a connoisseur of South Korean films. But I really the site really enjoyed it was not what I expected. It was long. So if you're planning on watching it, my friends do plan to sit down for two and a half hours. And I got a lot to talk about it. So but before we get into that, Jen, how did you how did you discover this film? Because this was one of your recommendations?

J Jen Myers 01:39

Yeah, I think I think like you mentioned, it pops up on a lot of lists of horror movies, I think often kind of underrated horror movies, especially for people like us coming from, you know, an American or Western film reference. So I think that, like you said, this one is a little bit difficult

for maybe larger audiences to get into, it's really long as a foreign film. And, you know, those are a couple things, which, you know, us, us, CDs are fine with, of course, but, you know, for larger audiences, sometimes those things are challenges. And so I just think this isn't as widely known as, I don't know, maybe it should be, I think it's I also really liked this movie, it's yeah, it's a journey. It's definitely a journey. I'm not necessarily an expert in South Korean film or anything like that. But I have been trying to get more into it recently, just because most of its that I can see is really, really good. And they're doing a lot of really great stuff. And so this was one of my attempts to be like, I wanna I want to get into some of these movies that I hear some buzz about, and that I don't know a lot about going in. And this was one that I think I first saw it a year or so ago. And it kind of blew my mind at the time. And then I rewatched it recently for the podcast, and it kind of blew my mind all over again, I had kind of forgotten that there's so much in this film that I feel like even though it was stuck in my head as something Oh, I liked that. And there was a lot going on there. I think I had forgotten some of the details of it. So when I rewatched it, those all came back and I just kind of rediscovered it and liked it all over again. Which was which was fun. This is not a fun movie though, sorry. That's a weird word. I should we should be really clear. This is. This is a journey. Like you said, Jesse. It's long. And it's it's kind of challenging.

J

Jessi Chartier 03:25

It is so yeah, I mean, all the films that we watch have merit to them, right. So this reminded me a lot of Oh, the name escapes me, I'm gonna have to put it in the show notes. But the Chicago International Film Festival last year, I did a film from Brazil, I want to say and it was a folklore that followed a man as he was he was an older, older man of African descent, I think being run working in a dairy farm that was run by Austrians, and is treated like crap because he's treated like an indentured servant. And it's his journey of descending into his heritage. And there was so much kind of just story of the and not even just story, but just like tie ins to folk culture of his particular area. And it reminded me similar like the wailing reminded me of that too. There's so much cultural story going on. But as a an I agree, I'm not a connoisseur either. I mean, let's I am a white woman in Chicago, so I'm just gonna call it out. But I was still able to really connect with that and be able to see that and they did it in such a way that is beautiful. Like to honor that that cultural tion. And I think that one of the things that I really that drew me into this was even though all those points were approachable and accessible, you were still really connected to the main character because you yourself didn't quite know what was going on like he's trying to grapple with? Well, how realistic is this? How can I rely on science? Can I rely on common sense? Do I need to return to religion? Do I need to return to customs? Like what do I need to do in order to address the conflict that is directly in front of me. And for those of you who haven't seen it, the direct conflict is that there is an illness going around the village, that appears as a ration boils, and that eventually drives its victim insane to the point A where they become homicidal, where they end up killing people around them. So that's the direct kind of conflict. And this, our main character is a police officer, or detective. But what is key in this is that the village is there is a rumor, but it's a strong belief that there is a stranger who lives on the outskirts of town who is of Japanese descent. And everyone believes that he is the reason that all of these things are happening. So there's like, there's just there's just, you could read a lot into it. I mean, obviously, the most surface level is xenophobia, right? Like this stranger who is an outsider has come in, and is now causing things to happen. And I do not know enough of relationship between South Korea and Japan to even be able to understand where that comes from. And so I'm not even I can't speak to that, but it's clear that it's there.

