

QLH-S3E2M: The Manor

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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

We talk about movies. So we're going to talk about parts of movies that may be spoilers. If that doesn't bother you, you can keep on listening. Or you can hit the pause button and go watch the films that we're talking about before you continue here. Consider yourself warned. Let's talk about The Manor. To save her family from having to watch her deteriorate. Judith enrolls herself into residential care after learning that she has Parkinson's, she learns that something sinister is going on in the manner that kills residents yet no one believes her. So up top, I think we can you know, we can say I didn't say I don't think this was objectively a great movie. But I thought it brought some interesting themes into discussion. And there was something about it that like stuck in my mind. And and so that's why I suggested it for this. So I thought like, let's well as we say, let's talk about it.

J Jessi Chartier 01:13

Yeah, so I got drawn into the horror genre because I started writing a stage play about dementia. And I should probably get back to that at some point in time. But like, the the idea of aging, being a form of domestic horror is very interesting to me, because of our culture and how we treat it. And no one really talks about it even in the horror genre, like we talk about the themes of horror. And the most common things are things like grief, you know? And how would you talk talks about the fears of getting older, or the grief of getting older, like you have to go through these processes. So I was really excited for us to in this this month of episodes to really look at the aging the movies that tackle that the the movies that look at what is it like? How is old getting older, a form of fear? How does it scare us? How does it scare those around us? So yeah, I'm really excited to talk not only about this one, but also our main movie, Relic, because it's just so unique. It's just a unique slant on the horror film.

J Jen Myers 02:25

And I think it's interesting that you kind of put it in the context of all horror films, because I think horror films also tend to like feature really young protagonist, I mean, like, traditionally, right? It's, you know, when we think of horror movie, like tropes or stories, I think more often than not, we've got teenagers or, you know, young people. And I think like, as you talked about, in a lot of the films we've talked about recently, it's moved into maybe people who are slightly older who are dealing with maybe parenthood and associated grief and things like that. But I feel like we haven't quite evolved to this to the stage or we're getting into older people as protagonist or dealing with everything you just talked about, like the fears of that, and I don't know, maybe he's because I am getting older, but some of the stuff is like it again, this movie, the manor, like hit me hard and those themes, just because the themes themselves are so powerful.

J Jessi Chartier 03:21

Mm hmm. That's exactly right. And I also so let's let's talk about those like state of Well, first off, let's talk about how you came to the film. How did you come to this film, Jen?

J Jen Myers 03:31

This was one I actually don't even know I'm like I like I've mentioned before I watch a lot of horror films. And sometimes they're just things that I'll catch a tweet or a list or something that just kind of comes up and I saw this one and it you know, sometimes I want like something that I think is not going to be gosh, I say this with all the love and respect in the world but not super taxing mentally to me or emotionally. You know, sometimes I want I just want like a fun horror movie. And I think this is a Blumhouse production. And so I've watched a lot of those. I think it might even be part of the Into the Dark series. And I've watched a lot of those which I think some of them are really good. Some of them are better than others. They strike me kind of on the level and again, I say this with love and respect, but they're like almost like Twilight Zone episodes expanded. That's how I like to look at them. And I love the Twilight Zone. So that's that's like a compliment for me. But a lot of these films it's also kind of like they're not necessarily like arthouse films or I you know again I'm saying all of these terms just as a general descriptors with no value judgments. I love a good Twilight Zone episode. I love a good kind of basic horror movie. I like all that stuff. This was one of those ones that I thought it was gonna be kind of in that genre like yeah, let me watch it and it is and in some respects, I think the manner is a fairly like straightforward kind of horror movie package. that has like kind of like maybe buried under all the styrofoam peanuts has like, this really cool kernel of an idea. And that that kernel of an idea is what kind of like made it stick in my mind. And so I had watched it and being like, Oh, okay. Hmm. And it just, I was just thinking about it a little bit more afterwards. And so yeah, I think it's because what you mentioned is that kernel of an idea is about ageism. It's about like how we treat older people in society. It's about what it feels like to get older and not necessarily maybe be served by that society. And also, like, what do you do if you can't trust your own body or your own mind? And those are really compelling ideas?



J Jessi Chartier 05:41

Yeah, I think that you nailed it right on the head. This did feel like a really sophisticated Twilight Zone episode. And you know, the stated text is very clear, in that you someone or something is kind of terrorizing the residents, right in this nursing home, coming to them at night, just kind of like this ever present menacing threat. And we get the impression that it's death initially. Because like there's this there's a cat that will identify who's going to die

J Jen Myers 06:13

Which is based on a true story. Have you heard that?

J Jessi Chartier 06:15

No, I haven't Tell me more.

