

# QLH-S4E10\_ Picnic at Hanging Rock

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

miranda, film, girls, rock, headmistress, talk, mystery, watch, women, fact, picnic, sara, sense, movie, young women, disappears, edith, hanging, feel, people

## SPEAKERS

Jen Myers, Jessi Chartier

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Jessi Chartier 00:04

Welcome to Quiet Little Horse. Here we talk about the films that creep under your skin and take up residence in the dark.



Jen Myers 00:17

Let's talk about Picnic at Hanging Rock. 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. During a rural summer picnic, a few students and a teacher from an Australian girls school vanish without a trace. Their absence frustrates and haunts the people left behind. It's time to talk about one of my favorite movies ever.



Jessi Chartier 00:57

You've been recommending this movie to me. For years.



Jen Myers 01:01

I love Picnic at Hanging Rock, I saw this, I think, you know, kind of randomly there are a lot of films that when I was like, you know, 16,17,18,19 When I was just like discovering films, and I had access to the Independent Film Channel, and there are so many films that I just would find, like that. And because I was just a sponge soaking everything up, you know. And this is one of those films that I knew it had a strong reputation. I think I saw that Independent Film Channel or TCM, I don't know I saw it, it was not one that I like sought out necessarily. It was something that I kind of knew was supposed to be really good. And I remember just kind of one day seeing it and was just like this. This is everything I like I didn't know why. And I didn't know how to articulate it. I just knew that this was like really important in some deep way. I just immediately loved it. And I have loved it ever since which has been like 20 some years now.

J Jessi Chartier 02:04

So So now that you've seen it again recently, yeah, still hold up to your initial

J Jen Myers 02:10

100% 100% I think I love it even more now. And I think it's now I can articulate some of these things that I just kind of felt before you know, and honestly, and I mentioned this to you. And I might have mentioned this a couple other times in the podcast when we've done films that are like my favorite. It's happened more than once that these are films that I have bought the Criterion edition of, but a lot of times I'll buy a film because I'm like, Oh, I know, I want to have the Criterion edition of that. But I don't necessarily like watch it as soon as I get it. So sometimes it will just sit there on my shelf, even though I love the film, but it's like a favorite from ages ago. So I don't have a lot of compulsion, especially now that I'm an adult with other things going on all the time. And so I had not sat down and watched my Criterion edition of Picnic at Hanging Rock for until very recently. And then I watched that and all of the special features. And now I'm just like, newly obsessed with the film all over again

J Jessi Chartier 03:09

Okay, so let's dive into this. What struck you about the movie when you first watched it?

J Jen Myers 03:15

Not to sidestep your question, but I'll try to answer at the same time I give a quick overview of what's going on because I do think it can be quick.

J Jessi Chartier 03:22

Oh, yeah, we should do that. We should definitely do that. What what happens in the film?

J Jen Myers 03:26

Well, that's the thing. And it'll be quick, though, because honestly, not a lot happens. That you're told about specifically, right? So we have a girl school in Australia in 1900. So late Victorian era around the turn of the century, turn of the 20th century. And it's a summer day, which it's summer in Australia, it also happens to be Valentine's Day. And they have an annual Valentine's Day picnic where they go out to this natural rock formation called Hanging Rock. And they you know, they have a picnic there every year. And so we're introduced to all of these girls who are, you know, teenage, maybe older teenage, I would I would say we would place them like high school age girls. So you know, they're on the cusp of lots of things. And this is a little bit different because it's the Victorian era so they're in there at a girls school. So they're all being brought up to be very proper young women, they all are wearing white gowns and

gloves as they go out to this picnic. The the headmistress of the school, gives them all kind of a lecture beforehand and one of the things I remember is she says after you are through the town like they're being taken out in a carriage just like after you're through the town then you can take off your gloves you know like but you can't do it beforehand because people will see God forbid people in the town see, you know, wearing your gloves, but I thought it was such a nice little like detail of like this. This is what this world is like for these girls, right? So they go off to this picnic, and they have a very lazy summer per day, at one point everybody's watched stops. And they don't quite know why. And then couple of the girls led by this one that we follow who's kind of the well, I don't want to say like Queen Bee, because they don't really have that dynamic. But Miranda is kind of this one young woman who seems to know a little bit more than she should about things. Let's put it that way. And she and a couple other friends end up going into the crevice of the rock, and they never come out at all. So the rest of the when the credits roll. Yeah, exactly. But so the with the rest of the film is basically what it does to everybody that has to deal with this really strange mystery. It will say right up front, like this mystery does not get solved. Not even close. Like you don't get anything the rest of the film is just basically yeah, how everybody else kind of degrades in the face of this mystery.

