

QLH-S02E05: What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?

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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.

J Jessi Chartier 00:32

Let's talk about Whatever Happened to Baby Jane. In 1917 Baby Jane Hudson was a child vaudeville star pushed and spoiled by her fame hungry father. In adulthood her career flames out while her sister Blanche rises into a successful movie star. But after Blanche is crippled in a car accident, the two sisters age into a tense relationship bound by Blanche's dependence on Jane's caretaking and cracked by Jane's toxic combination of alcoholism, guilt and desire for days gone by. So Jen, my mother first told me about this movie, I think when I was in high school, and I never got around to watching it until just now. Oh, wow, that's not true. I started to watch it. And then something always interrupted me. It was like the universe just never wanted me to finish the movie. So I only ever got like 10 minutes into it. And which is a horrible place to be pulled out of any movie, but especially this one. Yeah. So I'm super glad we finally got to it. But because it's just I Oh, this movie, Bette Davis and Joan Crawford. You can't go wrong with those two.

J Jen Myers 01:42

Oh, yeah. No, that's it's such a it's really a good movie. And I know that sounds kind of silly. But

it has a reputation attached to it that I think makes it sound like it's more sensationalized or that it's all about, like, the grotesque aspects of the film. But it really has enough substance that it's like an actual good movie. It includes those aspects. But past that, there's more to it than that. I think I was a teenager when I first saw this. And it was one of the first kind of classic films I remember watching. And I think it is because of that reputation. I don't know exactly why. I was like, Well, this is, you know, you watch like Casablanca. And I don't know, Maltese Falcon. And then you're like, Yeah, next is Whatever Happened to Baby Jane is like, it's an it's very accessible for some reason. I mean, like, as

J

Jessi Chartier 02:34

a title, what I feel like the movie is, it's still so accessible, because it's, it's held up over time, like it is not aged, like it's very, everything that you deal with, or the characters deal with in this film, are very prevalent today. They are, unfortunately, very universal feelings. And there's just a sense of, you know, some of the horror movies that we kind of talk about on this podcast are a little bit more distance, they're more like metaphors for things that are going on, like the Babadook is a metaphor for grief. This movie doesn't have metaphors, it just like smacks you in the face with reality. And I think that because of that, it falls some people would say it falls more into a thriller than it does to a horror. But I think for me, at least, this reminded me a lot of the horror aspects of Carnival of Souls where there's, if you watch it from a feministic point of view, there's just this ever sense of dread, because especially in that the time period that takes place, the true autonomy and power of women was so fragile, like it could have been taken away at any point in time. And that's really for me, one of the things that was like a looming fear throughout this whole movie was the sense of, they're going to lose, everything was a house of cards, they're going to lose everything in a hot minute, at any point in time, because they're in show business, because they are women, because they're older women in show business, like there's just so much that the society is like, piled up against them. And so then when they start to turn on each other, it just becomes this sense of tension of like, oh my god, who's going to fall? Are she going to take the other road with her? What's going to happen? So for me, that was one of the reasons that I think this movie really holds true is there's just a lot of current reality to it as well.

J

Jen Myers 04:36

Yeah, no, I think you're absolutely right about that. And I think one of the other reasons that maybe it's still has it packs such a punch is what you just you said earlier is the the two leads, who are such forces, just like they, you know, they were in their earlier work, and they are in this film, and they were in real life and probably after this film and all of that, like, there there's such power for women, and putting them together and famously did not get along very well. So there's there is kind of a underlying tension. And of course, they're both of them were consummate professionals. And so I don't think that would get into the way of the film. But, you know, it's it's almost like I think, well, it hasn't been made into television and stories that there feud beyond the film, but I think it's really just because there are two incredibly powerful women who are put in the the system that you just described, and had to survive it. And they did survive it for this long. And so I think that is all swirling around in there, and also gives it this kind of reality still comes through today.



J Jessi Chartier 05:42

Yeah, I think it's interesting, because I remember texting you while I was watching it, and I was just blown away by Bette Davis's portrayal of Jane. And your response was just so poignant. It was like, so I had said, here for the audience, I'm gonna actually read the text, because I feel like this was like, you hit it spot on where it was. So I had said, you know, Bette Davis does an amazing job in this movie. And your response was, she knew which role was Meteor? And I feel like it's so true. Like, if I can't imagine the negotiations and the arguments that must have gone on between Joan and Bette, about who is taking what role?