J Jen Myers 06:30

Yeah, and I again, I am also not an expert in this. I know a little bit about it, I can recommend if people would like to learn a little bit about that, at least through a fictionalized way, I recommend the book Pachinko by Min Jin Lee, I apologize, too. If I'm not pronouncing those correctly. It's it's yeah, it's a challenge for me, I'm gonna do my best Pachinko is a really great, wonderful novel about a family, it goes through several generations of a Korean family that emigrate to Japan. And it really helped me understand a lot of the ways in which that was difficult to how the Korean immigrants were kind of treated as second class citizens in a lot of way, and kind of kind of regulated to their own lesser well tended areas and neighborhoods. And there is hopefully this isn't a spoiler, but there is literally a character in that novel, who is, quote, unquote, Japanese passing. So even though he comes from Korean descent, he passes as Japanese. And when he's discovered, he's kind of unveiled, it's a huge deal. We had a little bit of the opposite of that in the wailing I felt or if I felt at least, like I could kind of see it from the opposite perspective, where we have a, a Japanese man who lives as an outsider in a small South Korean village, or on the outskirts of a small South Korean village. And so I feel like me, I don't want to overstate it. And maybe it's just a fact that he's a weird dude living by himself in the woods, and nobody knows who he is. And that makes people a little bit worried about him. But it does seem that the fact that they make a point of mentioning he is also a Japanese man, and when they go to talk to him, after they start suspecting him, and the police go to talk to him, they definitely, you know, check his papers and ask him some questions about why, why he's there. And you definitely do get a sense of like, they're not 100% cool with the fact that he is who he is. And he's there.

J Jessi Chartier 08:27

Yeah, yeah, there's just a lot of there's just so much to the stranger to the character. I don't they don't ever give him an actual name, either. They just refer to him as either the Japanese man or the stranger. So he's nameless, and he wouldn't when we see him, he is always just so stoic. He's not angry. He's not riled up. He's not happy. He's just present. What I like about it, too, is that he, so we've got the the xenophobia of this outsider. And he's different, which is always I shouldn't say always, but in in most stories, when you talk about like, true evil, it's usually the opposite of whatever is considered true. Good. So like, in Christianity, if you hang a crucifix upside down, that's a sign of the devil, right? Because it's the opposite of what it's supposed to be. So it's like that, that opposite piece to it. And so what I like about what they did, I just want to talk real quickly about this, like the first time we see this man, this stranger he's fishing, and there's so much allusion to him as a fisher of men. Which is, of course, how a lot of people refer to Jesus, and it even opens the whole movie opens with the quote from the Bible, about the doubting Thomas if you're familiar with any of the Bible stories, so the idea is that In the Christian faith, the idea that Jesus dies comes back to life. And he just shows up in front of his disciples and the guys are all like, oh, how can you be real? Or Tom at this one particular one is how can you be real? And in the story, Jesus says something to the effect of how can I be dead I am flesh and blood come touch me. And of course, then Thomas puts his hands on Jesus to make sure that he's real. And there are, so there's already like, that opens with it. So you're already like, started off as an audience member with this, like, Hey, you don't really know what dead and alive really is. Regard like, you're not quite sure. If someone is dead or alive, we're introduced as Thomas as this sense of doubt of like, okay, who is that, but then we're also immediately introduced to this fisher of men, who is not your traditional fisher of men in the Christian sense. He is like fishing for souls. And there's a lot of illusion and references back to that. And then at the very end, so even with the the xenophobia, there's this

outside stranger that is different than us. There's also lots of typical, they are ideas around being considered evil, which are not necessarily xenophobic, but our traditional incense and that it's the opposite of good. So like, if you come into the SIS, this, this country, and you are doing things differently, you're you're evil. And I just thought that that was just a really nice use of a very common metaphor when it comes to evil. Like they used it kind of throughout the whole movie where you aren't really sure if this. I mean, you're led to believe very early on that this is least this was my emotional journey. All right, here we go. emotional journey of Jesse during the wailing was, okay, this guy is just such an outsider, and everybody's been xenophobic. And then more stuff starts to happen. And then you get to his house and you discover he's got this shrine in the back to everyone who's dead. He's got his ancestral altar that is different than I think what people would consider a traditional ancestral altar. So you start to think, okay, yeah, maybe this guy is a little crazy. Like maybe he's not the devil, but maybe he is causing something. Maybe he brought some kind of bio weapon or whatever. And then more things start to happen. And you're like, Okay, no, it's definitely this guy. Like, yes, 100% this guy. And then you look at the clock, and you're like, What the hell we have an hour left. And if you're a clock watcher for movies, like I am, I'm like, Ooh, what's gonna happen? Like, there's more to go and it just the everything just then starts to turn starts to spin like on a top so that you don't know your your true north your equilibrium of like, what's right, what's wrong, is totally thrown off for like, the last 40 minutes of the film. And you're like, Wait, I don't Is he the guy? Or is it this other thing? But what's this? What?

