

Note: This show periodically replaces their ad breaks with new promotional clips. Because of this, both the transcription for the clips and the timestamps after them may be inaccurate at the time of viewing this transcript.

00:00:00	Music	Music	Foreboding orchestra music.
00:00:04	John Roderick	Host	Civil wars don't have the sweeping tank battles, sneaky submarine escapades, or the mass death by famine that characterize your big Hollywood wars. But it's exactly their intimacy that makes them venues for exceptional cruelty. Nothing brings out the savagery in a population quite like the opportunity to finally, <u>finally</u> punish their next-door neighbors who have consistently refused to fertilize their lawns <u>despite</u> the neighborhood covenant, in <u>addition</u> to leaving their Christmas trees up until January 20th, and what better way to express this neighborly consternation than by draining the offenders' blood into the gutters with masonry trowels and basking in the lamentations of their legal spouses?

During normal wars, we can barely muster an abstract hatred for enemy soldiers without drumming up some tinpot xenophobia or F-16-ified neoliberal geopolitical world-building chorus line. Civil wars enjoy a much lower barrier to entry, needing to appeal only to the blinding, all-consuming hate people feel for the family next door who otherwise completely shares their culture and values, only didn't Tweet in favor of their preferred candidate in the Democratic primaries.

The Spanish Civil War of the late thirties wasn't an ancient conflict between adjacent tribes, nor a social cleansing where everyone who wore glasses and owned a pencil was denounced as a class-enemy and beheaded, nor a fight between an agrarian slave-owning caste of second-class aristocrats and a mercantile abolitionist nation of bustling arms-dealers, nor a bureaucratic and industrialized persecution and enslavement of an innocent and bystanding ethnic minority by a complacent middle class in thrall to a fast-talking nutcase. It was basically a slap-fight between liberals, conservatives, and the Catholic Church over how to govern Spain.

We don't have strong impressions of it in most of the West because we too often either never heard of it, or see it through the *Sun Also Rises* lens: glamorizing it as a time when leftists wore berets and turtlenecks, and Picasso painted murals, and people fighting a lost cause could still retreat into the mountains and sit around a campfire debating dialectical materialism. In contrast to the dozens of millions that would die in a few short years, it seems almost quaint and kind of boring. Likewise the authoritarian isolationism of the subsequent 35 years of Franco's rule, and the peaceful transition to constitutional monarchy that followed, dulled the aftermath into feeling like a song that faded out after the first chorus.

00:02:30	John	Host	But the victory of the Nationalist dictatorship of Francisco Franco over the Republican rebels was bloody indeed, and repression and resistance continued long after the nominal end to the conflict. <u>Especialy</u> along the border with France, where the Pyrenees provided cover for the long tail of the republican resistance. This film is set in 1944, long after the attention of the world had shifted elsewhere, set in the unobserved nightmare of the early years of the Franco regime. These are wounds still felt in Spain.
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Our main character Ofelia is a preteen protagonist still in the part of childhood where fantasy and reality are hard to distinguish. Her mother has thrown in with stepdad-to-be Captain Vidal, a sociopathic Falangist tasked with stamping out any stragglers in his bucolic border region. His command post—a large, rustic farmhouse—happens to be, as my realtor might put it, labyrinth-adjacent. Ofelia meets a creepy giant faun in the center of this labyrinth—also echoing my recent real estate transactions—and he sends her on some scary-ass quests.

We come to admire her determination and bravery, especially in contrast to the decidedly non-fantastical and oftentimes chickenshit behavior of the adults in her life. Vidal likes executing people for no reason. Ofelia's mother both fails to protect her and suffers under Vidal's sadism and quackery while also carrying his baby. The film ends in both triumph and tragedy after a staggering couple of hours of freaky magic, tree toads, ghouls, torture, chilling violence, and what Ben might describe as game-changing fantasy imagery.

This film thrust director Guillermo del Toro into the public consciousness in a big way—also as Ben would say—and he's gone on to direct some really major films and win tons of awards. It's a powerful mix of cultural, religious, economic, and political ideas and images, and played a kind of truth and reconciliation role in Spanish culture. As I would say. It doesn't really care if you're from somewhere else, and doesn't take any pains to explain the setting or the symbolism. This works in its favor.

00:04:37 John Host

The echoes of the Spanish Civil War are bouncing around the public square again. In many ways it's a better analogy for our present political world than World War II will ever be. It sometimes feels that we're in a world separated from dark magic by only the thinnest gauze, and what we really need is a brave little girl to feed giant exploding bugs to a tree toad.

"You're getting older, and you'll see that life isn't like your fairytales. The world is a cruel place. And you'll learn that, even if it hurts." Today on *Friendly Fire: Pan's Labyrinth*.

[Music builds to an eerie string crescendo and then fades into the opening drumroll of the next song.]

00:05:13 Music Transition

"War" off the album *War & Peace* by Edwin Starr. Impassioned, intense funk.

War!
Huh!
Yeah!
What is it good for?!
Absolutely—
—nothing!
Uh-huh!

War!
Huh!
Yeah!

What is it good for?!
Absolutely—
—nothing!

Say it again, y'all!

War!

[Song fades down and plays quietly as the hosts speak.]

00:05:32 Ben Harrison Host Welcome to *Friendly Fire*, the war movie podcast that used to believe in a lot of things that we don't believe in anymore. I'm Ben Harrison.

00:05:38 Adam Pranica Host I'm Adam Pranica.

00:05:40 John Host And I'm John Roderick.

00:05:42 Ben Host I was gonna do that in like a nice, lispy Castilian accent.

00:05:46 John Host Uh-huh.

00:05:47 Ben Host But, uh...

00:05:48 John Host "Grathiath." (*Gracias.*)

00:05:49 Ben Host I lost my nerve!

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:05:50 Adam Host You don't wanna be turned into someone's soundboard.

00:05:53 Ben Host Yeah, well—! But I was like "Are people gonna like, take great umbrage with my... use of a Spanish accent?"

[Music fades out.]

00:06:01 Adam Host I get a lot of shit about my resting face, from so many people.

00:06:06 John Host Mm.

00:06:07 Adam Host I've got a bad resting face. But—

00:06:09 John Host Not bad.

00:06:10 Adam Host —I would argue that Sergi López's resting face is among the most evil we have seen in film.

[Ben laughs.]

That guy is great casting.

00:06:22 John Host He is so evil, and when you start the movie and you're like "Oh, here's the evil guy..."

00:06:27 Adam Host Yeah.

00:06:28 John Host He double, and triple, and quadruples down on it.

00:06:31 Adam Host Sometimes you get a sense of someone's evil just on their own. They can be evil by themselves. But you see his evil reflected in the innocence of his new wife, and the new daughter that is brought along. Like, you get this compounding aspect to him that just gets worse and worse! At what point did you know that Ofelia was going to kill him? I was rooting for it right away.

[Ben laughs.]

00:07:00 John Host You know, the foreshadowing of that little bottle of sedative... which we see Ofelia looking at, it—you know, it spends a lot of time in the frame.

00:07:11 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:07:12 John Host Definitely you knew something was coming with that.

00:07:15 Adam Host Yeah.

00:07:17 John Host I can't say that I—that I, in the middle of this movie, could see where it was going.

00:07:23 Adam Host Yeah, that's true.

00:07:24 John Host 'Cause there are two realities in this movie? And you don't know which one is gonna win out. You know that world has to... win, in the film, because you can't have that world be the one that is sidelined.

00:07:39 Adam Host I think it says something major about the magical world being the good world, and the real world being the evil world.

00:07:46 John Host Although the magical world is full of peril.

00:07:49 Adam Host Isn't it also full of hope in a way that the real world isn't?

00:07:52 John Host Well, but you don't know whether the Faun—the Faun seems like he's really treacherous, and monkeying with her!

00:08:00 Adam Host Yeah! Whose side is the Faun on?

00:08:02 John Host Right.

00:08:03 Ben Host I kept expecting there to be a twist where the Faun was using the girl to advance some Faun-ish aim that—

[Adam laughs.]

—that you know, we didn't know about yet or whatever.

00:08:16 Adam Host Right.

00:08:17 Ben Host Like "Oh, yeah, I'm trapped in this labyrinth and only if you do these tasks three can I escape and take over the world" or something.

00:08:24 Adam Host Yeah. It felt like Faun was going to be end boss at some point.

00:08:28 John Host Particularly when he asked for the sacrifice of the child at the end.

00:08:31 Adam Host Yeah.

00:08:32 John Host That was the thing that we'd been leading up to this whole time.

00:08:35 Ben Host That's a very Biblical idea, though. Like the "Kill the baby here, and then I'll give you what you want. Tricks! I didn't actually want you to!"

00:08:45 John Host Right. But you know, when she eats that grape, and the monster kills the two fairies, and the Faun says "You're out." You know that's not the end of the Faun. You know that—you know that there's—

00:09:01 Ben Host Yeah.

00:09:02 John Host But he's—like, one of the great things about the movie is the Faun is gone for a long time.

00:09:08 Adam Host Yeah.

00:09:09 John Host At a crucial moment, where you're like "What is happening?" Like, the Faun was all we had.