J Jen Myers 06:18

Yeah, well, and it's funny to not to get like too deep into this, but I do think, I don't know if Joan would have taken this role because she likes to be the star. And she and she like to definitely, like be the center of things. But and this is from someone who's watched a lot of films like including not too long ago, the infamous Trogg that she made in the 70s about like, the missing link, I actually watched that film, Criterion Channel did a very comprehensive Joan Crawford collection recently, oh, my God never seen this all watch it. It's a horrible movie. But she she, she still maintains an incredible amount of dignity in that film. And so I think that that was her bag. I don't think she would have been willing to go as far as Bette Davis was in terms of like, you know, just completely out there. slovenly. You know, for lack of a better term craziness. Yeah. But that is in this film. I mean, Bette Davis wasn't afraid to go there. And she knew she knew what was going on. She knew that this was the role that was going to really get most of the attention. And I think I think it was an is,

J Jessi Chartier 07:31

well, two things to comment on that one. Yeah, I agree with you, especially because I think it was only a few years earlier that she had done Hush, Hush Sweet Charlotte, which also required the instability of a spurned lover who lost her lover in the Civil War, but was also aging and she had kind of like, gone insane, like the typical trope of crazy woman. And so I feel like this is one where, I don't know I'm really glad that she was paired with Joan Crawford if there was that rivalry, because I feel like she had more reason to bring home to the role. And just, she's so great. And her, her I just can't get over her acting like she's so authentic in her spiraling down, and her merry go round of craziness, but it's not craziness. Like you can see that she is in pain, like you can see that she is lost. And it's just, I don't know if it's because I'm not a teenager watching this movie now. But like, I watch her and it's like, both characters, both characters. I totally relate to and I'm like, Yes, Jane, I get it like these days gone by and then also for Blanche, you know, there was I was talking to a friend about this movie, and my friend was like, Oh, I hate that movie. Blanche doesn't stand up for herself. I'm like, clearly you've never been in a toxic abusive relationship, because Blanche does exactly what people in those relationships. Do. You know, the gaslighting that Jane does, like trying to manage the entire emotional state of someone else. Like it was just really well written, really well acted. And the fear is constant it's ever present. You know?

J Jen Myers 09:21

It's just ah, yeah, no, I agree with to it was interesting to be able to, like I had not watched this film in many years. I think I saw two or three times when I was younger, because it really did. I

him in many years. I think I saw two or three times when I was younger, because it really did. I really did like it when I was younger than I hadn't because I had seen it, you know, a couple times. I hadn't seen it in a really long time. And it is interesting. You talk about having like kind of sympathies with these characters and I definitely had sympathy with both then and I definitely do now. I will say that I think I had more sympathy with Blanche when I was younger. And you know, I wasn't in that type of relationship. I was definitely a lot more kind of passive quieter. Not wanting to say things out loud, you know, that sort of even if it were difficult or painful for me, that sort of thing. So I think that I was almost like entirely on Blanche's side completely when I was younger watching it, and I think, you know, to a certain extent, this is a very nuanced film, I don't think that that you're supposed to be picking sides necessarily or that if you're paying attention, everything in film that you can, but you know, yeah, you do, especially when you're at different places in your life. I when I was younger, I was like, I'm like, more so on Blanche's side, and definitely rewatching it now it's the opposite. And like, I have a lot more sympathy for Jane than I think I did when I was younger. And I think that's partially what you mentioned, there is a part of me that is a little bit like, I want it wanting Blanche to do this or that, even though I understand why she's not, there's part of me now is kind of like, well, we'll do this do that. But also just understanding Jane a lot more. There's, there's so much nuance, like you said in that performance, where she never seems that she's just like wilding out completely, and she never seems like coldly manipulative either. Like she's she's a very warm character in some ways. And I don't necessarily mean friendly, but you know, like, just she's not cold and distant. She's, even when she is like, being manipulative, you don't get the sense that this is part of some grand plan that she's constructed from, you know, on high and is enacting very carefully. She's just like acting out and like you said, acting from this pain. And it's twisted her and I think you I really got a sense that I feel like Jane is a monster that was definitely made not

J Jessi Chartier 11:42
100% 100%. That's the key

J Jen Myers 11:45
of it for me. And it really came through so much more than it did when I was younger, of the sense of like, this girl never had a chance. From the very beginning. She has been twisted and molded into what she is basically.