J Jen Myers 06:16

Yes, it is. The original cat is called Oscar. He's a therapy cat that lives it lives in the Sear House Nursing and Rehabilitation center in Providence, Rhode Island. And so people noticed that when a patient was in their, like, the last few hours of their life, he would show up and like, sit beside them. And so it got to be if the cat showed up. They're like, Oh, shit, or so that's how it is in this movie. Right? It's definitely like you could see it as a comfort thing. But I think in this movie, it's interpreted as like, yeah, the harbinger of death.

J Jessi Chartier 06:50

Right. Exactly, exactly. So I think that but I mean, so the stated plot is just like people are dying, which the callousness in me will be like, Well, yeah, cuz it's a nursing home. But it's not. It's not death. It's much more sinister than that something is identifying these individuals for some specific reason and kind of terrorizing them. And of course, Judith, who is there because she has early onset of Parkinson's, and is fairly healthy. She's very healthy, actually. But she's checking herself in early because she doesn't want as we said in the synopsis, so she doesn't want her family to have to see her decline. But nobody believes her because she's in a nursing home. And I gotta say that, that that is something that I feel like, I definitely am so worried about when I get older is having people treat me like a child again, right? You know, where it's like, oh, it's not to be so dismissive. Yeah, I have a fear. That's a real fear.

J Jen Myers 07:55

Definitely. That's something that really struck me as well, too. And it reminded me of I feel like there's no other horror stories and horror films specifically where it has a female protagonist who is treated like I think that's the kind of a gothic horror trope, right? Like, the woman is insane, or she's hysterical. And she just, she's wrong about what she perceives. And so we can dismiss her. And so I think that this is kind of a clever updating of that trope, because the reason this woman is being dismissed is not just because, well, it is kind of because she's got

something, you know, maybe mentally going on. But there's the added layer of the ageism there. And this is happening to her because she is an older woman who was losing her mental faculties. And I just thought that that that again, it's a really horrifying idea. And if you think about what that would really be like to be in that, and also, I think whether we want to admit it or not like it really compels us, because underneath, we know that that could very easily be us and might be us at some point in the future. Well, you know, the whole like dealing with the issues not necessarily caught in a manner where something is stalking us. But you know, that could happen too I don't know.

J Jessi Chartier 09:07

Well, you mentioned something that I think is really unique in this particular movie is the portrayal of the main character of Judith. You know, this is not a hag horror, like, yeah, Barbara Hershey is a gorgeous woman. So it is and she wears kind of fun, gothic. Yes, she's kind of hippy goth. Like, I don't know how else to extract to describe her. But like she's gorgeous,

J Jen Myers 09:34

quick confession. Another reason that I feel like maybe I was compelled by this, but I just love her. And that was like, that's like what I would want to be when I get older. Yeah, exactly. There was a little bit of like, oh, I wouldn't be like her when I'm older because she's cool.

J Jessi Chartier 09:47

That's exactly right. And I feel like there's so much that was beautiful about that. It's like finally we get to see yes, a beautiful older woman playing a beautiful older woman

J Jen Myers 09:59

and she Like, like, yeah, absolutely. And she's like a unique character. And she like she has a really good relationship with her grandson, she swears, she's a former dancer. So she's artistic. And she had had her, you know, a successful career. I just I think there is a level of like, oh, just how often do we get to see older women characters and films portrayed like this. So that's a very small thing that I nevertheless thought was really, I really enjoyed that.

J Jessi Chartier 10:24

Yeah, yeah, exactly. Exactly. I love that about it, too. I'd love to her relationship with her family members. Like she had an authentic relationship with, I want to say with her daughter, who was kind of like, Oh, c'mon, mom, like, yeah, let me take care of this. And she had a close relationship with her grandson for variety of reasons, right, specifically, because his father died early. And so she moved in to help kind of raise him, right. But I just I loved the fact that they, they weren't completely dismissive. Do you know what I mean? When she starts to talk about how scary she is, and how everything else is there, you can see her grandson being like, we

need to do something. And her even her daughter was like, Yeah, we should do something until the doctor is like, Don't feed into her delusions. And you can see her struggle with that of like, but she's my mom. Right?

J Jen Myers 11:17

So that's a really great point. Yeah, I hadn't thought about that as much. But I really, I'm really glad you pulled that out. Because it emphasizes that the her family are not just like these, these one dimensional demons who want to be rid of her and just throwing her in a care home. You know, it's a complex set of decisions. I think that led to her being where she is. And yeah, like you said, there's an authenticity there that I think is really interesting.

J Jessi Chartier 11:44

Yet one of the lines that her daughter gives her when they're in the car, pulling up is you don't have to do this mom.