J Jen Myers 13:04

Yeah, there's there's a lot of that. And I think you're really right and sketching out how kind of the film guides your thoughts and emotions along I think it's interesting to point out when you're talking about kind of like the the xenophobic reactions in the beginning, I think the film is really aware of the fact that that's how the characters are coming off and want you to understand them that way. Like they're not necessarily when we'll get into this a little bit more but the primary character the police officer, the father and in his his other his colleague, I got definitely got the sense that these are kind of bumbling small town police officers who are almost immediately in over their head when these this illness and these murders start going on. And you do get the sense innocent when they go talk to that Japanese man that they're a little bullying like, like, they don't trust him, and you're not sure exactly why he says like, oh, it seems like a nice old man. Maybe he's a little odd. He's out here all alone in the woods, but he hasn't done anything wrong. And I do think the film wants you to kind of like, interrogate that. Like, I understand that maybe the people we're following around, have some some, I don't know, maybe weaknesses, I guess. But I think that maybe this can get us into the conversation. That one of the other themes or subtext in this film beyond the xenophobia is kind of looking at masculinity. And I think that's one of the ways where you're looking at the men who are the primary characters and the actors the doers in the in this film, but you see them encounter especially the the main character, a lot of situations where they come up short and you start to see that their their reactions, they don't know really how to process these things that are happening. And basically, I was left with the impression of like, these people are not just stymied by this particular situation, that they kind of just he's stymied by the world in the modern world. and their lives in the world, they just seem like they got left completely behind and they have no idea what to do about it.

J Jessi Chartier 15:05

You know, that's really interesting you say that because I remember when they were at the stranger's house, going through things, and they found these hidden areas that were very disturbing. Maybe it was just, I maybe I've just watched too much Law and Order. But I was like, why are you questioning him about this? Like, he shows up, and they're like, sorry, that we didn't mean to disturb your house, which I understand there's cultural differences there, because I'm an American. So like, my assumption is, but they're also police officers. So like, I was very surprised that they didn't, culturally do what they needed to do. Right. But then continue to question him and be like, so you got this altar in the back of your house with pictures of all the dead people? Can you talk to me about that at all? Like, we didn't get the impression they did that, we just get the impression that they ran away with their tail tucked between their legs. And that was just really different to me.

J Jen Myers 16:03

Yeah, well, they also broke into find those things, too. So I don't know if that is his his kind of so I don't know if that was his into it. But it also kind of does, you know, lead to your point that I don't know, it feels like there's a better way or more efficient way, they could be handling this whole thing. You know, like, they only find that because they they break into his house and start like pushing into things. And then they kind of basically are like freaking out about it. And you're right, they don't have like a plan of action necessarily. They are reacting, they're not really like, you know, making decisions and going through with them. And I think that that actually does kind of come around to the same thing we're talking about here is that they're very reactive, and that is not going to cut it in this situation.

J Jessi Chartier 16:46

Yeah, the lack of lack of that's not the right word. But the the question of, you know, we talk about evil being turned on its head a little bit, it's really interesting that the main character is a police officer who should be able to protect his family, especially his daughter, and other people, but he can't. Right. So it's, again, there's that sense that something is off. Like there's this expectation of men of just the masculine toxicity. Let's just talk about that, like just the assumption that men should have a stereotype to them that they should be strong, they should be versatile, they should be like, all of these other things. But none of the police are not, I would go as far as to say none, none of the police officers fit that kind of stereotype. And in fact, the only one who really fits that stereotype are the stranger. Because he's also a very handsome man. Let's face it. He's a handsome man. And the shaman who is just like gorgeous, like this young, gorgeous, confident man who Yeah, to talk about this. Yeah, go for it.