J Jessi Chartier 12:01
Yeah, and I think that you can't watch this movie, and not talk about it in relation to the me to movement. And in relation to the horrible way we treat child stars, or at least we have in the past. I'm assuming it's still as bad. But I don't you know, hindsight is always 2020. Right?

J Jen Myers 12:24
Hopefully, it's not as bad. But there's still a certain aspect of it like, especially as a parent, I can't imagine it ever being completely good.

J

Jessi Chartier 12:31

Right? Right, exactly. So like, the treatment of young minds in show business is very dangerous. And I think that it can and has proven to be very detrimental to growth, and you know, development and all that stuff. And then on top of it, she's female, in an era where there were very few opportunities for women to have true power, and have true control over their lives. And so I want to talk a little bit about the role of women in this movie, because there are not very many men in this movie, which I think is really an interesting choice. But also the men who do appear. are, you know, what I like about them is that they're not caricatures. The men are not caricatures. They are representative of the time. And you're kind of rooting for them. Like the men that you do meet, like, you're kind of rooting for them to be more than they are. You know, like, there's the one studio exec, who defends blanches decisions around chain and all the like. And then you have the typical executive producer, I guess, or director, who is just not cruel, but pretty, I would say pretty stereotypical angry man, smoking a lot, blaming her for a bunch of stuff. But then like, his counterpart is very genteel, if you will very, like, yeah, I understand where she's coming from, which was great. And then I was convinced that the doctor was going to totally dismiss blanches phone call, I was convinced that he was going to be like, no, no, you're fine. Because that's what happens in the medical field a lot of times is that women are not really listened to. And so I was pleasantly surprised that that was not his reaction. And so I was like, Yeah, good job, doctor. And then of course, he believes the phone call back. But no, yeah. Yeah. That's that's that that's not how we react. And then Edwin, who is kind of his own con artist and training, which I I just I love Edwin because he's, he's just so like, you want him to win because that means that Jane will stop her shenanigans. Hmm. But he's not despicable. There's no men in this show, or in this movie that are despicable. I would say

J

Jen Myers 14:55

maybe with the exception of in the very beginning her father,

J

Jessi Chartier 14:59

the father Other good call Jen.

J

Jen Myers 15:03

He is a figure I again, I don't know if it was just like I'm older now or I have a kid now, but for some reason like the introduction part, which actually goes on for a little bit, like really hit me a lot harder than I ever remember doing before. And a lot of it is, is due to kind of like what I said before is you kind of see from the beginning that I felt like Jane never really had a chance. And even though in the beginning, she's depicted as like, she is a spoiled brat. And she, you know, is I forget what she's yelling about wanting in the beginning after the show. And her father's like, yeah, sure, we'll do this. But it also like you, I really got a sense. He's not like, you know, slapping her around or anything, but you really got the sense of like, he is the driving force behind all of this. And then you see the mother and Blanche as a little girl off to the side and her mother's seeing everything happen. And it's just clear that he is pursuing these goals. And that's all that really matters. And everybody else pays the price that they pay for it. And Jane is

actually probably playing one of the biggest prizes except nobody knows that at the time. Right. One thing that really stuck in my mind about him too, later on when Jane, like in the present day of the film, when Jane is talking to Edwin and they start talking about fathers, and I think she's talking about her father died when he was young. But he said something about he was a musician too, or he could have I think Edwin was saying the same thing about his father and I got the sense of like, this sounds like it was set up, Jane's father was set up as a typical, I