J Jessi Chartier 06:03

There's one what they find one of the girls.

J Jen Myers 06:06

Oh, yeah, so one of them does come kind of come back. And she's alive. She and but it's like more than a week later. And I think the doctors are like,

J Jessi Chartier 06:17

this is but even the her return is a mystery. Because she Yes.

J Jen Myers 06:20

And they said like, there's nothing wrong with her. There's absolutely nothing wrong with her. She's She wasn't like, you know, dehydrated from a week away or anything like that. So, and then there's actually a lot of the girls and particularly are very focused on her, like, tell us what happens. And they get really angry. And basically, you know, she ends up leaving, a lot of them end up leaving, though, because which makes sense. So at the end of the film, The headmistress is basically dismantling the school because the parents are all pulling their daughters because, you know, well, she is committing suicide. Yes. And then yeah, the very ends, we don't see it's told to us in voiceover, but we see her in black and all black and like morning. So it's like, this is the end of this. So basically kind of destroys this whole circle of women, essentially, both. There's the younger girls. And then there are the women who run the school, there's also a couple of teachers, one of the teachers disappears as well. So and that's pretty much all you've got in terms of plot, there are a couple other things that happen. But

that's not really what it is about. This film is about this mystery that is centered on a group of girls. And that's the film. So if you're into that, great if you're not, there isn't a whole lot I can do for you.

**J** Jessi Chartier 07:42

Well, I'm really interested, because like I came at this film, this year, like the first time I watched it was for this episode. And so I have a different approach to it, because I came at it with a highly analytical mind where I was there. Yeah, like, Oh, this is like raw nature. And oh, man, they had to bring in a quote unquote, like they had to bring in a quote, unquote, native man to help them hunt and find that, and he's even wearing colonial wear, like, there's just like, so many little pieces of that kind of play that I noticed. But I really want to hear when you watch this, you were fairly young. Um, well, I mean, but so what struck you about it that you loved so much?

**J** Jen Myers 08:27

The thing about this film for me was, it felt to me that these girls all were on the edge of a power that they didn't understand. And I don't mean that externally. I mean it in a more metaphorical way. And I think Miranda, the main character really inhabits this, where you get this sense, and also Miranda, in this film knows that she's gonna go out to the Hanging Rock and not come back. She says a couple things like this, she knows but you just also get a sense, this actress does a really great job of presenting her as a person that that knows something beyond what people want her to think. And this goes back to a little bit what I was talking about in our earlier episode hatching on these themes of women's repression. And, you know, we have a bunch of girls who are, you know, being brought up to be proper young ladies who never step out of line, never say anything out of line, you know, certainly are not thinking about things like sex and even what they can do in their future. They're not taught that they have power. They're taught that they're going to be playing certain roles, and they cannot step outside of those roles. And Miranda seems to really embody this kind of awareness that there is something outside of those roles.

**J** Jessi Chartier 09:57

Well, and I think that that comes into play I don't know, maybe I'm reading too much into this. But I think from my end, it was very clear that her and Sarah were in a relationship.

**J** Jen Myers 10:08

Yeah, I mean, I think you're this movie was made in the 70s. And I think that even if it wasn't explicit, they were sophisticated enough to know. I mean, and going back to like Victorian era, there usually were very strong relationships between women that were not necessarily sapphic. But also there were ones that were, you know, like romantic and or sexual relationships. And so yeah, they have a very, very close relationship. And I know that probably was not uncommon in schools like this

J Jessi Chartier 10:37

So I would assume the same as well. I mean, even like you say, one of the things you talked about your Miranda giving hints that she wasn't coming back, she tells Sarah, before going to the picnic, you need to learn to love someone else. And like one of the first things we see is Sarah opening the drapes in the bedroom and turning around and smiling at someone and you see, it's Miranda. So like, it's there's an indication that whatever they had, was insulated, it was within that bedroom, whether it was sexual or not, it doesn't matter. It was they had a very tight relationship. And that was now going to end because of whatever reason like now when we first watch the movie, you're given the impression that Miranda is just talking about growing up, like she's what can you do as a Victorian woman, you have to go off and marry you know, the the things that were awarded to you were very limited. And they were growing into women of Victorian times. So like, you get the impression that she's saying, you're going to have to find someone else to love because we're eventually going to have to go off and do what society expects us to do.

J Jen Myers 11:42

Yeah, absolutely. And I think just to kind of kind of wrap up, both, I guess the synopsis, what I'm thinking about is like so yeah, what really resonated with me is the fact that this is at its essential core to me a story about like girls, learning that, about the repression they're going to have to impose upon themselves, yes, to live their lives as women, even though they have these emotions or desires or powers inside of them. It doesn't matter. And there's something to me I feel like I interpret Miranda's journey is that she goes and kind of becomes one with the power rather than living that life.