00:09:14 Adam Host Yeah, and without him there's sort of an absence of hope. Like, when we're in the real world for a long time and shit gets worse and worse and worse in those moments, you're relieved to see this character that you were so unsure of throughout. Because he's your only chance at redemption.

I was really mad at her for eating that grape, though. Come on.

[Ben laughs.]

00:09:37 John Host Me too! What the hell, man? Just—you had—

00:09:39 Ben Host Yeah. Haven't you read any Greek myths? You know you're not supposed to eat the grape!

00:09:42 John Host You had one job!

00:09:44 Adam Host They set her up very interestingly, though. Because she goes to bed without dinner! Right?

00:09:48 Ben Host Right.

00:09:49 Adam Host She's gotta be hungry. It's not just her wanting to know what a grape tastes like after so long. It's that she was punished, and is hungry.

00:09:56 Ben Host Right.

00:09:57 Adam Host And I think that's crucial. It's not just precocious kid stuff.

00:10:01 Ben Host The movie doesn't highlight that as much as it maybe would have in the hands of a more... un-self-assured director. I also read that that scene was in part about the predations of Catholic priests against children? The Pale Man is more interested in her than the feast.

00:10:25 Adam Host Ooh.

00:10:26 Ben Host Being like a big—like a metaphor about that. Which... I, uh, I didn't pick up—

00:10:32 John Host Right. He had this incredible feast, but he was eating the fairies instead.

00:10:36 Ben Host Right. And this is—this came out five years after the Spotlight stories broke. So...

00:10:45 John Host But it doesn't feel like a contemporary reference. It feels like one that goes back to Middle Ages.

00:10:50 Ben Host And this also doesn't really feel like a—like, this is I think... It's in the top ten of best-grossing foreign language films in the US market, but it really doesn't feel like it's geared toward a US audience. Like, it's definitely not giving you the same kinds of, you know, safety nets, story and context-wise, that movies that are for a US audience would. Yeah, this is a Spanish movie for Spanish audiences, and... and it is fucking amazing, so it also works for other audiences.

[Laughs.]

00:11:27 Adam Host It's also a rated-R fairytale. Which I think... is an interesting choice, right?

00:11:32 Ben Host Yeah.

00:11:33 Adam Host If you're going for the broadest possible audience, maybe that is a,

uh, unconventional combination.

00:11:40 Ben Host God, it is so much more... viscerally brutal than so many of the films we've seen. Like, it's probably in the top three, right? For *Friendly Fire* films?

00:11:53 John Host So many small details that are... that—that turn the character of the Captain into so much deeper of a character than he could have gotten away with, right? Guillermo del Toro could have made him a cartoon. But the thing—the off-handed comment to the doctor, like, "If it comes down to it, choose the child over the wife"?

00:12:22 Ben Host Yeah.

00:12:23 John Host The fact that when he gives his little torture speech about like, you know, here are—as he pulls his tools out.

00:12:32 Ben Host Yeah!

00:12:33 John Host He gives this little sadistic kind of like... "By the second tool, you're going to be my friend."

00:12:39 Adam Host And it's like rehearsed, 'cause he uses it again, yeah!

00:12:41 Ben Host Yeah!

00:12:42 John Host 'Cause we see it again!

00:12:43 Ben Host You never get to see that guy do the speech twice!

00:12:44 John Host Yeah!

00:12:45 Ben Host Like, we've seen that speech in a thousand movies, but seeing the guy do it a second time is so... is so illustrative of what a—he's like a very simple person, in a lot of ways!

00:12:57 John Host Yeah. Yeah, and it increases his sadistic depravity. It makes you see into him. In a way that—him constantly pulling out the watch as a reference to his father is also great! But more of a cartoon than just that simple detail.

00:13:14 Clip Clip **Captain Vidal:** Por gusto.

Crowd: *[Murmur, repeating]* Por gusto.

00:13:17 Adam Host His admonishment of his wife at that dinner in front of the guests, I thought, was another example of that. I think everyone has felt that way, socially. Like, where someone goes right over the top of you, publicly, and that kind of hurt from someone that is supposed to love you? I thought was like—that's a moment made for adults to understand.

00:13:40 John Host Even more! The detail that slayed me in that moment was when she was like "I'm going to bed" and left the table, all the men stood up. But the two women...

00:13:51 Adam Host Yeah.

00:13:52 John Host ...stayed seated, and were clearly whispering to each other about her.

00:13:58 Adam Host Yeah.

00:13:59 John Host Some shitty class—

00:14:00 Adam Host Just catty bullshit.

00:14:01 John Host Just like *[snooty indistinct muttering]*.

00:14:02 Adam Host Yeah.

00:14:03 John Host And that was—and that's in the back of the frame! Right?

00:14:04 Adam Host Mm-hm.

00:14:05 John Host It's like—the film—the camera sees it, and is meant to see it, but it's not foregrounded. You don't—it's not a cut-away close-up. It's just... and all of that was so—the detail of that was so... I don't know, just like, humane and perceptive.

00:14:21 Adam Host There's something—there's a quality about a Disney myth film that tends to obscure all the parts for adults. Right? And this is a weird mirror version of that, where like, all of the peripheral adult stuff that's just for you and me is the centerpiece, and the kid stuff is almost at the periphery, in a film like this.

00:14:40 John Host That's true of like, modern Disney films, but I think the original cartoons, uh, you see a lot more—

00:14:46 Adam Host You're talking about *Song of the South*?

00:14:48 John Host Yeah.

[Ben and John laugh.]

00:14:49 Music Music A clip of James Baskett singing *Zip-a-Dee-Doo-Dah* accompanied by tweeting birds.

It's the truth! It's actual! Everything is satisfactory.

[Clip fades out.]

00:14:52 John Host But like, *Cinderella*... there's a lot of brutality in it.

00:14:54 Adam Host Yeah. Yeah.

00:14:55 John Host Right? Social brutality. That I think they leave out of *Frozen*.

00:14:59 Adam Host Right.

00:15:00 John Host 'Cause kids today are idiots.

00:15:01 Adam Host [Laughing] Uh-huh.

00:15:04 John Host 'Cause everyone gets a medal!

00:15:07 Ben Host [Laughs.] Okay, boomer. Um—[laughs].

00:15:10 John Host Both sides!

00:15:11 Adam Host Is that an Olaf impression?? What is that?

00:15:13 John Host No, that was just half of an Aspirin in Ben's cola.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:15:20 Ben Host I prefer an Alka-Seltzer in my coffee.

00:15:23 John Host Uh-huh.

00:15:24 Adam Host Mm.

00:15:25 Ben Host If we're making beverages here. [Chuckles.]

00:15:26 John Host Right.

00:15:27 Adam Host Yeah.

00:15:28 John Host Nice callback.

00:15:29 Ben Host Let's talk about the context that this film is set in! It's like, during World War II, but Spain is not really like a Theater of the conflict. It's—this is like Francoist forces mopping up at the end of the Civil War for them. Right?

00:15:44 John Host Well, interestingly, like a little-known side of World War II is the Maquis—

00:15:54 Clip Clip **Lwaxana Troi:** [Maques?](#)

00:15:55 John Host —resistance to Franco, but also to the Germans, in the Pyrenees during World War II. So it's not—we don't hear about it very much. But the Maquis—so we see it in a lot of World War II movies, right? Because a downed pilot is trying to get to Spain.

00:16:11 Ben Host Right.

00:16:12 John Host We see that all the time. Somebody behind enemy lines is just trying to get to Spain. And we will often see the pilot make it there, and then some guy—

00:16:22 Adam Host He hopes the final jump will be the jump home.

00:16:24 John Host The jump home, that's right.

00:16:25 Adam Host Yeah.

00:16:26 John Host But we see him arrive at the frontier, and a guy with a sloppy hat and a shotgun materializes from behind a tree.

[Ben laughs.]

And we know our pilot is safe. But who that sloppy-hatted guy is is a member of the Maquis, who were the resistance. And they were fighting Franco, right? Spain wasn't safe. Spain was supposed to be neutral, but it was a fascist dictatorship!

00:16:50 Ben Host Wasn't Spain also trying to get Germany to like, give them the Basque Country and like the parts of Southern France that are Catalan? Like, weren't they try—weren't—since Germany was in charge of France, Spain was like asking, like, "Hey, what about if we took over a little bit more of the border?"

00:17:09 John Host Well, that part of France was sort of the one corner of it that the Germans never really occupied. Right? They didn't care about Biarritz, or—I mean, I guess they did. It was part of the Atlantic Wall. But down around the mountains, there wasn't any—there wasn't very much German presence. And so, yeah! The—I mean, Spain was exerting its influence.

But the Maquis were not just fighting Franco. They were also... they were part of the—whatever. The general Allied war effort. And it's a thing that isn't—we see so many references to "the resistance," and I don't think that story's been told very well except *Behold the Pale Horse* sort of, I mean, tells the aftermath story.

00:17:58 Ben Host The Maquis are the guys that are all like *[thin, strong voice]* "We've got to get these damn fascists out of the Pyrenees!"

[John and Adam laugh.]

00:18:06 John Host And the thing is, they lost.