J Jessi Chartier 16:42

can't, I didn't succeed, I can't do this. So I'm going to do it through my kid type thing. So I don't know, he really stuck out to me this time around watching the film as the key to a lot of everything we're talking about not only the characters, but also like this whole system we're talking about. It's interesting. So the scene that you're talking about where she's eating ice cream, and or not eating but demanding ice cream, and the father is like, no, no, no, and then eventually gives in right, which is a horrible parenting. But I mean, I can't say that because like, I know that there are times you need to give in. Like there are many battles certain cases, yes, yeah, certain battles, you are not willing to die on those hills, I totally get it. But the movie is meant to give you the impression that this happens all the time. So but if you turn the closed captioning on the daughters and the mothers because it's predominantly women who are standing outside waiting for Baby Jane to come out, see this, and they say things like I've always blamed the parents, or if my child ever said that, like there's a lot of parental blame put there. And I think that that was just a really wise choice, because it was very clear, right that we were meant to believe that this father was just not doing right by his children.

J Jen Myers 17:59

Right, which I mean, from what we see, I'm inclined to think that's actually the case. And not just because of that particular circumstance. But the whole act of like, like, it doesn't seem that even Jane doesn't seem to be enjoying the performance as much as she enjoys what she gets from the performance. Yes. And so that's, and that's the thing when it comes to all of this stuff, when we want to talk, I feel like I know there are some kids who love to perform, and love to do things like that. And if they're drawn to that, and things work out then okay, cool. But it's also I've always felt like it's so hard to tell, how does how does anybody know? How do they know? How do I know that sort of thing? It's kind of hard to determine all of that. And so I think that this is just all tangled up, I feel like and a lot of what the parent wants. And you know, maybe what they need at this point. She's also like making the money for the family too, which is, you know, a part a part of all of this as well.

J Jessi Chartier 18:56

Well, let's talk about there's something that I wanted to just chat with you about on this as well, is that there is this there is throughout the movie, this merry-go-round of who's in control or who is the powerful one, or who is the victim who is the passive, right. So when the movie starts out, first off, there's that we'll talk about the scene in a hot minute, but there's that strange scene of a child crying, and then a Jackbox pops up and starts to cry too. I want to talk about that too, because that was weird. But the merry go round piece. So at the beginning of the movie, Jane is the one who is the contributor. She is the one that is in charge. She is the

one that has the power. And it's clear that the Father may be the puppeteer behind the scenes, but it's clear that whatever Jane wants Jane will get because Jane is the one that's bringing in the money. So there is a clear center of control their Blanche is depicted as very passive, angry but passive. And as they grow older that switches and Blanche becomes the one who's in charge. She's the one who has all the power all the money is the one that is known has the celebrity, if you will. And so Jane now does not become the passive, she becomes angry in her own way, but still is dependent upon Blanche now. And then once the accident happens, and we come to the present day, if you will, the yesterday, you don't really know who's in charge. Like you, you think it's Baby Jane, because she's the one who is still mobile. But they're living in a house that we're told. Well, we actually don't know, we're told that Jane will Jane's perspective is that daddy bought the house for her. Blanche his perspective is that she bought the house with her first paycheck,

J Jen Myers 20:57

which I believed until the very end of the film. And that that's what counts everything else into doubt.

J Jessi Chartier 21:05

Yes. And I think that that's that's the merry-go-round. I talk about from like the audience perspective, like you're watching this film under the assumption that the only abuser in all of this right is Jane. And at the end, you realize that no, Blanche has been holding this incredibly powerful secret.

J Jen Myers 21:27

For years, decades. Yeah, it's monstrous. It really is.

J Jessi Chartier 21:32

Yes, letting someone believe that they were the cause of your paralysis, like, Oh, my God, which then of course, pulls into question. Everything right, that she has told Jane? Yeah,

J Jen Myers 21:45

definitely. There's, there's, throughout the film, there are some times not to, we're not like, you know, like victim blaming Blanche at all. But there are definitely some times where her her kind of like avoidance, I think she's interpreting it or means it as kindness. But you know, you just want to stand up and say, this is actually not kind you're not actually helping. And it's easy to kind of dismiss that as well. She thinks it's kind, she just doesn't really know that sort of thing. But then at the end when she reveals that she's responsible for her own accident, and she has let Jane believe that Jane is responsible for her entire the rest of her life, it kind of made me feel like maybe this avoidance was not necessarily just avoidance or avoidance, trying to be kind, it

was also like her own avoidance of not having to deal with certain things. And that's, that's another one of the reasons that my sympathy for Jane ticked up a bit to where, yeah, it really does kind of cast all of this other stuff that point, that point, she said, in a different light.