J Jessi Chartier 12:29

It there's a sense of agency that the girls who go up into the rock have that the "Who's the one that take along with them at the end. Edith, Edith that is, is terrified of which is why she comes running down.

J Jen Myers 12:43

Yeah. And she screams when the other three disappear. Yes. And then also like the, like I said, one of the teachers disappears with these younger girls, and she's the one that later on the headmistress mentions, I learned to rely on her, she talks about her masculine intellect, and things like that, which is nice echo of what you were just talking about. And it's kind of like, it's clear that there was some sort of a strong relationship between the headmistress and this teacher, and that now the teacher is gone as well.

J Jessi Chartier 13:17

Yeah. And I think that if the teacher disappears, so eat it, eat it, it comes back down. And everyone's like, what happened? What happened? What happened? And so they finally take Edith back up to try and retrace steps, but of course, so Hanging Rock is a geological rock

formation that basically is an old volcano that is no longer active. And it's all these lava rocks that look like towers. So there's like mazes and you can easily get lost in there. And so she obviously gets lost. But she talks about seen the, the the other teacher whose name I cannot remember the one who disappears isâ€”

 Jen Myers 13:53

Miss McCraw. Yes, she's the one who disappears.

 Jessi Chartier 13:57

So you didn't talk about seeing Miss McCraw going up as she was coming down. But she was going up in her pantaloons. She didn't have her skirt on.

 Jen Myers 14:06

Yes, there's there's a couple hints well, and even like after, after everybody disappears. And then when they find Irma is the one that they find who originally disappears and it comes back. There's a scene where she's convalescing at a somebody else's mansion outside of school, and the maid is taking her clothes away. And she's like, there's no corset here. Like what happened to her corset? Or how did she have all of her other clothes but no corset and the mistress of the house is like, Oh, it doesn't matter and anything but there's a couple of hints that are dropped around the fact that like these proper young girls or when or women are missing items of clothing, that it's very strange that they should be missing it.

 Jessi Chartier 14:52

I would love to have an LGBTQ plus interpretation of this film.

 Jen Myers 14:59

Oh, I mean, I think that's there. Yeah, definitely. Yeah.

 Jessi Chartier 15:03

Because it is just it's, it's so clear that these women are, they have this deep relationship with each other. And they don't want to leave the installation of whatever they have. And I don't know, I need to go back and re watch it again, because I don't know how close they are to graduation. I don't know how far away they are from having to grow up. But it's clear that these ladies are like, they like they are not afraid of their own agency, and they're not afraid of their own power.

 . . . 15:06

**J** Jen Myers 15:40

Yes, yeah, no, for sure. Well, and this, I think is a good place to mention. This film is from a novel. It's right. Let's talk about that. Yeah. And also, like, you'll know, when you read the book, and also the beginning of this film, it starts with a text about, you know, these young women disappeared in 1800 Hanging Rock. And so it's very easy to get the idea that this is an actual historical event. As far as I think anybody knows. It's not. It's not. It is not however, the author of the novel Joan Lindsey, has. She's never she usually comes down saying, No, it's not. But she's also been a little cagey about like, what did inspire this book, she said that she wrote this in the matter of a few weeks in almost like a dream state. And there's, there's something I want to throw in here, because I was watching the special bonus features on the criteria, in addition, and there's a documentary that they do, and they speak to the actress who plays Miranda and this, this was done in like in 2003. And she tells a story of when they were shooting, she had had kind of I don't know, maybe a little bit of an upsetting circumstance or something. And she was coming down the side of the rock, and she sees this old woman there. And she had not met her before. But she said she knew immediately had to be Joan Lindsay, because there would no reason for I guess, another old woman to be around there. She's like, this must be the woman who wrote the book. And Joan came up to her and gave her this really strong hug and said, Miranda, it's been so long, since I've seen you. And I was just like, whoa, that's kind of a weird thing to say.

**J** Jessi Chartier 17:21

That is totally weird thing to say. But she's not the actress

**J** Jen Myers 17:25

like right, when also who you're talking about? Like, are you just talking about the character when you wrote this book? Or is this calling back to maybe some sort of event that happens that we don't know about?

**J** Jessi Chartier 17:42

She did say that. So the the author I watched a little bit to the author did say that she would picnic at Hanging Rock with her family all the time, and that the first event like the first time that she was there was when she was three, and it just left a lasting impression on her. You, you wonder, did something happen to this author at that this at this location, and that she is manifesting this in her storytelling, which I love even adds to the mystery of the movie and the book?