00:18:08 Adam Host I think that's your best impression, Ben. That's my favorite.

00:18:10 John Host That was a good impression.

[Ben laughs.]

00:18:12 Adam Host Your—that was Gregory Peck, right?

00:18:13 John Host Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

00:18:14 Adam Host Just to be clear? Okay.

00:18:15 Ben Host Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's my Peck.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:18:17 Adam Host You are Peck's bad boy, Ben!

00:18:20 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Ohhh, boy.

00:18:24 John Host But we see the Guardia Civil in this movie. Second movie where we get to see them, in just recent memory.

00:18:29 Adam Host Yeah!

00:18:30 Ben Host Their weird hats.

00:18:32 John Host But we see them working in conjunction with the army, as part of this project to eradicate the rebels.

00:18:40 Ben Host The Falangists were kind of like the National Socialists of Spain, is that correct?

00:18:45 John Host Yeah, the Francoists.

00:18:48 Ben Host It's like a one-party state, and the one party is also kind of the—like, structured like the military?

00:18:56 John Host Well, yeah. Right. Just as happens in all fascist governments, right? The distinction between the military, the police, and the government blurs.

00:19:07 Adam Host Mm. You don't say.

[Pause.]

00:19:10 Ben Host Like, one thing that I could not escape thinking about watching this movie was like, it has felt dark and desperate in our country a lot lately. And fortunately we are not in the "The fascists are mopping up the resistance in the hills" phase of—*[laughs]* of things. Like...

00:19:30 John Host I think you'd find it very difficult in America for the fascists to have defeated the rebels, given... I mean, it would have to be like, a genocide. Or a—I'm sorry, a massacre. A genocide suggests that it is a—sort of a—one group that gets killed?

00:19:49 Ben Host There's an ethnic element. Yeah.

00:19:51 John Host Right. Whereas here they would have to destroy all of the West Coast. Which would be very hard, given... I mean, given that Subarus are nuclear-proof.

00:19:59 Ben Host *[Cracks up.]* Yeah! And if they destroy our Subarus, we'll get in our kayaks or on our mountain bikes—

[John laughs.]

—and escape via other means.

00:20:10 John Host Let me highly recommend the book *Ecotopia*. I mean, not as a good book, 'cause it's not, it's a terrible book, but it's a great idea.

00:20:16 Adam Host That's a great plug, John. That's why we do so many advertisements on *Friendly Fire*. It's—

[All three laugh.]

00:20:23 Ben Host Yeah. There's nothing quite like getting the Roderick endorsement, for any product or offering.

[All three laugh.]

00:20:33 John Host This book will give you lice, but at the same time...

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

...it's good on the imagination.

But yeah, the—I—we don't see in Europe anymore a situation where a regional administrator will have sort of godlike power. But there are plenty of places in the world where you would still find that some Commandant Marcos would end up, you know, having total authority over a region.

00:21:05 Ben Host Yeah! Captain Vidal really reminds me of the colonel in *Rambo III*. Like, "Out here, I'm in charge!" Like "I am the final word on who gets to live and who gets to die!"

00:21:19 Adam Host Yeah.

00:21:20 John Host Right.

00:21:21 Ben Host There's no, like, due process of any kind. Like, he kills that guy and then finds out that he really was hunting rabbits, and doesn't care. And just uses it as like a teachable moment for one of his lieutenants.

00:21:33 Adam Host Everyone's name is Guardia Civil.

[All three laugh.]

Like Spetsnatz was the name of that soldier in *Rambo III*.

00:21:39 John Host Yeah. "Spetsnatz, get in here!"

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

But if you look at the Spanish Civil War and kind of contrast it to the American Civil War, for instance. Like, one of the things about the end of the American Civil War is somehow the idea that we were gonna—that the union was gonna be restored... uh, for the most part, eliminated the idea of there being a rearguard action on the part of the rebels. You did not see the Confederates retreat into the mountains and wage a guerrilla war against the Union for 50 years.

Now, they did it in a different way. They never assimilated, they never followed reconstruction.

00:22:20 Adam Host Are the hills in this metaphor 8chan?

[Ben cracks up.]

- 00:22:23 John Host Yeah, the—[laughs] that's right. The Confederates ultimately retreated to 8chan.
- 00:22:27 Adam Host Right.
- 00:22:28 John Host Whereas in the Spanish Civil War, it was a civil war and the fascists won. But there—but that didn't mean that the resistance—the resistance was already fighting in the hills. They didn't just lay down their guns and say "Alright. We give up." Until the fifties! I think the—I think the... eventually they were—all the leaders were captured. This is the *Behold the Pale Horse*, story, right? All the leaders were captured or driven into France, and eventually it just ran—the revolution ran outta steam. Or resistance, I mean.
- 00:23:04 Adam Host This may be a dumb question, but as the representative of those who do not know on *Friendly Fire*, I'm gonna ask it. What did the Spanish expect from their alignment with fascist Germany? Was it about self-preservation by aligning yourself with who you thought would win? Or did they truly believe in what they were going for?
- 00:23:26 John Host In 19—in the 1930s, fascism was—just as we see now—became very popular, and populist. Because it seemed like a... absolutely viable next form of government! I mean all these ideologies were vying with one another, and it wasn't clear not just, like, which would win, but which was the better form of governance for human beings! Because in an industrial or post-industrial world, which was pretty new... like, how do you make a government of people?
- 00:24:01 Adam Host So it was a philosophical alignment and not a practical—?
- 00:24:05 John Host Both. I mean it was—Franco was the test case for European fascism. And so everyone, Mussolini, Hitler, they were all watching Franco to see what it looked like. And they funded the Federal side of the war. It was a—you know, they used—the Francoists used German arms in the war, because the Germans were like "Hey, let's test out these Stuka bombers and see how they work!" It was really like—it was like a dress rehearsal.
- 00:24:40 Ben Host One thing I wondered about with the fascism is that there's like, rationing and stuff? And if the government is distributing all of the stuff, doesn't that have more of—like, isn't that more like socialism than capitalist fascism?
- 00:24:55 John Host Well, that's why it was called national socialism. Because it—it had—
- 00:25:00 Adam Host You gotta re-brand it!
- 00:25:02 John Host Well, and it—that was meant to somewhat undercut the appeal of the communists. Like "No, no, no, the communists say that we're gonna have this collective redistribution of wealth, but we're doing that, too."
- 00:25:15 Ben Host "We're gonna flatten society."
- 00:25:17 Adam Host Scenes like the dinner party where these captains of national socialist industry are talking about how people are starving in their country while at the same time enjoying eating from the horn of plenty on their own dinner table, the hypocrisy of that is fairly pronounced in this film.
- 00:25:38 Ben Host And the complicity of the Church in the way that works, too.
- 00:25:42 John Host Oh, for sure.

00:25:43	Adam	Host	Yeah. Yeah.
00:25:44	Clip	Clip	Speaker: Alright. Mistakes were made.
00:25:45	John	Host	Well, if you think about Mussolini's story, he was a communist. And an intellectual. And then his switch to fascism was done... really philosophically! I mean, in the early days he was a journalist and a writer! And was like "You know what? Actually, the more I think about it, what we <u>really</u> need is a... strong hand."
00:26:08	Ben	Host	Well, you know, like, with politics, like, you <u>want</u> to be bringing more and more people into the tent. You know?
00:26:14	John	Host	Yeah. <i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah.
00:26:15	Ben	Host	You can't just condemn somebody for having had a different belief earlier in life.
00:26:18	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i> Yeah, that's why we are endorsing—
00:26:22	Music	Transition	Brief clip of "War." <i>War!</i> <i>[Music stops.]</i>
00:26:24	Promo	Clip	<i>[Music.]</i> Travis McElroy: I'm Travis McElroy. Courtney Enlow: I'm Courtney Enlow. Brent Black: I'm Brent Black, and we're the hosts of <i>Trends Like These</i> . Courtney: <i>Trends Like These</i> is an Internet news show where we take the stories trending on social media, and go <u>beyond</u> the headlines! Travis: We'll give you the actual facts of the story, and not just the knee-jerk reactions. Brent: Plus we end every episode with a ray of hope that we call The Wi-Five of the Week. Travis: So join us every Friday on Maximum Fun. Courtney: Or wherever you get your podcasts! Brent: <i>Trends Like These</i> . Real life friends talking Internet trends. <i>[Music ends.]</i>
00:26:53	Promo	Clip	Music: Dramatic organ/piano music. <i>[Background noise throughout: a howling wolf and cawing crow. April speaks in a sinister voice.]</i> April Wolfe: Hello there, ghouls and gals. It is I, April Wolfe. I'm here to take you through the twisty, sca-a-a-ry, heart-pounding world of genre cinema on the exhilarating program known as Switchblade

[Sisters.](#)

[Sinister echo on the title.]

The concept is simple: I invite a female filmmaker on each week, and we discuss their favorite genre film. Listen in closely to hear past guests, like *The Babadook* director Jennifer Kent, *Winter's Bone* director Debra Granik, and so many others every Thursday on [MaximumFun.org](#). Tune in! If you dare...

[Thunder booms, something growls over April as she cackles evilly, and then all sound abruptly cuts.]