J Jessi Chartier 22:48

Right, right. And it's at that moment that Jane basically cracks. Like she's no longer angry, she's happy go lucky, but still very childlike. She goes and gets ice cream, and comes back and dances her way back while people surround her. Like, it's it's clear that both both women have lost. You know, and it's, it's heartbreaking in that regard. It's heartbreaking to to know that no matter what these women have, just have lost it. And I just think it was so good. Let's talk a little bit about a man we got. We got to talk about this. Aging women. Yeah. And the perception of they're evil. They're evil, especially if they don't marry and have children, God forbid. Yeah, well,

J Jen Myers 23:38

should we talk a little bit about how and we kind of only just uncover this, as we were researching for this episode, at least I certainly did. That this is a whole sub genre, like, Well, I knew it was a sub genre. But I didn't quite realize that other people recognized it the same way. And that they had like names for it. And some other research done out. But there's definitely a sub genre, especially around this era, in the 1960s. A films that kind of were centered around older women, who were generally unbalanced in some way. It kind of almost in a lot of times is portrayed as grotesque, either physically or mentally or both. Yes. And it's such an interesting sub genre for me, because I kind of feel that the the recognition of it and probably how a lot of people, I don't know, maybe people that were making or liking it at the time, see it as a negative thing or something against women. But I think it's fascinating because it exposes this, this pressure that we put on women, like I see it entirely as a contextual thing. And I think it's really interesting to see the horror stories literally sprang from that.

J Jessi Chartier 24:53

Yes, I mean, well, this is where all old folk tales of witches come into play, right? Like this idea that you have and older, old women who are alone or who are unmarried, don't have children, etc. And it's just it they're always portrayed as like crazy as not saying like they're not motherly, they're not sisterly. They are, God forbid powerful women who are just old. Yeah. And this particular movie, what I like about it is that, I don't know, I felt like they didn't. ageism was something that was definitely played to, but was not played up. unpack that a little bit. What do you mean? So we know that these women have grown older together? Mm hmm. And there's clearly this desire to hold on to the past from both of them. Right, but Joan Crawford's character, Blanche is not perceived as evil or old. She's just perceived as mature. Yeah, and Baby Jane is, has this beautiful foil to her character of she is of a certain age, and yet acts younger. Mm hmm. And so I think that that is actually what they play to more in this particular characterization is it's not it's not old women who don't have children. It's appropriate place like, where are you? It's almost like mindfulness, where it's like, where are you in your life? And owning that, right? And Blanche? Doesn't she owns it more than she than Jane does. But she

also holds both of them in the past with the secret. And Jane deteriorates from her movie star days or attempting to be movie star days. Because she does try but it's not successful all the way back to the only time that she was successful was when she was like a kid like eight. Right? So I think that that's actually where like, it's more that's where the horror comes into play. For me, it's not Hague horror, in regards to crazy old woman. It's more of a refusal to accept where you are and be where you are.