**J** Jen Myers 18:12

Definitely. But I think it ended, I think it also points to the fact why I think this resonates on a deep level with so many people who watch it because I think that there's something really profound and essential at its core that maybe cannot be articulated, that maybe shouldn't be articulated. And it could be that, or it could kind of actually, you know, point to various things. But I think that it's what it points to is not nearly as important is the fact that this, this

mysterious core exists. And I think that that's what kind of connects people to the experience of watching this film, that there's something at its center that we can't quite describe or wrapper our understanding around, but you recognize it in some way.

J Jessi Chartier 18:54

I think that plays nicely in with the power of the rock too. Because there's, throughout the movie, when the girls are climbing, it's almost it's almost like they become a little bit more and more delirious. And you get the impression that it is the rock that has this draw or is enchanting them or has some kind of power that is drawing them in. And it's done beautifully between like sound you get rumbling sounds, you get cinematography. I mean, it does remind me a lot of images in that regard, just like how things are played out, even though this was not the same director but it was just like, I really loved how there's this sense of mystery to everything. And that the girls who are enchanted I mean they they do scandalous things according to Victorian law, they take off their stockings and their boots and they walk barefoot up the side of the hill. And they don't even listen to Edith anymore they like collapse into exhaustion and fall asleep and then miraculously wake up in a translate. It's just it's so. And like you had mentioned earlier that Edith had screamed at their disappearance, but like, what happens is they go into a crevasse, and there's this there's this the weight of the power of the rock is so overwhelming that she screams and runs away.

J Jen Myers 20:25

Yeah, like nothing happens like that. That's actually a really important thing to clarify, because I didn't mention it. She screamed, but they don't like fall. There's no musical sting. There's no like nothing. They actually actually the crevasse, I think is like almost still leading up hill. And you're right, they're in a little bit of a trance. But they're not like zombified. They're just like we are going now. And they willingly go and climb further into the rock. And there's just something about this that Edith immediately recognizes, as you know, most frightening to her because it is otherworldly. It's not frightening to them. And that's why they're being drawn into it. I think this is also a good place to kind of mention I, this is not exactly the same thing we've been talking about. But the fact of this place this in the fact that it's taking place in Australia in the 1900s, when I was reading up on this, I found that a Hanging Rock, this area was still more or less under Aboriginal control until about the mid 19th century. So very, that is not very long after this movie takes place, like colonialism has really just come in and took taking things over very quickly. This was a sacred spot for the aboriginal tribes that lived around there. And so there's kind of a specter to have the fact that, you know, the British Empire had come in, claimed all this land was imposing their ways of life on things. But that is not going to eradicate what's in the land itself. What's still there, what goes deeper, what has been there, before they got there, is always gonna be there. And I think that that's never drawn out either. And I don't think it should have been, again, this is a movie that doesn't really draw anything out. And I think that's a good thing. But I do think that that's part of this. And it's I think it's also something they're probably aware of in the same way that we talk about the relationships between the girls, I think that they were aware that this is part of the environments of the story.

J Jessi Chartier 22:29

Yeah, it's hard to it kind of circles back around, again, to the author of the of the book, it's like,

what relationship did she have with this place? Because it is so unexplainable. And yet Peter Weir does a really nice job of capturing that in a cinematic form. Yeah, because it's there's the subtlety between the rawness of it and this Victorian colonialism.

**J** Jen Myers 23:01

And maybe that's a good place to talk a little bit about just like, this film is a dream. And it starts out with that quote, right, the pope quotes, all that we see or see him is but a dream within a dream. But I mean, it gets it's almost kind of like a cliché to describe his film as dreamlike. But it really is this this film is very, it's very much for me replicates the feeling of when you are alone on a summer afternoon, that's very, very hot. And you have nothing else to do when you're like lying in the grass. And you're just like, melted into that time. And that's what I feel like when I watched this film all the way through, like the whole thing is kind of hazy. And not exactly ill defined visually, but kind of just everything is could flow into something else. And you could just step into something a whole nother world. That's what I feel like I don't know if I'm just going off on a tangent here.

**J** Jessi Chartier 24:06

But you know, it makes total sense. It reminds me of like, it reminds me of a different version of like the Fae. So like, in what did we watch the Halo where there's this delineation between civilization and the Fae, right like and you have these moments where you can pass back and forth between the two worlds. That's the same here but the threshold is not as defined. It's it's much more loosey goosey and much more like you say hazy. And I think that that's really cool about it because everyone is affected by the power of the rock of this other worldliness of it. The clocks all stop at the same time. People fall asleep and wake up and are like why was I so tired? It's just like those those magical moments of a hot summer day in In a place that is uncivilized, but also is not terribly threatening, it's just the like the natural dangers that happen with nature.