April: *[Rapidly]* It's actually a very thought-provoking show that deeply explores the craft and philosophy behind the filmmaking process while also examining film through the lens of the female gaze.

So, like, you should listen.

[Same sinister echo effect] Switchblade Sisters!

00:27:39 Music Transition

Brief clip of "War."

*Huh!
Yeah!*

[Music stops.]

00:27:41 John Host

But I do think we feel now that, you know, that a lot of those ideologies have... have proved themselves in the world. But just as—you know, just as there are people that—oh, and I—well, I mean, talk about "both sides"-ing. Just as there are plenty of people in the world today that will say "Well, communism was not—"

00:28:04 Ben Host

There's never been a real test, you know? *[Laughs.]*

00:28:05 John Host

There's never been a real test, right? Because the Soviets were—or the Solviets were fascists, ultimately. And so communism is still a viable ideology, because it's never—you know, because... because it didn't get a fair shake.

00:28:19 Adam Host

Because socialism is commonly coupled with fascism. Most commonly.

00:28:22 John Host

Well, I mean, all authoritarian governments end up being fascist. And if you're controlling—if you're centrally controlling every aspect, or a lot of aspects of society, what else—

00:28:33 Adam Host

Yeah.

00:28:34 John Host

You gotta have somebody that—you gotta have some police! Right?

00:28:37 Adam Host

Right.

00:28:38 John Host

And the idea—you know, the idea that socialism would be a sort of police-free... It's the idealism-socialism. But there are people—and you see them now in Europe; you see them all over—who would make the case that fascism had never been given a true shake, because it was combined with Hitler's racism.

00:28:57 Ben Host

Gotta try it, guys! Kumbaya, you know?

00:29:00 John Host Yeah, right! Like, let's roll it out in France and Hungary and, you know, Slovakia or whatever.

00:29:07 Adam Host That email address is FuckOff@maxfunkenstein.sex.

00:29:11 John Host *[Laughs.]* But you know, the people that are arguing for a fascist—or I'm sorry, you know, like a strong central government and a strong leader, they don't see themselves as Hitler acolytes!

00:29:25 Adam Host Yeah.

00:29:26 John Host They just want... the borders tight! And they want—

00:29:30 Adam Host "We're not the bad guys, right?"

00:29:32 John Host They want a big man!

00:29:33 Adam Host Yeah.

00:29:34 John Host A big man! *[Pounds fists.]* Not these little men!

00:29:37 Ben Host I mean, I think that this movie has like some really interesting explorations of that. When the doctor gets kinda caught having, um, Kevorkian'd the rebel that they have in the toolshed, he says to—

00:29:52 Adam Host Yeah, we should really pivot into end-of-life rights as a conversation here. Right on the heels of that conversation we just had!

[John and Adam laugh.]

00:30:00 Ben Host Well, he says to Vidal like, "You're like—you're the kind of person that can unquestioningly follow orders, but I am not."

00:30:07 Adam Host Yeahhh.

00:30:08 Ben Host "And most people are not."

00:30:09 John Host What a strong indictment, too.

00:30:10 Adam Host That was awesome.

00:30:11 John Host Yeah.

00:30:12 Ben Host Yeah! Like, and I think that that's like—like, it really is a sick burn on Vidal. And the doctor knows he's dead, so it's like "I might as well go out with both middle fingers up, I guess."

00:30:23 John Host That's right. That's right.

00:30:24 Adam Host Is Vidal able to comprehend that, and take it as the burn that it is?

00:30:28 John Host No.

00:30:29 Adam Host He is almost so single-minded throughout the film that you... that his eventual takedown feels less cathartic, because I—he's not ever a thinker to the degree I feel like that could ever feel that kind of pain, from that kind of cut.

00:30:44 Ben Host Well, yeah! And like, I don't think that anybody that is like that would ever, like, understand that moment for what it is, either. Like, if they screened this at the White House there are certain people that would, you know, understand the movie, but the main guy would certainly not.

00:31:00 John Host He would identify with the captain.

The ultimate burn is when Merc—when he starts to like, give his soliloquy about how he wants to be remembered, and Mercedes

says "No. Your son will never hear your name, and you will not be remembered at all." And you see the recognition on his face! His whole project—

00:31:15	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:31:16	John	Host	—which was to do what his father had done, and leave a boy... he was being erased. And you saw—that was the <u>only</u> thing he understood.
00:31:27	Adam	Host	I love the momentum of that scene. The moments leading up to it, and then the eventual death of Vidal, I thought was paced perfectly. Because the film comes up to a point. You register Vidal's recognition that "Oh, shit." Like, "My master plan is blown. My kid's never going to know me." And <u>because</u> he's incapable of... of <u>feeling</u> that or <u>anything</u> throughout the film, and he's <u>instantly</u> killed.
			I loved it. I thought that was great. We did not give that character a moment to come full circle, and to recognize his folly, or to have any sort of emotional breakthrough at that moment at all. Like, he was put down, in a way that was righteous.
00:32:10	Ben	Host	'Cause he's a psychopath! He's never going to.
00:32:13	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:32:14	Ben	Host	He doesn't have the organ in his body that would enable him to change.
00:32:20	John	Host	What was fascinating about that is—or fascinating to hear you say that—is that it's the <u>one place</u> that I wanted more catharsis!
00:32:28	Adam	Host	Hmm.
00:32:29	John	Host	I wanted to watch him <u>suffer</u> for... two more beats. And they—because as we went up to that moment, given the brutality in the rest of this film and the film's willingness to just deliver unto <u>everyone</u> —
00:32:43	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:32:44	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:32:45	John	Host	—the <u>harshes</u> t take...
00:32:46	Ben	Host	Have the camera linger on the hacksaw going through the guy's leg.
00:32:49	John	Host	Right! [<i>Exhales forcefully.</i>] I thought that the Maquis were gonna kill the boy. In front of him.
00:32:55	Adam	Host	Yeah, when he was handed over I was like "Oh, god." Like, "We're gonna see a baby broken over someone's knee."
00:33:01	John	Host	Yeah! Yeah. And I <u>really</u> expected that to happen. And when the movie said "No, the Maquis are gonna take this baby and raise him as a <u>rebel</u> —"
00:33:09	Adam	Host	Yeah.
00:33:10	John	Host	Or you know, like, raise him as a boy who never know his origins... and then they shoot him—they shoot the captain. It all happened so <u>fast</u> that I was just like—I just was a <u>little</u> bit starved for more... resolution! But I know that that's a strength of the movie, not a weakness.
00:33:28	Adam	Host	Hayden Christensen plays the baby in <i>Pan's Labyrinth II</i> .

[John and Ben laugh.]

When you get to fully get the recognition of when he figures out who he is.

00:33:39	John	Host	Right.
00:33:40	Ben	Host	There actually <u>was</u> a <i>Pan's Labyrinth II</i> in pre-production, and Guillermo del Toro decided to scrap the project so he could direct <i>Hellboy II</i> . <i>[Laughs quietly.]</i>
00:33:50	John	Host	Whoa.
00:33:51	Adam	Host	Interesting choice!
00:33:52	John	Host	Was it gonna be <i>Pan's Labyrinth II: Electric Boogaloo</i> ?
00:33:54	Ben	Host	Uh, I think it was gonna be <i>Secret of the Ooze</i> .
00:33:55	Clip	Clip	Yelling over electronic music.
00:33:58	John	Host	<i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:34:00	Adam	Host	I love Guillermo del Toro's choices. Like, in his career. Like, why <u>shouldn't</u> he go do <i>Hellboy II</i> ? He's one of our best creators! Our best directors.
00:34:10	John	Host	Was <i>Hellboy II</i> good?
00:34:12	Adam	Host	It doesn't matter!
00:34:13	John	Host	Right.
00:34:14	Adam	Host	Like, he's a guy that's just as capable of making <i>Pan's Labyrinth</i> as <i>Blade II</i> .
00:34:17	John	Host	What if he went into porn? Would you still feel that way?
00:34:20	Adam	Host	Yeah.
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			I'm sure he would make great pornography! Be amazing!
00:34:23	Ben	Host	Wow.
00:34:24	Adam	Host	Imagine the hand-jobs when the hands have eyeballs in them!
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
00:34:28	John	Host	Guillermo, if you're listening... why not pivot to porn right now? We could use a little bit more art in porn.
00:34:35	Ben	Host	His next project is <i>Pinocchio</i> , scheduled to come out in 2021. So... <i>[laughs]</i> .
00:34:40	John	Host	Pooorn!
00:34:41	Adam	Host	I bet that is gonna be <u>so</u> scary. Oh my god!
			<i>[Adam and John laugh.]</i>
00:34:44	Ben	Host	That nose-fucking, though. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:34:47	John	Host	Yeah. The special effects, obviously, are inccrrrediblyyy <u>interesting</u> , if not... I mean, I'm not sure if they hold up—I don't know what you would have done with CGI that would have been <u>better</u> ? The Faun was very strangely... <u>built</u> .

00:35:05 Adam Host I think the effect that works is Doug Jones. As an actor. Is the effect that works.

00:35:12 John Host As the Faun?