J Jen Myers 27:27

Yeah, yeah, I get that. That makes a lot of sense. And it's definitely that that's the contrast and Jane right, because she's, she's grotesque, not because she's old. She's grotesque, because she is an older lady trying to act like a nine year old, and dress like a nine year old. And thinking that those type of wiles and smiles and things like that are appropriate. They're not. But you're right. She does all of that, because that's the only time she's had success, not even like professional success, just like people appreciating her success, people connecting with her success, that sort of thing. And you're right, I think that's a really good point. And I think that that's why I said, I find this sub genre interesting, because I think that if you look at it just on the surface, it does seem like women are being made fun of. But I don't think that's what the sub genre is about at all. I think that it's it's this kind of strange zone where we can examine and identify the pressures that turn women into things they should not be. I think I've seen several other films in this genre. And I do feel that there is a sympathy with these women, even when these women are also clearly like doing bad things. And I think that's one of the reasons this film, like we mentioned before it there's a month enough nuance for you to have sympathy with both characters. Because it's not just saying haha, look at these old women. It's like, Hey, look at the whole story of these women's lives. And think about what made them the way that they are and that the way that they have dealt with it and haven't dealt with that and Jane goes further off the edge because of her inability to accept anything that's kind of happened beyond her childhood. And that's a point that makes a lot of sense. It's perfectly reasonable to a certain extent. So yeah, it is it is interesting to see how I think it's interesting how it plays out and play a tree you said that she accepts it more but you know, she still has a portrait of herself when she was young over her bed, which I mentioned to you before we started recording. I love that I love women who have portraits of themselves in their in their homes and I think it shows up in a lot of these movies or TV shows with that have stars in them and I think it's always like a sign of them reaching for their their old past and in some cases it is I don't know if it isn't Blanche's case I think it might be a little bit she's also watches yourself on TV. I don't know how many how movies. I'm not a movie star. I don't know how many movie stars like watch their movies, on TV and things like that. But yeah, it is it is interesting to see like, maybe this is a example of Blanche, expressing this in a healthy way that you can have you can grow old and she's looking back on it from where she is now. And she recognizes that but doesn't like have to cling to it so much. I don't know. It's an interesting thing, just to examine how that all plays out.

J Jessi Chartier 30:25

Yeah, I agree. I think that the just trying to suss out how these characters got to where they are is half the fun, you know, and then watching unfortunately, watching them kind of fall apart at the same time. Well, I



J Jen Myers 30:38

guess we kind of do have to talk about that. And after we've talked about this and talk about like, how there's these contexts of power and pressure, and all of these different factors. It is unfortunate that and the end, like you said, they both lose, they both lose pretty badly. And that's yeah, that's an interesting way. I think a lot of times we when we watch movies like these, there's, I don't know, and I wouldn't say they always add happily or uplifting, and many times they don't. But I think that they they end in a place that is a little bit more. I don't know, for me, I feel like it's a natural, okay, we can accept this as part of the world maybe type thing. This movie, I don't feel like I want to accept that that's a part of the world like it is realistically, but you know what I need? I don't feel like at peace with the end of this. I feel like this is a tragedy from the beginning to the end, because there isn't a moment that these women had a chance to do anything else.

J Jessi Chartier 31:43

Yeah. It's very, very Shakespearean ending like everybody fails. Yes. Because I don't I mean, there's, you can kind of imply if you want it to imply that Blanche survives because the police arrived. Great. I don't think she survived. I don't think she does either. I think she dies as Jane is going off to get ice cream. And that Jane just loot she's done. Like she's completely snapped, right? Because she's no longer bound to her sister. And so it is very, if you take that interpretation, it is very Shakespearean everybody loses in the end. And that's very, it's a unsettling although it is a satisfactory ending. It is still very unsettling. Can you talk about the costumes? Sure. I love that. Jane continues to dress in lots of floral patterns, lots of lace, lots of light colors, like she's not covered. She's not wearing darker clothes. She's just in this perpetual state of I don't know if it's meant to be childlike, or Victorian. or of the time of the seven like 19 Seventeen teens, ish, you know, but I just I love how they play up this and paint her like she's so painted. She's so over the top and glamorous, in all the wrong ways. And then you have Blanche on the other end, who is so plain Jane, no pun intended. But she's just so plain Jane. She's like, very much more muted. She wears, she wears pants. God forbid, she wears darker clothes. She's got, you know, very modest hair. Also, I'm going to give a shout out to Bette Davis for doing all of the heavy lifting in heels marching up and down stairs with tres holy dragging her sister across the floor. Like all the physical work that she had to do. And she did it in heels. I'm just saying,

J Jen Myers 33:51

Yeah, those were tough ladies. Oh, my God,

J Jessi Chartier 33:54

well done, well done to you. But I just I love the contrast of the costumes and how they, you know, if you really wanted to read into it, too, you could talk about how, oh, well, you know, light represents good and dark represents bad. So like, should we have seen this coming all along? Right? Yeah. But I think it was more of that sense of innocence. And rather than, like that sense of holding on to something in the past and not accepting where she was.