J Jen Myers 17:52

Not not not just the young handsome man, although that is entirely true. But yeah, so like as a point. So we've got to a point in the in the story where the illness is sprouting out, people are being horrifically murdered, like they murder their families and stuff, like and friends and things like that. And so and it's becoming an epidemic, like acute is popping up in different homes. And so it's starting to, and I think that what starts to really get things getting in deep is when they do break into the stranger's home and they find his, his his altar and all of his collected items, I believe, isn't it there they find the daughter shoe. Yes. And so our main character finds

his daughter shoe there, and now he sees there's a connection there. And then I think that that leads into the dark, the daughter does start acting out in very strange ways. And so now we have her in peril. So I think that there is a turn here and when things start getting increasingly out of control, yeah, the the police officers are kind of like South Korean Barney Fifes. Like they don't know what to do, you know, and there are shots of them like hanging out at the police their offices, and they do seem like I think one time like one of them is reading like a manga or something like you know, they don't seem like they this is really their, their deal. They're not used to dealing with birders, they're not used to dealing with these types of things going on. And frankly, who is I get that, but they are definitely portrayed that way. And so then when the danger starts coming into his this man's family, and they start realizing and recognizing and admitting at least the like his wife and I believe it's his mother in law, or is it his mother? No, it's his mother. Okay, as a mother.

J Jessi Chartier 19:35

No, it's got to be his mother in law because he, he claimed that she was sick.

J Jen Myers 19:40

Okay, yeah, that's right. They bring in a shaman. And yes, and the shaman I feel like is what really lends this contrast. I feel like if you weren't really aware of how the the main men characters were being portrayed, and kind of in a kind of like an ineffectual lights. You see that when the sheman shows up because he's such a contrast. He's, he's this young, handsome, confident man. And he comes in, and he's like, I know what is going on here. And I know what we need to do to fix it. And I'm going to do that. And it's such a sharp contrast before what you've seen before, that you, for me, at least, it's like it really cemented all these things that we're talking about. It's like, okay, I see how they're setting this up now. And he just comes in, like, blazing. And anyway, so he starts to, he says, there's a very evil spirit here. And I have to get rid of it. And that's when we get into some really beautiful visual of the ceremony of him trying to exercise this evil spirit, which is really interesting. And that goes back to what we're talking about as folklore. This is a really interesting film and the folk horror discussion because I feel most of the films in that canon are Western. And that this is an Eastern folklore that has all kinds of different things coming in the way that culture does, you have the Christianity aspect, but you also have this traditional aspect of magic and spirits and shamans. And it's really interesting how those things are all mixing together in this movie.

J Jessi Chartier 21:12

Yeah, I would love I would love to be able to get someone to help us understand the historical melding of traditional religion when Christianity first came in to South Korea, because the way that the we're assuming remember, folks that you all have watched the movie, so we're gonna spoil a lot here, but like, especially towards the end, where you shift from. Okay, is this a Christian devil? Is this a hungry ghost? Is this something different? Like, what religion does this evil fit in? Because that will help solve the problem, right? They start with the shaman. And it seems like it's working, but then they abandon it, because they're afraid it's going to kill their daughter. So then they go to Christianity, and Christianity basically says, can't do anything. And they've already tried science. So they take matters then into their own hands. And that was

when the group of men basically go up and try and find and we can talk about that too, in a minute. But then even after that, when the woman in white shows up, you're like, Okay, well, who's she? Like, is she? Is she? Good? Is she evil? Like, we have now been trained to want to compartmentalize these strangers? Are they good? Are they bad? Right? And so all of that, then is thrown into this contrast in this question at the end, where the main character is told by the woman in white, no, no, I'm here to help you by the shaman. No, no, she's here to kill you. I'm here to help you, and the daughter who's kind of going off the rails. So like, you don't know, you don't really know what to compare. You can't really compartmentalize it. It's not, that's not the right way to approach it. But even there, there's that sense of like intermingling of like, well, what? Where does Christianity fit within all this? Where does traditional beliefs fit into all of this? Where does science fit into all of this, like, you want to fit things into it, and you can't and it just it adds to the tension of that last scene, which I think is just beautiful.