00:35:13 Adam Host That there is a man in there, as both that character and the Pale Man eyeball-hands guy, is magical to me. Because there is something so un-natural about that performance. It just looks alien, physically.

00:35:28 John Host You could have made the Faun look slightly more human, or more goat-like, or something. But it—but he really looks like—almost like a preying mantis!

00:35:37 Adam Host Yeah. For me there was an uncanny valley-ness of it that worked in its favor. Like, you know that's a guy, and it's a combination of CGI, too, and it's—it just made me uncomfortable in a way that was very effective.

00:35:49 John Host The Pale Man, certainly.

00:35:50 Adam Host Yeah.

00:35:51 John Host There's—I don't know how you could make that scarier.

00:35:53 Adam Host Yeah. That's the stuff of nightmares, for sure.

00:35:56 John Host His arm-waddle—

00:35:57 Adam Host Yeah.

00:35:58 Ben Host *[Shudders.]*

00:35:59 John Host —was the thing that really sold it to me.

00:36:00 Adam Host Yeah.

00:36:01 Ben Host Yeah, when he starts moving, and all those little bits start flopping around. *[Stifling laughter]* Just makes your skin crawl.

00:36:07 Adam Host There's something nightmarish about the slowness of a chase, too. And the way the Pale Man chased her toward the chalk-drawn door was—there was like an inevitability to that.

00:36:19 Ben Host Right.

00:36:20 Adam Host That made it all the more tension-filled. It was great.

00:36:22 Ben Host Did the hourglass add anything? Like, I feel like it would have been just as scary if she'd run for the door and it had closed and we had no idea why.

00:36:32 John Host It just added to the fairytale-ness of it, I think.

I feel like Ofelia, at the center of this movie, it's—it's so... we see—we've seen it a couple of times, where a child is at the center of a movie. And we've seen amazing performances by young people. But Ofelia has to deal with so much. And she's so lovely! Like, you cannot help but fall in love with her at the beginning of the film, and she does that amazing thing which is you continue to be in love with her. You fall more deeply in love with her with every passing moment of the film. Until you're—I mean, at least I was so invested in her, and each new trauma, you bear the full weight of it.

00:37:18 Adam Host Her internal logic to this whole thing is really effective, because you begin from the premise that she is a believer in the stories that she reads. So of course she gives herself over to the idea of the Faun,

and the Faun's mission. But also, she's not particularly good at the missions. Or like, for example, putting the root under the bed of her mother? Like, she gets caught doing that.

She's not good at this stuff in a way that a kid wouldn't be. And I thought that was a really great way to shade her character. Like, she feels very real in that way. She's not acing every mission the Faun's giving her. In a way that made the entire film feel like it was in danger of failing!

00:38:02 Ben Host And she's also not political. Like, this whole... the whole setting is about this existential conflict between the republicans and the fascists. And she really is... she's way too young to have an informed opinion about it, and she doesn't even—like, the film doesn't even try to make her try to have an opinion. It's just that kids have kind of a— a gut understanding of right and wrong, and she is trying to do right by people.

00:38:37 John Host And as the movie progresses, her transformation is—and the one that connects the two worlds—is that what begins as a kind of fascination with fairies, and intrigue about the Faun because she loves this—she loves that aspect of the world; she is a magical realist. As the film goes on, we more and more realize that the Faun and the labyrinth are all she has left, right? As one after another thing that matters to her is stolen.

And that's the only reason that the two halves of the movie belong together as much as they do! Right? It's not just a fantasy world that she's living in, it's a... because the Faun does not care at all about the revolution.

00:39:33 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Right.

00:39:34 John Host The Faun never references the war. Doesn't care about her dad. Isn't interested, doesn't even perceive it.

00:39:41 Adam Host Yeah, the Faun's about reinstalling the princess only. And doesn't even regard the world that he's visiting in order to make that happen, really.

00:39:48 John Host Right. Which could be off-putting! Or I mean, it—it's what makes the two sides of the movie feel unrelated. Until you realize it all hinges on... she needs to go into the labyrinth! And that is why his potential evil, his desire to sacrifice the boy, her refusal—it's what gives it... it gives it all that additional weight.

00:40:13 Adam Host Yeah.

00:40:14 Ben Host But that's coming back to that, you know, kids understand fairness and right and wrong in this kind of... inherent way that grounds the movie in a kind of reality.

00:40:25 John Host That's why you on this podcast ground it, Ben.

00:40:28 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* Aw, thank you!

00:40:30 John Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

00:40:31 Ben Host That's the nicest thing anybody's ever said to me on *Friendly Fire*.

Um, do you guys wanna hear a Moment of Pedantry from somebody complaining about this movie on the Internet?

00:40:41 John Host *[Laughing]* So hard to imagine what it could be.

00:40:43 Adam Host Yeah, it must feel really good to complain about this movie.

[John laughs.]

00:40:47 Ben Host I found a train pedant in the IMDb goofs section for *Pan's Labyrinth!*

[Someone, presumably John, applauds.]

00:40:52 John Host Yaaay!

00:40:53 Adam Host Alright! I will, uh—I'll retract that comment. I'm always about train pedants.

00:40:57 John Host Me too! What was wrong with that locomotive?

00:41:00 Sound Effect Sound Effect *[Beeping as Ben speaks.]*

00:41:01 Ben Host "During the scene of the villagers coming to the mill to receive their food rations, a modern locomotive horn can be heard in the background."

[Beeping stops.]

00:41:07 John Host *[Disappointed]* Oh, it's a horn pedant.

[Ben laughs.]

00:41:09 Adam Host A subset of train pedantry is train horn pedants.

00:41:13 Ben Host Mm-hm.

00:41:14 John Host I thought it was gonna be about that awesome scene where the rebels had blown up the railroad tracks, and the train crashed.

00:41:19 Adam Host That was a great-looking setup.

00:41:20 Ben Host What do you do about that? Can you dig a train out of dirt like that and get it back going again?

00:41:29 Adam Host I think you just finish the job, and you bury it there!

00:41:31 John Host Nooo. I mean, if you can raise a sunken ship and repair it and put it back to sea, you can pull a locomotive out of the dirt. As long as the boiler didn't explode, and it didn't look like the boiler exploded.

00:41:43 Ben Host Yeah, the boiler looked intact.

00:41:44 Adam Host *[Knowingly]* That's one train that's not running on time.

[Beat.]

00:41:48 John Host Oh my god.

00:41:50 Ben Host Sure isn't.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

00:41:51 John Host Why do you—why do you say things like that in the voice of Colonel Trautman?

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

00:41:56 Adam Host Better bring a good supply of bodybags.

[John laughs.]

00:42:00 Ben Host It's kind of a Colonel Trautman moment for Vidal! Right? He's got the—

00:42:03 Adam Host Yeah.

00:42:04 Ben Host He's got his jacket over his shoulders in that scene?

00:42:06 Adam Host That's the *Usual Suspects* moment where he figures it out. Like "Well, if they didn't steal anything from the train, it must be a diversion." And then shit is popping off.

I understand I'm probably feeling it the way I was meant to feel it, but the frustration of that lock not being busted... even after the fact, in order to obscure the provenance of the key? Like, come on, guys. You're really hanging Mercedes out to dry here.

[Ben laughs.]

By not doing that.

00:42:36 John Host Mercedes's brother Pedro is not the sharpest tack.

00:42:39 Adam Host He's not! Especially because Mercedes so clearly is!

00:42:42 John Host Yeahhh.

00:42:43 Adam Host She is the badass of the film! I mean, if I'm gonna be pedantic for a moment... the way she wraps her knife in her clothes seems like the knife would fall out all the time!

00:42:54 John Host It felt to me like a very sort of, like, Basque—like a reference to a kind of mountain girl thing, where it's like "Where do I keep my knife?"

[Ben laughs.]

"Wrapped in my waistband! You never know when you're gonna need a paring knife."

00:43:10 Adam Host Yeah...

00:43:11 John Host It just felt—and I don't mean mountain girl like Jerry Garcia's girlfriend. I mean mountain girl like...

00:43:17 Ben Host Fascist-stabbing kind.

00:43:19 John Host Yeah, right.

00:43:20 Adam Host I was very satisfied when Chekhov's Knife was finally brandished and used.

[Ben laughs.]

00:43:27 John Host Is this a *Star Track* (sic) reference?

00:43:29 Adam Host In the way that it was, on Vidal. Like, when she's able to cut out of her ropes and give him—and give Vidal the Joker cheek?

00:43:36 John Host Well, you—

00:43:37 Adam Host That was very satisfying, right?

00:43:40 John Host The Joker cheek was great, but she stabs him hard in the shoulder and the chest. And somehow, like, missed the—missed his heart or his neck.

00:43:49 Ben Host He does a lot of running around after that.

00:43:52 John Host He sure does.

00:43:53 Ben Host I would be a real baby about that—that whole... all those stabbing wounds. I would not be able to do my own stitches on my cheek.

00:44:01 John Host That was pretty hardcore.

00:44:02 Ben Host I would not be chasing anyone into the labyrinth.

00:44:04 Adam Host Lots of wince moments in this movie. The stitching, you're right, Ben. That was definitely one of 'em. The drinking of the shot and seeing it ooze through the gauze was another one.