**J** Jen Myers 25:09

Well, yeah, and it feels like it's really the danger depends on the individual. So someone like Edith is terrified by this. And I think a lot of you know, this film is very much centered on girls and women, we have a couple male characters around the edge that I think just kind of helped define that a little bit. So there's a young man from a good Victorian family and a more working class, native Australian, well, not native, but he is white. But he as opposed to this, the other boy who is clearly like an English transplant, right. And they see the girls before disappearance, the Australian makes a lot of crude remarks about him, and things like that, which kind of emphasizes how these girls are going to be seen by the external world. But even the men around there, and then later, we see the like the police chief or whoever who is trying to find them afterwards, and things like that. So the men, we in there are still very bewildered by this place, one way or the other. And the young man also, he also goes to try to find them and ends up like dazed and injured. So it affects everybody. And it seems to be really depending on who the individual is, whether that is, you know, going to be like, scary or not to them, essentially, Miranda welcomes it, it's like she's going home, and knows the whole way through that this is where she should be. And a lot of other people are scared by the prospect of getting kind of

absorbed by that. So it's such a subjective thing that I think is really fascinating. It's what you bring to it. And the fact that people think that it's unsettling or dangerous, is a really interesting fact in itself.

**J** Jessi Chartier 27:03

Yeah, it has this ethereal piece to it, that reminds me a little bit of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, where it's like, you don't really, or even *The Haunting*, the book, *The Haunting*, where it's like, you are absorbed into your environment. And there's no real. It's not supposed to make total sense, because that's not the point. And I like what they did with that here, like you mentioned, like random knows where she's going. Like, or at least she welcomes it so openly that she's allowed herself to be directed a little bit.

**J** Jen Myers 27:38

Right. She may not know exactly where she's going, but she knows she should go there.

**J** Jessi Chartier 27:43

Yeah, it's like she should go there, wherever there is, that's where she's going.

**J** Jen Myers 27:48

And I want to throw in here too, I hope we're not jumping around too much. So there's just so much to talk about here. But back in my point, talking about how the world sees these girls. So I want to draw a parallel here to something that I don't know if it was something they pulled from directly. But this reminds me a lot of *Laura Palmer* and *Twin Peaks*.

**J** Jessi Chartier 28:09

Oh, yes. Let's talk about that.

**J** Jen Myers 28:11

Yeah, because *Miranda* specifically, is this character who knows too much. Not exactly in the same way as *Laura*, especially because we learned that *Laura* was, you know, very literally into a lot of things that that maybe a young girl should not have known about. But there's something about the characters that I find really similar. And I think *Laura* had a similar sense of, I think she had more of a sense, she was going to something not great. It's not exactly the same. But also in a sense that this is what she's fated to do.

**J** Jessi Chartier 28:46

At first sort of fated,

**J** Jen Myers 28:49

It was what she was that connects like, sorry, I'm gonna make another dot here on the on the charts, to a film we didn't talk about a lot. But we talked about briefly when we talked about found footage, which is Lake Mungo, which is an Australian film, that is a mock documentary about a family named Palmer, dealing with the loss of their teenage daughter. And throughout the course of that film, they find the family and when they're trying to find answers to why they lost their daughter, eventually, they can get to those really scary moments where they find footage of her and they realize she knew she was gonna die. And she had that same type of kind of fatalistic, this is just what's gonna happen. And so I think the triangle of those things, is really fascinating to me. And they all at their center have this young woman who does not belong in the world that she lives in, in one way or the other. And Miranda, I think gets the best of it. So I think she gets the most peaceful exit from that world, but they all have to leave one way or another. They're and they leave behind them, these voids that no one else can explain or understand.

**J** Jessi Chartier 30:09

That's a great way to put it. You know, the, because that's exactly what Laura Palmer does is like, they're the impetus to explore what happens with those who remain exactly. You know, it's not about the person who's lost. It's not about the person, how the person was lost. It's the what happens to the people who remain.

**J** Jen Myers 30:28

But there is also something about the fact that I don't think it's an accident, either that, again, this is these are all about teenage girls who are kind of on that threshold, as you mentioned, and I think that they all have the they're all girls because they don't fit where they are, that means that they have some sort of power, at least in my interpretation that makes them not fit for where they are. And what is the world do with young women with power, it has to restrain it somehow. And that's what I think is so interesting about Picnic at Hanging Rock is you have like, is there anything more restrictive than being a young girl in the late Victorian era? You know, like, the whole name of the game was restriction, the whole entire thing was about tamping down any agency that you might have to fit into a certain mold. And Miranda, I feel makes the decision to embrace her power and let it dissolve her. And it's more complicated when you come to like Laura, or no, I'm completely forgetting the name of the girl in Lake Mungo, but I feel like it's a similar thing where you have girls that are they're not meant for the places they were born into, and they don't have any other options. And that's something deeply sad about that to me.