J Jen Myers 11:50

Yeah, you know, I again, I think it's really a cool thing. That is what's kind of driving this whole narrative is this is Judith's decision to do this. Because I think it underscores that she's doing this because she's scared, she's like, She's scared of having her family have to see her, you know, failing and having to deal with that. And so like, this entire thing is driven by fear. It's a reasonable fear. And I think that, you know, she's also doing making a noble decision by making that choice, but the entire thing is about fear of what is happening to her inside. That leads to like, everything that happens in the film. Yeah, exactly. You know, having said all that, to like, I feel like we've covered a lot of thematic things and everything but so should we move on to maybe some of the things because there's there's more that happens in this film that is just like metaphorical somatic. Like I mentioned before, I feel like this is a a horror box that has a kernel of a cool theme in it. And then there's some Styrofoam peanuts, so I don't know. Do you want to get into those? You want to get into the peanuts? Maybe?

J Jessi Chartier 12:54

Styrofoam peanuts? I love it. Well, what do we want to talk about first?

J Jen Myers 12:58

Well, because there is there is a monster in this film, right? Like literally.

J Jessi Chartier 13:04

Yeah, there's an external monster. It's not just this right, lingering fear.

J Jen Myers 13:08

Well, and then there's there there's an external monster and then before we even get to the external monster, we get kind of the I guess, I don't know, the monsters minions, or the the witches. I don't know what we want to call them. So there's a group of people in the care home, other other residents, other older people, who seem to be kind of ruling the roost, right? Like they're, they're there as residents, but they have they're very comfortable there, they seem to have a certain amount of like power, or their host like, again, to kind of like draw parallels between like, if this movie were featuring younger people, I feel like these would be the queen bees in the lunch room, you know, or like, if they're, like, I remember I did see a movie recently about like a group of girls at a boarding school. It's like they would be the popular ones. Right? That's what this group is. So we get kind of, like, drawn into well, why are they you know, so kind of powerful and comfortable. Where does that come from? And then it well, you know, as we said before, no spoilers here. So I'll just kind of dive into this and we can start picking apart. It turns out that they are entering into some dark bargains with that monster in the woods to keep themselves whole both physically and mentally.

J Jessi Chartier 14:19

Yeah, that I got feelings about.

J Jen Myers 14:23

All right, well, let's let's talk about them. That's what we're here for.

J Jessi Chartier 14:26

I feel like I was just really disappointed with the ending.

J Jen Myers 14:32

Okay. I don't think you're alone. From what I've read on on the internet. I think a lot of people were

J Jessi Chartier 14:39

I thought that I liked the fact that oh, we all thought Judith was going to so at the ending she knows she's offered. She basically kills one of the queen bees and they offer up to her a spot if they if she continues to if she joins their coven basically and continues to do what they want. She agrees and I, I what I like about that is like, Judith is not perfect, right? she succumbs to that desire. But she was built as such a stronger character than that, that it just felt false. And I also don't like the fact that I don't know it felt hokey. It just felt hokey. I don't know how else to explain it. Like I just wanted something else there. I wanted something more it would have been I don't know what I would have done. But I just the idea that these three individuals were

scampering off into the woods, calling out to this tree monster who apparently this is all Celtic. Because yeah, God forbid, you can't have Celts called out to this tree monster who would come and suck the life out of a resident return with that life force. And then those three could consume that life force and become young for a night. And they're just so many holes in it is like, okay, so they become young for a night. But then that does that also give them longevity? Because these three have been around since like the 80s. So is it a two time potion? Like, does it do two things at once?

J Jen Myers 16:31

That's that's a very fair point that I feel like in a lot of the when you get down to brass tacks about how this longevity is actually working. I'm not sure if it's super clear. Because as we see, in the very the very end, the last scene is Judah who's celebrating a birthday and her like her family's there and her daughter is because we also saw that the very beginning it opens on a birthday celebration. And at the end, the her birthday, her age is the same as it was last year. And her daughter is like, Oh, I think there's like a mistake here. So you know, clearly like she Judith is just like stopped kind of in time. She's not necessarily younger, at least visually in that scene. But she's not celebrating any more birthday, basically. So yeah, I don't know. But like you said, there is a bit, although I did find it. I don't know, maybe this was just kind of it doesn't make sense in the story. But right before then, well, as soon as Judith kind of accepts that bargain, she becomes young again as a dancer. And she's like a young, a young dancer dancing in the woods dressed in red, which to me call it definitely it feels like it was a deliberate callback to like the red shoes. Oh, 100%. Yeah, we're, you know, basically, you know, which is also a story of, you know, making a deal, a dubious deal. To get something you know, you want for yourself, whether it's, you know, longer life or abilities or, you know, whatever, that sort of thing. And I did find that that moving. And when you try to break it down logically in the story, it may not make sense. But yeah, I think that what we're left with is people are sucking away other people's life force to maintain their seat. And I think the thing is, it's not just their own lives, like, this is what keeps them like mentally sharp and keeps the disease's at bay. So I think that's another part of it. Like you said, it's, it's still, it's kind of strange in the the narrative doesn't quite work that out. But I feel like that's the main point is like, they're just kind of maintaining themselves.