00:44:16 John Host I definitely spent quite a bit of time thinking about whether or not I would be able to stitch my own mouth back together.

00:44:23 Adam Host I think of the three hosts of *Friendly Fire*, you're the most likely one to be able to do that, I think.

[Ben laughs.]

00:44:29 John Host My first thought was that you would need to do a better job if you intended there not to be a scar. Or a—if you wanted to minimize the scar. And he seemed to be doing it to really give himself a Joker scar there.

00:44:45 Adam Host If you don't stitch up your cheek, would you just have a big mouth forever? Like, would it heal that way?

00:44:50 John Host I think—I think you would have real problems.

00:44:52 Adam Host Ah...

00:44:53 John Host I think that would be bad. Make your mouth, like, two inches wider on either side?

[Ben laughs.]

00:44:59 Adam Host Yeah.

00:45:00 John Host "Raaar!"

00:45:01 Adam Host Yeah, I mean—

00:45:02 John Host That would be—if you could do that, that would be a body modification thing.

00:45:04 Ben Host Yeah, yeah, yeah. There would be people with forked tongues and that running around every downtown on the West Coast.

00:45:10 Adam Host No explanation for Willem Dafoe's mouth.

[Ben laughs.]

Uh, that's just a natural thing. He didn't use a knife for that.

00:45:17 John Host Way to get a slag on William (sic) Dafoe in—slip it in.

00:45:21 Adam Host Not slagging Willem Dafoe! One of the best mouths in the game.

00:45:24 Ben Host He's canceling his donation to MaximumFun.org right now.

00:45:27 Adam Host I love Willem Dafoe. Best in the business.

00:45:30 John Host Top ten best Willems.

00:45:33 Ben Host *[Laughs.]*

One thing about the film that I didn't love, and something that we've criticized in several films, is how Instagram-y the color palette felt? Like, it really felt like a lot of scenes were probably shot super flat and then they just, you know, turned the dial like as hard to the blue as they could. You know, when they're outside in the rain or whatever, or... or just warmed the colors up, like, within an inch of credibility every time they're in the forest with the partisans.

- 00:46:13 Adam Host It felt like myth-making technique to me, though, in a way that I enjoyed. And liked.
- 00:46:19 John Host But it wasn't—but as Ben was saying, it's—it wasn't just when...
- 00:46:22 Adam Host Yeah.
- 00:46:23 John Host ...uh, the monsters were there. It was also—it also happened—
- 00:46:25 Adam Host It was consistent. Yeah.
- 00:46:26 John Host—in reality. Yeah.
- 00:46:28 Ben Host Yeah. Like, the—it really started to bother me toward the end, where—like, you know, the last 15 minutes of this movie take place at night, in... outside in the dark. But Vidal's shirt is like, bright red where the blood has soaked through it? And then everything else is pallorous and blue.
- 00:46:49 John Host It did get a little *300* there.
- 00:46:51 Adam Host There's a well at the end and everything, huh?
- 00:46:54 Clip Clip **Music:** Ethereal choral or strings.
- The Faun:** Y habéis elegido bien.
- [A sound of impact or an explosion, and shouting. Blends into a sudden blast of deep brass and drums from the background music.]*
- [Clip audio ends.]*
- 00:47:01 Adam Host I know Ofelia is ostensibly the main character of this film, but I think you could really make the case that Vidal is. Ben and I have talked about this before. Like, could you re-score the *Batman* film and make the Joker the protagonist and Batman the antagonist just by changing the musical cue? And I feel like I—
- 00:47:22 John Host Is that—are you "both sides"-ing *The Dark Knight*??
- 00:47:25 Adam Host I would never do this here, but what I'm—
- 00:47:27 Ben Host Not *The Dark Knight*. The original *Batman*, John! The theory is that like, the Joker is a man of the people, and Batman is a billionaire arms-dealer that goes and beats up petty thugs at night for fun. And the Joker is destroying all of the symbols of wealth, like the art museum, and putting—you know, he's adulterating all of the cosmetics in town, and stuff. He's a—he's a—*[laughs]*. You know, he's like a—he's the underclass fighting back against the oligarchs. Not our original take, but we're—our theory is just change the score, and you've got a whole different movie on your hand.
- 00:48:05 Adam Host By referring to that, I am not attempting to switch up who is the protagonist and antagonist of this film. Only—
- 00:48:13 John Host Screen time.

00:48:14 Adam Host I'm only talking about—yeah. In terms of screen time and... and weight of character! I feel like this—you could really make the case that Vidal is the main character of this film. And I think it would be okay if you saw him that!

00:48:29 Ben Host I don't know, because he doesn't change! Like, he doesn't undergo any character change. He is single-minded until he's got a bullet in his brain.

00:48:38 Adam Host He's given so many interesting scenes, though. Like, I don't disagree with you at all, Ben. But like, so many memorable scenes. The constant shaving. The tinkering with the watch that his father intended to be dead. He just can't—*[stifles laughter]* he can't allow that watch to be dead.

[Ben laughs quietly.]

He keeps it going. The slashing of the mirror with his razor blade? I—as much as I hated the Vidal character, I really found him interesting and compelling.

00:49:09 John Host I feel like that is all examples of what—I mean, just brilliant filmmaking. The—his relationship to that watch is never fully elucidated.

00:49:18 Adam Host Yeah.

00:49:19 John Host But it is throughout the movie, and you cannot... you cannot but wonder about his relationship to his father. Whether that relationship with his father is what made him into a monster? It clearly did.

00:49:31 Adam Host Yeah.

00:49:32 John Host But the slashing of his own throat in the mirror gives—it gives that character so much... complexity, if not depth.

00:49:41 Adam Host Yeah.

00:49:42 John Host All of those are—I mean, why—

00:49:45 Adam Host You're never on his side, but at least in that moment you're like "Alright. Well, he does hate himself, and that's good."

00:49:50 John Host Yeah!

[Ben laughs.]

I don't understand why filmmakers, more filmmakers, don't watch this movie and take those cues! Like, give your villain—give us, the viewer, a couple of things that make us feel smart! A couple of things that make your movie smart!

00:50:07 Adam Host That fastidiousness of him physically is played out in so many other scenes. Like the constant shaving, the idea that every hair on his head is perfectly in place, is just another version of him keeping all of the food and medicine neatly organized in a barn that's behind lock and key. Like, every part of his life is so controlled. And then you introduce the messiness of a pregnant wife, and the daughter that she's bringing with him. Like, and that is—that's a conflict that begins and just never ends until he's dead!

00:50:39 John Host Even the way he shoots every person that presents any kind of problem.

00:50:47 Adam Host Yeah.

00:50:48 John Host He's just—he just puts a gun to them and shoots them.

00:50:50 Adam Host It's all of the threads that are sticking out from the sweater. Like, he's clipping them. Like, that one guy in the very beginning, like—god, one of the most brutal scenes is like—not breaking a wine bottle over that guy's face, but using it—the flat end of it.

00:51:05 John Host To smash his nose in. It's awful.

00:51:08 Adam Host And the idea that that was maybe a tale of mistaken identity, because there were rabbits in that guy's bag, like—like, there are no loose ends to that guy's life.

00:51:17 John Host Well, and including every time they fight the rebels in the forest, they then go around and kill—

00:51:23 Adam Host Yeah.

00:51:24 John Host They coup de grâce everyone.

00:51:25 Adam Host Everyone.

00:51:26 John Host In a way that just feels... completely methodical, but also like, no prisoners.

00:51:30 Adam Host Yeah.

00:51:31 John Host No loose ends to tie up. Walk around and give everybody a bullet.

00:51:35 Ben Host No due process. But he's also like—I mean, the train scene is a great example of the fact that like, from a military standpoint, he's actually not that great. Like—

00:51:48 John Host He's not that great.

00:51:49 Ben Host He totally misses that he's being drawn away from his base by a fake attack. And that—I think that's like, maybe my favorite part of his character, is that like, there's—like, he is so brutal that he's dangerous in every scene. But he's also... trickable. You know? Like, he has serious blind spots.

00:52:10 Adam Host His need to tie up every loose end is what ends him.

00:52:16 John Host And the—it's another, I think, example of how good this script is, and how good its realization is, is that the rebels are not portrayed as especially noble? But also, that's not played for laughs. The rebels are not made to be especially clumsy, either. The way the army is presented as sort of bloated and not-that-good. Like, no one is that good in this movie!

00:52:44 Ben Host Right.

00:52:45 John Host But it's never played for—it's never made ridiculous.

00:52:48 Ben Host Righteousness is never equated with effectiveness in this movie.

00:52:53 John Host Right.

00:52:54 Adam Host How satisfied were you that the end of Ofelia's story occurred within the realm of the magic, vs. the real world? I mean, it's not like she's going to end the war with her activity. But... I think if there's one part of the film that I was a little let down by, was that that was where the film ended, instead of in the real world. We got to know a lot of real-world characters that are, uh, summarily forgotten by the time Ofelia's story ends. And it's not just 'cause they're dead; I mean, we

know there are more of them out there.

I guess it only lends credence to the idea that this is a—this is a myth film, and that's what it's about, and it's not a war film.