**J** Jessi Chartier 31:56

But if something is also very beautiful about their disappearance, then there is something good, yeah, it's very relieving. Because they are no longer bound by whatever was binding them.

J Jen Myers 32:06

That's true. That's true. And I think that definitely comes through a Picnic at Hanging Rock, like there is something that is both melancholic, but like you said, beautiful about these girls, and the one woman leaving this world.

J Jessi Chartier 32:22

Mm hmm. And I also love the fact that it did take place in the Victorian period, because I think that that's the only period this would really work in like, a period of high seance and like, repression at its finest. But underneath it all, you were really something different, right? There's so much literature about how the Victorians gave these errors. But then underneath it, like there was lots of other stuff.

J Jen Myers 32:49

Oh, there's so much underneath the surface.

J Jessi Chartier 32:51

Underneath it all, you know. So I think that even the setting works, the adds to it doesn't even just work. It just adds to, to everything. And it's just, it's not meant to be answered, there are no answers to what happened to the women, or the girls. No idea. The you know, the more recent version of it gives the impression that they chose they were choosing to run away. And they had been planning this for a while then does an 18 version of it. Which almost to me, I don't know, it makes it it takes the shine off of it. Like, you don't need a reason to want to melt into things.

J Jen Myers 33:29

Oh, I like that. You don't need a reason to melt to want to melt into things. That's really good. But yeah, no, I agree with you on a percent. And I think that I read to that. I mean, this film did really well in certain circles when it came out. Because you know, they got it. And then I think more mainstream, it did not because I think I just watched an interview with the director Peter Weir, who described I don't know if he witnessed this, or he was told about this. And I think this was an American audience where there was one guy who threw a cup of coffee at the screen. He's like, I just wasted my whole time I watched this whole movie and you don't even learn the solution to the mystery. And it's like, I can imagine there were people were like, okay, but what's the answer? And that is, you're not going to get that in that film. And, you know, you should probably question a little bit more about why you feel like you need to get that because then you're not going to there's a lot of other areas of life you're not going to get that in anyway. But ya know, it's it's this the nature of this film is about that mystery. It is the fact that and at the same time, it's not just the mystery it's the fact that you're not supposed to know it. It's a mystery in the sense of kind of how the term used to be used in you know, more of like,

religious mystery these things that are unpalatable to man right that like we're not supposed to understand. That's what this is for me. And I think when we talk about mysteries, these days we have a very like, more of a storytelling Oh, this is a mystery. And we go through these things. And at the ends, we learn the solution to the mystery. Or as I say, it's a riddle or a puzzle. Exactly right. It's more of a riddle. But there's an old definition of mystery. That is something that we're not meant to know that we're not meant to be able to put into human terms. And that's what this film is. This is an old style, ancient mystery. And modern people enter into that mystery. And they disappear. And that's part of the mystery.

**J** Jessi Chartier 35:36

And I think that that's just so beautiful, because there's so many different connections. I mean, almost all folklore has that green world mystery, Joseph Campbell called it the green world, right? Like an Anglo Saxon, it was always the woods, it was the Fae with the Giants. causeways, it was always and here, it's Hanging Rock. And it's almost always this place of raw nature of where you human control is completely senseless. But that what you try to do as a human, there will not work. And so you feel so unrooted and just kind of untethered. And I think that that's what Hanging Rock feels like. And that's what I think a lot of old folklores were always about is that you were untethered from the world. And so that can be a very dangerous place to be, because you don't want to operate when when you have no runner or tether.

**J** Jen Myers 36:31

Exactly. Although for some people, it could be a very liberating place to be so never really belonged in the world in the first place. And that's right, exactly. And that's a that's what this is about. You have these these girls who are recognizing that they don't belong here. And so they're going to embrace that mystery, in a sense of liberation, but anybody else who doesn't have that awareness, or you know, who just doesn't have that same relationship with the world? It's terrifying.