J Jen Myers 23:20

I feel like the kind of the underlying message of this film is that there is no black and white there is not even in and this is what should we go ahead and get into a little bit of how this does end up. Yeah. And like so once you get past the Well you mentioned the part where and this this is another thing that feeds into kind of the men suffering from their own and effects and effectiveness they basically decide they're all gonna go kill the stranger at some point. So they literally have like, kind of, you know, pitchforks grouped together to go destroy the monster in the woods and that is an interesting thing where it's another reaction and they so they did they do end up killing him don't they? Are they think they did? No, they think no, no, the okay see, this is where things start getting twisted right things start getting twisty so they go up

J Jessi Chartier 24:11

to the cabin. And they run into we think is his first victim Park Park Shin I think his name is

J Jen Myers 24:22

so and by first victim you mean who who we are taught to think as the strangers or who had the spirits first victim correct one and the flashback earlier? Yeah, we saw a flashback earlier in the film.

J Jessi Chartier 24:33

Yep, that's exactly right. So he comes back to life. And so the group of men are up at the stranger's house. The victim is now zombified, comes walking through and attacks the men and they eventually kill him. I don't remember how because it takes them a while to like, get kills. Regardless if they

J Jen Myers 24:56

ended up. I think he's the one that don't they chase him onto the road

ended up. I think he's the one that don't they chase him onto the road.

J Jessi Chartier 25:00

No, that's that's different.

J Jen Myers 25:02

Oh gosh, this later Oh, that's later confused. So So I have seen this film twice by the way,

J Jessi Chartier 25:07

somehow they kill him. I mean, he doesn't die from a rake being he doesn't die from being stabbed in the head. He doesn't die from being cracked over the head with a rock. I. Oh, that's right. He dies on his own from whatever infection he has. That's right. That's right. So he dies on his own. And, and it

J Jen Myers 25:27

can I throw in real quick when we're talking about twists, because so we mentioned the zombie. He is brought back to life by the stranger. And that is presented in a scene that is counterpoint to one of the rituals being done by the shaman. And so it's presented that these two are working magic against each other. But you're not sure for what purpose? Yes, you're not sure at that point. That's exactly and so especially and so one of the thing that's going to be revealed later, shortly here is that maybe the shaman is not on the up and up and then you start wondering was the stranger actually the good one who was right working against the shaman? But we should also be clear that the stranger did bring this guy back as a zombie, but we don't and so

J Jessi Chartier 26:10

this we don't know that for certain. So here's how it goes. Nope, we don't so the the stranger is running away from the group of men. I'm gonna back up. Group man, no. Again, I've seen this group of men show up at the stranger's house, a stranger runs away before they arrive. He runs to his first victim which is this guy in a truck and he gets there and discovers that there are candles and incense and a variety of other things outside the truck and he opens the truck and the body of his first victim is gone. Then we cut back to the stranger's house and the group of men are being attacked by this now zombified first victim, zombified first victim dies. The men see the stranger in the woods watching, terrified, and the stranger takes off. And they take after after him. They lose him in the woods. And so they get on there, they get into their truck and drive away, and we see the stranger in the woods, watching them drive away. And then we see him notice a girl in white, and she freaks out and runs away, and the stranger chases her. Then, as the men are driving down from this man's house that's in the middle of a mountain. Something hits the men's truck, the car, and they freak out. They're like, Oh, my God was out of body. So they get out of the truck, they go back to what had hit them. And it turns

out, it was the stranger who is now dead. I remember so then they grow. So they're all like excited, because they're like, yes, this guy's dead kills them doesn't matter. So then they push him over the edge of the cliff to push them farther into the valley. And there's a scene where we're focused on the main character, and you can see the woman in white up above, just watching. So now we're like, okay, cool, cool. Evil is over. We're all good. So main character goes back daughter is now healthy. everything's on the up and up. This is where stuff gets real.