00:53:38	John	Host	It hurt me. It hurt me, actually. I didn't want her to die. I didn't want this all to be a fantasy of hers. I wanted her to physically, corporeally, walk into... the underworld. I did not want the passage from the real world to the underworld to be a passage undertaken by the spirit, rather than by the body. Even though—
00:54:05	Ben	Host	You wanted a blue portal.
00:54:07	John	Host	I did. I wanted her to ascend to Heaven on the back of a steed, from the dome of the rock. I did <u>not</u> want her—even though at the beginning of the movie we're made to understand—at the <u>beginning</u> of the movie, she actually <u>walks out</u> of the underworld, <u>into</u> the light. And that character dies, and we know she will be—her spirit will be reincarnated in a person <u>above</u> the world that will come back <u>down</u> .
			But the fact that it—that she made that journey as a <u>soul</u> , rather than as a body, made it feel like maybe this was all a dream. And it definitely was played for tears. It's a little bit—it was a little bit of like, <i>The Little Match Girl</i> .
00:55:01	Ben	Host	Yeah.
00:55:02	John	Host	Where we see her die. And it breaks your heart. But she goes on to live in... in her kingdom, for all eternity.
00:55:11	Adam	Host	To sit at the left hand of her dead mother?
00:55:14	John	Host	Right. But that means that all those people down there are... not really under the Earth. They're souls. You know, that this is happening in a—in a soul realm, or a heaven realm. Which felt less... Pagan. And the Pagan-ness of that story was kinda key to its—you know, it's located in the forest. The fairies are bugs. You know, there's—he—the Faun smells like <u>dirt</u> .
			<i>[Ben laughs.]</i>
			So...
00:55:47	Ben	Host	He doesn't smell like frankincense!
00:55:48	Adam	Host	The story up until that point is so <u>good</u> at jacking up the stakes that by concluding it in an almost stakes-free manner, like, "She's gonna be fine <u>forever!</u> 'Cause she gets to go live in the spirit world!" is unfortunately... it unfortunately undercuts all of the tension that we felt throughout the <u>entire</u> film. At least that's how I felt.
00:56:10	Ben	Host	I wanna inject something that may complicate your feelings on that. Which is a quote from Kierkegaard that del Toro cites as part of his inspiration for the film.
00:56:20	Adam	Host	Here we go.
			<i>[John whistles.]</i>
00:56:21	Ben	Host	Goes: "The tyrant dies and his rule is over. The martyr dies and his rule begins."
00:56:26	Adam	Host	Okay!

00:56:27 Ben Host Does Ofelia have a martyr role in this film?

00:56:36 John Host The martyr—if there is martyrdom, and I imagine that there would be—right? That Ofelia would be something that the rebels would use. She—her death could be used by the rebels to influence popular opinion.

00:56:48 Ben Host Right.

00:56:49 John Host "Look how evil the monsters are; they killed this 11-year-old girl." But we never see that. Or it—nor is it even implied.

00:56:59 Ben Host Right, you have to go there in your own mind as you walk out of the theater.

00:57:04 Adam Host Ben, was the story of *Pan's Labyrinth II* Ofelia just sending the Faun out to fight for the Allies?

[Ben laughs.]

00:57:15 John Host It was Ofelia being installed as princess, and gradually becoming a fascist.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

00:57:21 Adam Host Oh, that's dark!

00:57:22 John Host Gradually realizing that her underworld power gave her, like, unlimited authority.

00:57:27 Ben Host Yeah. The—being—becoming corrupted by royalty? [Laughs.]

00:57:31 John Host Right.

00:57:33 Adam Host The conclusion of this film feels so final. I'm really surprised that there was a—ever even the idea of a sequel.

00:57:40 Clip Clip [Sound like a fire crackling.]

Speaker: No lo se exactamente, mi Capitán, pero no menos de cincuenta hombres.

00:57:45 John Host I went to Spain for the first time in 198...8? And really that was only 10, 15 years after the end of Franco. And you saw a lot of it still. Right? All the middle-aged men you met had grown up under fascism, and there still was a lot of that, like, pants pulled up to right under their nipples kind of old Spain?

00:58:06 Adam Host Lot of resting Peck face?

00:58:07 John Host Yeah, a lot of boules-playing, and sense that things—sense that... that the city should be clean, and run in a certain way.

00:58:16 Adam Host Ooh!

00:58:17 John Host And I looked hard for some kind of media that I could consume that would explain to me what Spain had been like, and what I was seeing in the residue of Franc—it's only 15 year—I mean, 15 years ago right now was the mid-2000s! Like, it wasn't that divorced from ye olden times. But boy, there wasn't a lot of depiction of it! I still don't know—I still can't really picture what it was like. Because it wasn't behind an iron curtain! It was like, a fascist government that survived for 35 years in the world.

I would—I'd be really curious to see a *Pan's Labyrinth II*. Just to see

what's going on in that forest!

00:59:06 Adam Host Well—

00:59:07 John Host She's just, you know, yelling at mushrooms.

00:59:09 Adam Host Guillermo del Toro doesn't shy away from making sequels, so maybe he'll circle back around and do it.

00:59:14 John Host *Hellboy: Pan's Labyrinth II.*

[Adam or Ben laughs.]

What about that?

00:59:18 Ben Host All I can find about this sequel is it's called *3993*. It starts in 1993, and then there's something that happened in 1939 that's relevant to the story, and it's set with the Spanish Civil War in the background.

00:59:33 Adam Host Wow.

00:59:34 Ben Host So...

00:59:35 John Host Intredasting!

00:59:36 Ben Host Yeah! So... there are ideas out there.

[John wolf-whistles.]

Oh, here's another quote! One of the writers is interviewed in ComingSoon.net. His name is Sergio Sanchez. "Right now they're re-opening many graves from the Civil War, and many people who disappeared. And now have enough time have—has passed that they're reopening the graves, and there's a lot of people who can finally find their ancestors and stuff, so the story deals with that."

01:00:04 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!
Huh!
Yeah!

[Music stops.]

01:00:08 Adam Host Have we crossed over into the magical realm of reviewing the *Friendly Fire* film we've discussed? I think so.

[Ben laughs.]

One object that stuck out to me—and I'm sure you guys, too—is the chalk that Ofelia uses to draw the doorway into the spirit realm, and also the exit. It actually is not a one-time use item, either. I thought that was neat. And so on a scale of one to five pieces of chalk, we will rate 2006's *Pan's Labyrinth*.

I wish I had seen this film in the theater! I don't know if you guys did.

01:00:50 John Host I did not. I've never seen it before.

01:00:51 Adam Host Yeah, I—this was my first time. This film blew really big when it was in the theater. I remember it was all anyone talked about for a long time. And like the way I reject many things that are popular, uh, for whatever reason I just didn't—

[Ben laughs.]

—I didn't participate, and I wish I had. I think this would have been a really fun movie to see projected big.

I think whether or not you can get with its magical realism is going to be whether or not you like this film. Personally, I was able to give myself over to it pretty quickly. I liked this world that Guillermo del Toro constructed. Even though, like, if you were to describe the film, just to a friend, it sounds insane. Like, what is with the labyrinth being right next door to Vidal's fort? How come he never goes into it, ever?

There is disbelief you must suspend in order to enjoy a film like this, but I think there's a certain amount of that you need to get with to watch any film! I don't think film is particularly unique in that way. But I think you know going into *Pan's Labyrinth* that it's gonna be magical. And so you're there to experience that anyway.

I really loved it. And I loved, especially, the little girl who played Ofelia. Ivana Baquero. Like, a great child actor. And I think the entire cast is rounded out wonderfully. I mean, every character in the film has their moment to shine, in a way that just doesn't feel like character service. I think the doctor is one of those guys that like, he's sprinkled throughout judiciously and then he gets his like, big moment that made me feel very proud for his character and for the actor playing him. I think there are many examples of that in the film.

The story in totality, I was riveted to! I really wanted to know what would happen. And I think... unfortunately I was motivated by the rage that I felt toward Vidal. I don't know if that was like a healthy feeling, to like, just—

[Ben laughs.]

"I'm in it to watch him die! How is he gonna die?" Like, "Give me that blood." That's what I was in it for, in a way that I—I think maybe Guillermo del Toro was not intending that to be my reason to, uh, to stick around in it.

01:03:14 Adam Host

But I thought most of what he did was effective, and effecting.

Outside of its ending. Like, I—I have to admit, like, the magic of the ending I found a little bit unsatisfying. I wished—I wish that the final scene took place in the real world, in a way that... that would have felt more satisfying. But I think for that reason I'm gonna give it a strong score, but not a perfect score. Four and a half pieces of chalk.

I think one question I have for you, John, is at what age would you show a child this film?

01:03:50 John Host

Yeah, I wondered it a lot. Because I—you know, I actually Googled "Can I show my eight-and-a-half-year-old this?"

01:03:57 Adam Host

So much of this would be great for a kid! I feel like there is a television cut of this film that—

01:04:02 John Host Yeah.

01:04:03 Adam Host —that could be great.

01:04:04 John Host What I got off of the Internet was "Do not show this film to your kid."

01:04:07 Adam Host *[Laughs.]* Yeah...