**J** Jessi Chartier 37:02

Yes. Which is why? I think that way, it explains a lot more in the movie. It explains why for example, the headmistress commits suicide. It explains why I think we're led to believe that Sarah commits suicide somehow, or someone killed Sara, that one who is it does explain a lot of the why a lot of the adults freak out. But the children like the other, the young man, and the girls, and the others are all like, kind not okay with it. But they're more inquisitive. They're like, I need to know what's going on. I want to understand what happened. But the adults are like, no, no, no, no, don't even question it. Don't even go there. You don't want to open that box, don't want to open the box. And yet the inquisitive nature of the younger generation wants to understand they want to explore they want to understand that piece. But let's talk let's talk about Sarah's death for just a hot minute. Before we wrap it up.

**J** Jen Myers 38:07

We were talking a little bit more about Sara in general, because we've just mentioned her in the context of Miranda

**J** Jessi Chartier 38:12

but yes, so her character, she is, yes, roommates, or close friends or lovers, however you want to interpret it with Miranda. And she is not necessarily a scholarship girl, as they would call it, but she is an orphan who had a guardian, who chose to send her to this school. And we learn right after the disappearance of Hanging Rock, that her guardian has not been paid her bills and cannot be reached cannot be gotten a hold of. And so the headmistress calls Sara in and says, we're gonna have to figure out what to do. First off, she says, Your guardian has stopped paying bills, we're gonna have to figure out what to do with you. That's all. See you later. I'll catch up with you later, and then goes up to her room half drunk, and says, I've arranged for you to go back to the orphanage. And it's just like, we'll talk about it more tomorrow. And then we find Sara dead in the green house.

**J** Jen Myers 39:22

Yes. And also it should be we should be. I just want to like underline this point, Sara was not allowed to go on a picnic to hanging hanging Well, this right she was not allowed. So she's had to stay behind behind. I think it was some academic infraction or something like that, which it's what we're led to believe. Exactly. Yeah, you I always get a sense that really wasn't it. You can also get the sense that I feel like this is Appleyard, the headmistress picks on Sarah a lot in general, probably. But yeah, so she was. Sarah was denied that escape. She could not go she could not follow Miranda and to wherever Miranda went, Oh, I 100% believe that Sara committed suicide. I think she jumped from the rooftop, especially because at the very beginning, when all the girls are lined up being lectured by the headmistress about behaving themselves when they go to Hanging Rock, Miranda looks up and Sara is on the roof looking down at them. So, yes, Sara knows how to get up to the roof. It seems like that's Miranda knew to look up to find her there. So I think that that is I mean, I could be drawing too strong conclusions here. But you know, I get the sense that that is it based on what we see in the movie that Sara knows got to get up to the roof. She's there a lot, and they find her crashed through the greenhouse roof. So it does seem very clear to me, and I feel like Mrs. Appleyard was setting her up for that when she tells her she's going back to the orphanage because she knows that Sara. Sara also admits that she was abused at the orphanage by the orphanage matron, so I think Mrs. Appleyard knows exactly how that story is going to end. And well, she's going to end her story in a similar way. So I don't think it matters anymore.

**J** Jessi Chartier 41:11

Yeah, I had forgotten the fact that she was on the roof and that she had crashed. I missed the detail that the roof

**J** Jen Myers 41:16

It's a very small one. That's just for some reason. That's something that I just connected.

J Jessi Chartier 41:21

But you know, makes total sense. But yeah, we're I mean, it's just, yes, that makes absolute sense. It ties back to what you were saying to that these women who are not, or individuals who are just not you they don't it's not that they don't fit in. It's just that this world does not accept them. Yeah. What do they do? What are their options? What are their other options? Exactly? And it's like this school was the safe haven for that. Yeah. And with this catastrophe, the headmistress knows that more and more parents are going to pull the girls. And so the school is threatened this safe haven for those women are now gone. Yeah. So it just it's such a melancholy but beautiful film.

J Jen Myers 42:08

Yeah, it is like it ultimately I think you're absolutely right. That's where it comes down in the end is that the everything fell apart after the girls disappeared, because it kind of revealed the fact that they were all trapped. And the girls escaped. But there were no other options for the people who got left behind. And there are a lot of people who just simply have no other options. And that's how it ends.

J Jessi Chartier 42:35

Yeah, it's just a beautiful tragedy. I don't know how else to explain it.

J Jen Myers 42:40

I think that's a good way of putting it all together, a beautiful tragedy. And I think it also there, there is something it's tragic, but also beautiful about the fact that some of them kind of escaped. I think the whole world sees that as a they don't, I don't think they see it as an escape. I think they see it as nothing but a tragedy that these girls apparently like died. But there's nothing frightening about them leaving. It's a very,

J Jessi Chartier 43:14

it's very peaceful.