J Jessi Chartier 18:30

Yeah, I think that that's, yeah, okay, that makes sense.

J Jen Myers 18:34

I mean, but you know, that's it. I mean, like, so weird. It's one of those things where I'm like, I totally see where you're coming from with that. And it's just like, I think it's like one of those things, you just decide that you're gonna like roll with it or not. And I think both choices are completely valid, you know?

J Jessi Chartier 18:50

Yeah. I think here's the thing. I have a problem with it. Like in most other movies. Like it was

Yeah, I think here's the thing. I have a problem with it, like in most other movies, like it was portrayed as, like this big reveal. And it was clearly not a big reveal.

J Jen Myers 19:01

Oh, that makes sense. Yeah. Yeah. I just want to kind of give my my perspective on that, like the choice that Judith makes. I have to say, I don't think I had the same reaction that you and I would I think a lot of other people did, again, from what I've read, I don't know it. It worked for me, because for me, I felt like because her character was so strong and still made that choice. It underscored how deep this fear runs. Like that's how much it scared her, that it can scare a person the prospect of losing a hold of yourself in your mind, even if in fact I think almost if you look at it in that way, it makes more sense that it would scare a strong character that much because otherwise when she frankly was you have to lose. But if you are a person who has prided yourself on your, your independence, your creative abilities, you know all of these abilities that you have That's gonna make the fear even greater. And that's what's gonna push you to do things that may seem out of character because it's all it's all about the fear underneath. So for me in that perspective, it actually worked out for me. I again, it's one of those things where I completely see why it may not work for everyone. But for me her decision worked in that way. Because it's kind of like, it's it's that's how that's the depths of the sphere. Oh, by that? You don't have to, it's fine. If you don't. Like I said, it's no, no, no, I think it's I try to

J Jessi Chartier 20:32

Yeah, yeah, no, it's I do I think it's just like, again, I think I just wanted more, it could

J Jen Myers 20:38


probably have been done. Well, again, like I said, I think maybe in a different movie, it would have been done differently or with maybe more finesse, but given kind of the tropes of, of, you know, the type of movie this was that just wasn't how they went about it.

J Jessi Chartier 20:54

Right, right. That's true. All right. That's fair. Yeah, it's overall, though, I'm going to come back and pull this up overall, that I really think that this film tackled something that is very unique, and at least in the horror genre, and I would love to see more movies like this, that tackle this fear of growing older and see it and just put it in the forefront of societal discussion. Because I don't think we talk enough about it. I think that we need to address it more. Also, I love seeing strong actresses. Yeah. And I think that some of these roles are really hard and really challenging. You know, like Jill Larsen, for example, was in The Manor and she's also in The Taking of Deborah Logan, the name of them. Yeah. Isn't a movie. Yeah. Yeah. So like, those are media. That's a media role. And so I just think it's great. I think the the theme of it is great for us to look at. So I'm excited to see more films like this coming out.

J Jen Myers 21:53


Absolutely. I agree. I think you just Yeah, you've perfectly wrapped up all that stuff. And I think that's why this was such a great place to start with this kind of longer discussion that we're gonna have. And we're gonna continue into the next episode.

 Jessi Chartier 22:06

Absolutely, yeah. In the next episode, we get to dive into a what I consider an incredibly strong film in this genre relic, which is really exciting. So I'm very much looking forward to talking about that. Yes, me too. Okay, so I highly recommend people watch the manner just to kind of get a clean palette of what we're going to be talking about in the next film and then to watch relic because relic is so good. So please join us for our next episode of relic, where we continue the conversation of ageism and horror. And we get to dive into specifically someone who is suffering from dementia. So it's really good. Jen, if they want to learn more about us, where can they find us?

 Jen Myers 22:51

Well, we have a website at quietlittlehorror.com and we have links to all of the episodes on there at the various podcast providers. And you can also listen to them streaming at the website, or you can find us at Twitter at [quiethorror](https://twitter.com/quiethorror), Instagram at [quietlittlehorror](https://www.instagram.com/quietlittlehorror) and if you want to get in touch you can send us an email at hello@quietlittlehorror.com.

 Jessi Chartier 23:14

Thanks for joining us. We'll see you next time. Bye