J Jen Myers 34:23

Yeah, I think it has more to do with like, I think children tend to be dressed in lighter colors, especially from that time period. And I think it has a lot to do with that is kind of interesting. This is making me think of kind of an our whole discussion of, of women aging and acceptance around that and everything. There is a for me, I feel like there's a disturbing undercurrent to that conversation, which does say like, well, Baby Jane kind of became what she did or, you know, descended in the way that she did because she didn't accept her age, which is true to a certain extent. But I also feel like there is an element in there that is kind of like judgmental in the fact that a woman must be a certain thing in maturity, like, you must be Blanche, and you must wear darker colors and not be so flamboyant and everything like that. And I think that that, that in itself is kind of an interesting discussion to have around this of kind of like, maybe another thing that contributed to to Jane's downfall is that she was supposed to kind of be in this one particular path, like she didn't have as many other options to. Again, that's not to say that that would solve her underlying problems. But you know, it, it also is saying, like, she also doesn't have any other things to do. So in a way, it kind of makes sense that she regresses back to this one time when she could express herself freely. And she could be what does she really just likes wearing those type of things, but women aren't supposed to wear those things. So what is she going to do, but you know, regressed back to a time where she can't and that's something that persists today, where, you know, it, obviously that things are a little bit more open when it comes to both women's roles and what women wear. But I mean, as somebody who turns 40, this year, who has a lot of visible tattoos, like I also feel very aware that there are ways that women are supposed to be, especially as they grew older. And back in 1960, there would have been even fewer for older women. So it's kind of it's another to me, I feel like it's another pressure that's been put on somebody like Jane that probably contributes to all those along with all the other stuff, which is much bigger. But it's just another one of the things we talked about when we talk about like women aging, the the business that they're in, what those journeys are like, and it's just kind of like there aren't many other options. And so what are you going to do?

J Jessi Chartier 36:53

Totally, totally well, you lose your mind. That's what happens.

J Jen Myers 36:56

Yes. That's the only option. Yes, exactly.

J Jessi Chartier 37:00

That is the only that's the only reasonable option. And I think that you know, what some? You know, what's interesting is that she does where she wears a lot of the clothes and a lot of the makeup and even her hair. Similar to what she was wearing on stage. Yes, she wears the curls, she curls her hair and wears the curl. Yeah, everyday, she curls her hair up every day. So there's that sense that very clearly, she's trying to retain that side of herself, that pert that history of herself, right. And nobody else seems to be bothered by it, which is great. Because I think that like, nobody does, like a whole, like looking up and down and like, oh my god, what is this woman wearing? What they do instead is they do something worse, which is they don't

even recognize her. They don't even know her and they don't even acknowledge, like, she comes in to the newspaper. And she's like, and she said, you can see it in her face. She's like Jane Hutson, like when they asked Who was it? And like, like, guys, like, great. And you can just see her like, yeah, waiting for someone to be like, Oh, that Jane has sent right like, but nobody does. Yeah, you know, and it's it's heartbreaking. It's heartbreaking, because it's, that was her sense of identity. And now her sense of identity is Blanche's sister, or worse yet, the woman who tried to kill Blanche,

J Jen Myers 38:18

right, which is again, just kind of like a high highlighting how the options are so limited. Mm hmm. Like, what what could have happened to her if she had other like, viable pathways for identity or expression? Right. I mean, probably nothing more in this particular case. But I mean, in a kind of general sense, that's for sure. For sure. Well,

J Jessi Chartier 38:37

I mean, you know, Blanche kind of did what her father did, which was, you know, cornered her into the certain persona and, and kept her there.

J Jen Myers 38:48

I think that's very insightful. And I think you're absolutely right, is that like I said earlier, Blanche thinks she's been kind through this whole thing, but she really does just kind of replicate the same cage that their father put Jane in in the first place. And Jane can never get out of it.

J Jessi Chartier 39:05

Oh, I love the light at the end. Where Blanche says I crippled myself. Yeah, it's like oh, you did in so many ways.