J Jen Myers 43:15

It's very peaceful. It's very beautiful. It's very filled with purpose. So I think that that's something that the audience sees that I guess the people the other characters in the film do not see. And the people who don't see that they end in much more awful ways. But I don't know, I feel like really get a sense that Hanging Rock, let some of them escape and away.

J Jessi Chartier 43:37

I wonder if people do pilgrimages to Hanging Rock just for this movie or story?

**J** Jen Myers 43:42

Well, I don't know for sure. I've never been there. Like I said, I've been like reading a bunch of stuff about it. I think that it's much more built up around there now than it used to be. I did read somewhere that I think this film has inspired, you know, more people to go there because in the end, apparently they do annual Valentine's Day picnics where people dress up in Victorian dress, and go there, which seems a little bit to be like tempting fate, but also sounds kind of fun, you know?

**J** Jessi Chartier 44:11

Trying to think if you like this one. So if you like this movie, John, what recommendations?

**J** Jen Myers 44:17

Okay. So that's, that's a good question. I have had a hard time coming up with a list of films for this one. Like I said, this one feels so essential to me that I almost don't know where else to turn to. I brought this up in connection with other things. And this may not seem like a really strong connection. But for me, it reminds me of *The Innocents* that we talked about. Yeah, which is also a Victorian setting a very different type of story, but also also dealing with a lot of issues of feminine repression, and what expressions of you know, sexuality, or basically anything else are acceptable and how that can come out in twisted ways. or, you know, not come out at all that has a much darker trend to the story. But it they're connected a little bit in my mind. Do you have anything that this made you think of?

**J** Jessi Chartier 45:13

You know, I really liked to connect this one with *Images* just because that one's another one that doesn't have a total mystery solution to it.

**J** Jen Myers 45:20

Yeah, that's a good point.

**J** Jessi Chartier 45:22

You know, I'd also I don't know why, but this movie also reminds me of *Footprints on the Moon*.

**J** Jen Myers 45:27

Oh, interesting.

J Jessi Chartier 45:28

And I, I think it's because there is that sense of just like, who am I? What happened? While the Footprints on the Moon has a lot more of like a resolution to it?

J Jen Myers 45:43

Yeah. It's a very weird resolution. But you're right. It does. Yeah.

J Jessi Chartier 45:46

Yeah. Yeah.

J Jen Myers 45:48

I would also throw in there in terms of this kind of kind of the feel of it. The more of the dreamlike vibe, especially dreamlike vibe, dealing with young women, it seems reminds me a lot of Sofia Coppola's work. I think there's some overlap there. And I would also think just on the sense of there being an intense relationship between young women, I would hop over to New Zealand and mention Heavenly Creatures.

J Jessi Chartier 46:15

Oh, that's so good

J Jen Myers 46:16

Which has a very different vibe. But it has some similar themes. I think. And I do love that film. That would be a good one for us to talk about, I think in the future.

J Jessi Chartier 46:25

Now I saw that way back in the day. I saw that in a double feature of that, and Heathers

J Jen Myers 46:30

Oh, there you go. That's a nice pairing.

J Jessi Chartier 46:35

Yeah, it is. It is. And of course, you know, watch the original Twin Peaks too. That's awesome.

J

Jen Myers 46:40

Yeah, absolutely. That's a good point. Yeah, there's I feel like there's a lot and you know, just to reiterate Lake Mungo Oh, yeah. Which is another Australian film that I think it's a very different format. That's a found footage film. But I think that it has a lot of sense the same stuff going on underneath

J

Jessi Chartier 47:00

And stuff all around. Well, if you have suggestions on what we should watch next, please reach out to us. We you can get us in a variety of ways you can email us directly at hello at quietlittlehorrors.com. We are on Instagram at quietlittlehorrors. Our website quietlittlehorrors.com Twitter is the only odd one out which is quiethorrors on Twitter. You can reach out to us in any of those. Let us know we should watch and go watch that Picnic on Hanging Rock on Hulu. We're gonna reach out to Hulu and see if we can't get the audio fixed on it.

J

Jen Myers 47:31

Yeah, the one that's Hatching but yeah, well, that's Hatching that's not this one. This one but this one I think is available. I know it's on the Criterion Channel. I think it's on HBO Max as well too. So you should be able to watch it. So if you are like interested in going deep in this or maybe if you've seen it before, and you want to like investigate more I would recommend either I think the Criterion Channel has some of the bonus features or just go pick up the disk because there is a lot of extra stuff that is really interesting about this on there.

J

Jessi Chartier 48:03

And I think I'm gonna pick up the book because the book looks Yes. There is a book there's so much stuff Yeah. Amazing. Well, thank you for listening everybody. We will see you at the next podcast. And until then enjoy your horror movies and we will see you then bye