J Jen Myers 28:16

Yeah, yeah, cuz that wasn't confusing enough. If Yeah, if you have not seen this movie, also, you probably have no idea what we're talking about now. But it's like, that's just the beginning of the confusing twist. Yes.

J Jessi Chartier 28:28

So the twists and turns at the end. So basically, what ends up happening is, everybody goes home, everybody's happy. The shaman starts to freak out. Because he sees the woman in white. And the woman in white says Get out. And he's like, he has this violent blood vial vomits reaction. And so he's like, Oh, shit. So he calls the dad and says, I was wrong. The old man, the stranger was not the one that was casting the spells. It was this woman in white. And he was actually another Shaman. This old man, the stranger was a shaman trying to kill her. So now you're like, Oh, my God. What? So now we've, and so then we're like, Okay, well, we got to figure out what to do with this woman. So the husband, the main character shows up and sees the woman and she calls him over and they start to talk and she says, of course, no, I'm here to protect the village. The Shaman was in it with the stranger. They are the ones that are infecting. Now you're like what the hell?

J Jen Myers 29:29

Right? You're like okay, what I also do just to throw in this as I think it is when she when the two of them are having their conversation. I think that's also when so we didn't get too deep into this but and you had mentioned when they they tried Christianity, there is a cousin of I think the the main characters partner who is a priest in training, and that guy is going to visit the stranger. And isn't that I think that's happening at the same time, isn't it? Oh, the

J Jessi Chartier 29:57

strangers. They think the stranger is dead. And the deacon because he's not a full fledged police priest yet the deacon, I don't know, sir that goes back to the stranger's house and discovers there's an underground cave. And he goes down into the cave. And there lo and behold, is the stranger alive and pretty beat up, but definitely there. So we're cutting back and forth between what's going on with the main character and the daughter has now reverted back to herself. Yeah, and we get the impression that she is either in the process of killing her grandmother and her mom, for is going to be okay. But we don't see that. Everything hangs in the balance. Yep. We're left with Do we believe the shaman? So the shaman is trying to get

back to the house because he says that it's this white woman in white that's causing it. Woman in White says no, it was the shaman. And the stranger, the deacon is with the stranger. And is like telling him you need to tell me who you are.

J Jen Myers 31:05

And who is he Jessi?

J Jessi Chartier 31:09

So we, if you haven't watched the film, you need to go watch the film because the ending of that tension. So that tension, because it's not necessarily just about who is to blame. It's not who is the evil? Because you have in addition to that tension, you have no idea if the daughter is killing anybody at the moment. And this man has no idea. So he's caught between, do I believe the woman in white and stay with her? Do I believe the shaman and go back into the house? If I if the woman in what white is right, I need to stay here if and everything will be fine. If I believe the shaman, I need to go back to save my daughter. But I have no idea if staying or going is going to lead to anyone else's death or my own. And it's like this just as wonderful. And it's done in such a way that it's not like bombastic. It's not super heightened attention. But it's enough to make you uncomfortable. You know, I think that that's one of the things I love about that particular scene is that you don't have this clear drive, right? Like, there's no big bombastic music. There's no like fast cutting back and forth between characters. It's just really uncomfortable. really uncomfortable.

J Jen Myers 32:40

And I think it's I think you're absolutely right. And I think that is largely uncomfortable. Because you also don't know what the right call is. I think that it's correct. We there's there's a lot of movies, and I'm sure some of them are good. But I think that we as movie watchers are trained to be like, Okay, we know what the right call is. And we're we're seeing how the character is working through that. Or it's like, you know, I think in a lot of movies, you kind of like know how it's going to have to end up and you know, that the main character is going to have to, you know, is going to make the right decision. And they're going to do those spoiler alert, that does not happen here. We also have no idea. So I think that makes it even more uncomfortable. Because we're like, well, they're well you do very shortly after, but there's definitely a moment and then we're like I don't I also don't have this information. I also don't know what should be done in this case. And I think that's what really heightens the discomfort in that. But yeah, should we should we get into then when we find out?