J Jen Myers 39:13

I really like the line that after she admits that to Jane Jane's first reaction the first thing she says is, then we could have been friends this whole time. And I really I think it's also very insightful to Jane and how the things we've been talking about like her being so much in pain and what she's doing and have done come out at coming out of that pain and not some kind of like really cool, vengeful, you know, place she I think she always really wanted that. And it was her own, you know, her own guilt that like you know, her first reaction is not like what my reaction probably would have been like, Are you kidding me? You let me do this. Why my whole life I would I would be so much more angry. But all of her anger vanishes immediately. And her first thought Like, Oh, that wasn't true. So we could have been friends this whole time. That's all she ever really wanted.

J Jessi Chartier 40:05

That's right. That's all she wanted. She just wanted connection in a real relationship because she never had it. Yeah, she's never had it. Oh, it's so, so sad. Well, moral of the story. I don't know what it is

J Jen Myers 40:17

so many morals, there's like, I guess like, don't go into show business. Don't force your kids to go into show business. You know, accept your feelings and talk about them. Yeah, if you cripple yourself, don't lie and say it was your sister.

J Jessi Chartier 40:35

I love it. I love it so hard. Well, if people like this movie, do you have any recommendations of what they should watch? Or read?

J Jen Myers 40:43

Oh, wow. Well, like, as we said before, this is kind of I feel the center of a whole sub genre of film. So I feel like if people are into this film for the reasons that we've been discussing, there's, there's like, several others, you can go go check out. And I would say that my favorite is called What's the Matter with Helen, which is not it this was I think it was done like almost 10 years after this film. It's not a fantastic film. But it definitely has very similar storylines, and characters, it stars Debbie Reynolds and Shelley Winters, as I don't believe they're sisters, but they're, they're good friends who were in show business. And then later on, I think, in the 30s, are trying to put together a school to teach other little girls how to go into show business. And they're kind of the relationship between the two of them. And I really like it. It's, it's an interesting role for Debbie Reynolds, because it's not what you usually see her in. And I think that that's one of the things I really like about it. She's actually very good at it, though, too. So I would say that's a good one. And it definitely covers a lot of the same ground that we've been talking about in terms of how do you age as a woman with these limited options, especially when you're in the show business? So that would be my main recommendation.

J Jessi Chartier 42:03

Yeah, there's just so many other it depends on why you like the film, from my perspective, like if you, if you like, the psychological relationships and dependencies between these two sisters, I would recommend something different, you know, like, I almost would recommend like Arsenic and Old Lace if you like that kind of like relationship kind of playing off of each other. Even though that's not a horror film.

J Jen Myers 42:26

It's like comedy horror

it's like comedy horror.

J Jessi Chartier 42:27

It's a comedy. Yeah, it's just yeah, I like it's a fun film. Yeah, it is, is but if you like the mean, anything, Alfred Hitchcock to like that psychology around, things would be really, really good. But if you liked that aging, like that sense of aging women and what happens of course, Sunset Boulevard is one that pops into my head right away. I

J Jen Myers 42:48

was just thinking of that, too. Yeah, I feel like if you haven't seen Sunset Boulevard, first of all, you should just see Sunset Boulevard, because it's an incredible film. But yeah, I think that that was kind of like the precursor to this sub genre, right? Because it came earlier. And it's not exactly the same type of it's not like horror, it's definitely not horror, but it's really good.

J Jessi Chartier 43:10

Yes, yes, for sure. You know, I almost would also do maybe even Hand That Rocks the Cradle.

J Jen Myers 43:17

I actually never saw that. That's really good. Yeah,

J Jessi Chartier 43:20

I would, I would recommend something like Hand That Rocks the Cradle done, which doesn't really fit into aging women but it definitely fits into some kind of internal domestic threat that is kind of breaking relationships apart. So Jen, if people want to learn more about us and our podcasts, where can they go?

J Jen Myers 43:40

We have a website at quietlittlehorror.com and that has links to where you can find the podcast on different podcast services and also all the episodes you can stream there. You can also find us on Twitter at [quiethorror](https://twitter.com/quiethorror) and on Instagram at [quietlittlehorror](https://www.instagram.com/quietlittlehorror). And if you want to send us an email if you have any comments or suggestions you can email us at hello@quietlittlehorror.com.

J Jessi Chartier 44:06

Alright everybody, thank you so much for joining us today. We will see you on the next episode. Bye