J Jessi Chartier 33:36

Yeah, so here's the best part about the movie. I've seen the movie, I've seen it. I just watched it yesterday to get myself refreshed on it and use even after it. I still don't know what the right call is. I know who the people are, at least I think I know who's who. But I don't know what the right call would have been if I could have gone back and like told that person what to do. But we discover that well, at least from the deacons perspective, that the stranger is in fact, an evil

spirit. And is in fact some sort of demon or devil we do discover that the daughter has gone crazy crazy and has killed mom and grand mother and father. And she's dead herself or close to dead herself. Because that's how they find her. We do learn that the shaman is in with the devil because he shows up and creates collects the artifacts and takes the pictures. We do not know who the woman in white is. We do not know what would have saved the family. We are left completely powerless.

J Jen Myers 34:48

Yeah. Yeah. I think that's one of the reasons why this film, you know, maybe is underrated or when I say it's challenging, I think ultimately is that because yeah, I do think that it does kinda land a little bit more on the side of like, the stranger was the bad dude. The Shaman was in league with him. The Woman in White was, I think she seems to be like, what I don't know if she was like another shaman like a real one or I, I've seen a couple things I've read about this refer to her as a ghost. And she is presented very ghost like, she's maybe she's a good spirit. But yeah, no, we never know about that. There's a lot of stuff at the end of this. And then also just the fact that it doesn't end well, he fails to protect his daughter. And that is what forms the closing scene of that there's actually a flashback of him remembering being on a amusement park ride with his daughter and happiness. And I think he is saying something like, I'll, I'll take care of you. I'll take care of it, that sort of thing. And that's how it ends. And so what I think is interesting about this is that even though there isn't a clear like right or wrong, this is what they should have done. I do think there is a little bit and I don't want to push this too much in my own agenda. But when we were talking a lot about like kind of masculinity and how the men's reactions are presented in this film, that there is something for me in the fact with his he was presented with the options of believing the shaman that that young, confident man whose showed it and said he knew exactly what was going on, and he could fix it, and also associated with that other strong Beol man out in the woods, and that they did this trust, but you know, still fit into that mold. And then on the other hand, there's this young woman who is saying, I can you just have to trust me. And she does say that she put up a charm. So you can't you can't cross that you can't break that they will your family will be safe if you stay here. And so I think there might be something in there again, this is maybe protecting a little bit, but I think there is something in there where she's a quiet, mysterious figure who is please just kind of pleading with him to not act to not react to to stay still to you know, not just do and jump into something without thinking about it or just because that's what he feels he has to do. She's asking a woman is asking him to not do anything. And he can't do that. And so that's also something that's interesting to me about this.

J Jessi Chartier 37:18

Yeah, there's a it's just such a fun character to play with and look at. You know, and I think that that's what I like about it is that there's clarity around who the men are at the end, or their roles. There's not real clarity around her, but we assume that she's on their side. But we see trinkets and the charm, the charm that she has put up is the same charm that we saw it the first house, and that didn't protect the first house. So I think that there's just like, we're kind of left with a sense that sometimes evil does prevail. And sometimes it's caused by human nature, you know? Yeah, good I ever done. Yeah.



J Jen Myers 37:58

Good night, everyone. Sometimes, sometimes evil wins, everybody dies.

J Jessi Chartier 38:03

That's it. That's our show on ends. So well. I

J Jen Myers 38:05

mean, no, no, I think there's actually a lot of really interesting things about doing that. And having the courage even a lot of the films that, you know, we talk about, you know, horror films that are psychological that dig deep, that don't necessarily follow, you know, quote, unquote, traditional horror patterns. And yet, this is this type of ending is still a little bit unusual for us. We've, I think a lot of the films we've talked about. And I've definitely seen other films that have this kind of bleak type of ending as well. But this one, I feel like, really, really has this existential note of this is, you know, this is it, man, what are you going to do? And there's something and I think that's another reason why you know, this film is so challenging is because it is not going to get you a a comforting catharsis. It's, it's not going to wrap anything up for you. And I don't even just mean like, kind of in a narrative sense. It's not going to wrap up the things that you're feeling for you. It just lets you sit with them. And you have to have to deal with that. And that's it

J Jessi Chartier 39:12

as humans, we're not good at that. We're not good at that at all. But yeah,

J Jen Myers 39:15

but that I think that's I think that's why this film, kind of maybe it, like I said, it's challenging for people or gets overlooked for that reason, but it's also why it's so valuable.

J Jessi Chartier 39:24

You know what else this reminded me of, and for those of you who haven't listened to our earlier podcasts, you might want to go back and watch it just reminded me a lot of The Witch because you have a lot of the book ending the same kind of thing. You have a lot of the uncomfortability you have a lot of folks story going on a lot of the metaphors, a lot of similar themes. So I think if people really liked I think if you really liked The Wailing, and you have not yet seen the witch, go watch The Witch because I think that you'll like that one as well. What would you recommend for people

J Jen Myers 39:56

so and we just did a mini episode on Parasite. And I would throw that in there not just because

they're both a South Korean films, but as we talked about when we we talked about the talked about parasite, we talked about the fact that it uses metaphor and subtext in a really clean, elegant, effective way. And I think that the wheeling has I think it has more layers going on. I think it's its subtext is a little more obscure. But I think that it also has an elegance to it. That is really, really wonderful to see in a film, I think. And it does have the connection of being made within a certain country and culture that I think is interesting to draw some parallels to I would also throw in the director of parasite Bong Joon Ho has his I believe his first film Memories of Murder, which actually has a lot more in common with The Wailing in terms of kind of it deals with characters who are fairly small town police, police officers, what Memories of Murder doesn't have the supernatural aspect. And so when the wailing starts twisting and turning them or is a murder about kind of does that thing where it stays still, and it it examines the effect that that has on people and which I just think it's a great film, and I would definitely throw that in there. I would also throw in another South Korean film that I like a lot is called thirst. And it's directed by Park chan Wook, who he directed a couple years ago, there was the Handmaiden film that came out which I think that was fairly well known. He also directed Stoker, which is an American film has Nicole Kidman and Matthew Goode in it but The Thirst is a South Korean film it stars Sang Kong Ho from parasite as a priest who is infected with tainted blood and becomes a vampire. And so I throw that in there because that has a lot of the same type of intermingling of religion, and folklore, and modern South Korean culture and all of those things going on. I see elements of that mixing from The Wailing as well, so I'd also say Thirst.

J Jessi Chartier 42:01

That sounds real good. Yeah, I like what I I liked all of the stuff that we talked about today with The Wailing I like the uncomfortability I love the the mix of supernatural folk and religion and science. I really liked how it tackled a little bit about the masculinity, and then covered it all up with a little bit of xenophobia, like it was just this really nicely packaged a storyline. For those of you who are going to watch it or have not watched it yet do keep in mind it is two and a half hours which is pretty long for a standard horror movie, if you will, but this is you know, definitely well worth it really just a lot of fun. And we hope that you enjoy it. So glad you joined us today if you want to get in contact with us. You can find us in a variety of areas of course our website quietlittlehorror.com, you can email us directly at hello at [quietlittlehorror.com](mailto:hello@quietlittlehorror.com) You can also find us on Twitter at [quiethorror](https://twitter.com/quiethorror), Instagram, [quietlittlehorror](https://www.instagram.com/quietlittlehorror) and of course your favorite podcasting app. You can find a Quiet Little Horrors. Thank you so much for joining us, everybody. Jen, what are we doing next time.

J Jen Myers 43:13

So next time we are going to be relocating to the American South and talking about Eve's Bayou.

J Jessi Chartier 43:20

I'm excited about that one.

J Jen Myers 43:21



Yeah, it's gonna be good. Thanks, everyone.



Jessi Chartier 43:23

We'll see you next time.