[Ben laughs.]

01:04:08 John Host They said, you know, like... "A very sophisticated 15-year-old could learn a lot here. But—"

01:04:15 Adam Host I'm having nightmares about Pale Man right now.

01:04:17 John Host Yeah, right. An eight-year-old would just be like "Whaaat is happening?"

01:04:20 Adam Host Yeah.

01:04:21 John Host And also, like, there—it's an 11-year-old girl that all this is visited upon.

01:04:25 Adam Host Right.

01:04:26 John Host And that's for adult audiences, I think.

01:04:27 Adam Host Yeah.

01:04:28 Ben Host Well, I think, you know, when I have a kid I will wait 'til they're... at least nine years old to check this out. *[Laughs.]* Um—

01:04:37 John Host Your kid is obviously gonna be very gifted, Ben.

01:04:39 Adam Host Your kid is going to be a 30-year-old 7-year-old, right off the bat.

01:04:43 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* I take that as a compliment, that you guys think that I'm capable of generating somebody that is precocious.

[Adam laughs.]

01:04:50 John Host Maybe your kid can watch this, uh, when they go away to tennis camp.

[Ben and Adam laugh.]

This'll be their tennis camp movie.

01:04:57 Ben Host I really love this movie! And I don't have the problem with the end that you do, Adam. I think that for me, it's really effective that it doesn't... it doesn't give you exactly what you want. And I'll even say that like, I'm—I have some personal discomfort with the kind of like, depiction of being elevated to royalty being the like, ideal outcome in—*[laughs]* Western media. That feels like a very problematic phenomenon that pervades our culture, and I—I tend to really react badly to those things.

But because of the character and the time and the place in this film, it felt like kind of the right way for her to conceive of her own end, whether that's something in... you know, that really happens to her, or if it's something that her imagination provides her as her brain shuts down.

01:06:03 Adam Host Jeez.

[John snorts.]

[Laughing] That's some dark shit. Wow!

01:06:10 Ben Host Well, I mean—I mean you don't know! Right?

01:06:12 Adam Host Yeah! Yeah.

01:06:13 Ben Host Like, you don't know whether the movie is trying to set—like, I think it's intentionally ambiguous whether she's dead at the end of the movie or not. And—

01:06:20 Adam Host Some people see a white light; other people see, uh, three thrones, one of them unoccupied.

01:06:24 Ben Host John sees a blue portal! And—

01:06:26 John Host Sure.

01:06:27 Adam Host Right.

01:06:28 Ben Host You know.

01:06:29 John Host It's the three-throne theory.

[Ben laughs.]

[John makes an explosion "mind-blown" noise.]

[Adam laughs.]

01:06:33 Ben Host I don't know that I have a strong feeling which of those interpretations I agree with. I kinda like that it's ambiguous. And, um... it's a really challenging movie. It's one of the hardest watches I've had in the *Friendly Fire* project. But I think it's really worth watching, and I think that it having been a super popular movie at the time is, you know, a credit to what an amazing accomplishment it is. So I'll go ahead and give it, uh... I'll give it five chalks!

01:07:10 Adam Host Wow!

01:07:11 Ben Host Big fan.

01:07:12 John Host Wow. Five chalks.

01:07:13 Adam Host Big score!

01:07:14 John Host Yeah, there—you know, there's a big gulf between 4.5 chalks and 5 chalks.

01:07:21 Adam Host It's true. That's a half a chalk!

01:07:23 John Host More than there would be between—yeah! Well, but even, like, 3.5 chalks to 4 chalks...

01:07:30 Adam Host Yeah.

01:07:31 John Host It's not as big. Because it's a—it's like a Richter scale thing.

01:07:34 Adam Host It is!

01:07:35 Ben Host [Laughs quietly.] Yeah. It's like a—

01:07:37 Adam Host It's compounding interest.

01:07:38 Ben Host It's like atmospheric pressure?

01:07:39 John Host Yeah.

01:07:40 Ben Host It just gets more and more? [Laughs.]

How about you, John? Did you like the movie?

01:07:45 John Host You know, there was so much to like about it. I really loved the internal geography of it. We're at a mountain camp, and we have a real sense of how the mountain camp is laid out. And the specificity—not just of this period. Like, post-Civil War, mid-World War II frontier, uh... place? The specificity of the pregnant second wife of the captain being the mother of our protagonist. Like, everything, as you can—if you imagine him sitting at his typewriter and writing this script, just the inventiveness. And the bravery! The willingness to not make any of this... easy.

And then the success! Of actually situating us there. And making it not necessary that you know anything about the Spanish Civil War to be into the film. The rebels, although they were I think fairly realistically depicted, also were a kind of... you know, like, legend of the rebels, too. But again, not particularly noble, either.

All of it's so gifted. And you know, I watch a lot of these movies... wondering what the filmmaker's doing, and why. And I don't let filmmakers off the hook when they're lazy. You know? I just don't like it. If somebody—if you're gonna review a movie, you have to review it as the product of a mind! And the more minds involved, generally, the less good the movie is? And this is just a singular creation.

But there were—you know, there was stuff that... that drew me out. And some of it—and I think most of it. Most of it. Is just in the way the mysterious world was, um, art-directed! For lack of a better thing. You know, the bug that turns into the fairy. Like, we never really zoom in on the fairy and see their face. We never... it's never clear—

01:09:59 Adam Host We see their heads being bitten off.

01:10:01 John Host We do. But like, are those fairies grotesque? Or are they beautiful? Certainly Ofelia doesn't recoil at them. If he had wanted to make the fairies beautiful, he could have. He chose not to. If he wanted to make the Faun more natural, he could have. And he chose not to.

So me being, you know, kind of—not bounced out, but wishing for something different, is maybe just me, uh, wanting to make my own movie.

01:10:35 Adam Host We finally got there with you.

01:10:37 John Host Yeah.

01:10:38 Ben Host *[Laughs.]* So if you're listening, and if you have \$50,000,000 to give John...

01:10:43 Adam Host That's been your damage the whole time!

01:10:45 John Host Yeah. I—

01:10:46 Adam Host You gotta make your own movie.

01:10:47 John Host I believe that I should be the director of all these films, and I would have done a better job.

01:10:50 Adam Host Yeah...

01:10:51 John Host That is the problem of the—of the lay-film-critic.

01:10:54 Adam Host Yeah. You think you could do better?

01:10:57 John Host You think you could do better. Right.

01:10:58 Adam Host Yeah.

01:10:59 John Host And as somebody who's made some creative products in life, I—I make the mistake of thinking that my knowledge transfers. Right, all you have to do is like... know the different between a good tambourine track and a bad tambourine track, to know—

[Ben laughs.]

—also, how to make a fairy. In a—like a Spanish apocrypha.

01:11:22 Adam Host Those are compatible skills.

01:11:24 John Host Right. But I'm gonna give it four and a half pieces of chalk. I feel like the only thing that keeps it out of five pieces of chalk is maybe what you're saying, Adam, about the fact that if I were to describe this movie to someone who hadn't seen it, the fact that I would have to go like "No, no, no, no, no! It's—this sounds terrible, and it's great." There's just enough in there that causes you to—I don't know, question it a little bit.

01:11:48 Adam Host That feels like a degree of difficulty aspect to it.

01:11:51 John Host It really is.

01:11:52 Adam Host Like, this film rises above its story on paper.

01:11:57 John Host Let me ask you this. If she—if he had stabbed her, and she had fallen on the edge of the well, and her blood had dripped down, and it had not—what that would suggest was that she was not an innocent, which is bad. That was set up. But if she had just died. If she had died, and hadn't—her arm hadn't fallen in the well, and her blood had pooled on the side of the well and not dripped down... would that make this movie—it would make a thousand times more horrible.

[Adam and Ben laugh.]

But would it be better?

01:12:29 Adam Host I like to fantasize about all the ways that the films we've watched could be more horrible!

[John laughs.]

I think that's an interesting thought experiment. I don't know! Uh, where are our guys? Is a good question to ask, about now.

01:12:45 Ben Host My guy is the Faun!

01:12:47 John Host Whoooa. *[Stifling laughter]* How do you have the guy as the Faun?

01:12:50 Ben Host 'Cause I believe in second chances, just like the Faun!

01:12:52 Adam Host Wow! Alright! I guess—I guess a guy can't be constrained by the corporeal world.

01:13:00 Ben Host No!

01:13:01 Adam Host Fantasy guy is a type of guy! That's—that—that's Ben's guy!

01:13:05 Ben Host Pick from wherever!

01:13:06 Adam Host Yeah!

01:13:07 Ben Host *[Stifling laughter]* Mm-hm.

01:13:08 Adam Host Alright!

01:13:09 Ben Host How about you, Adam? Did you have a guy?

01:13:10 Adam Host *[Stifling laughter]* I mean, I'm gonna go way in the other direction here.

[Ben laughs.]

Uh, Mercedes is rugged. And as an embedded spy, she must maintain the sort of coldness that ensures her survival. And yet, like, she's always packing that knife. I think about—I thought about her life so much when I watched this movie. Like, every time she wakes up, she's wondering whether or not it's the day that she's going to die, or that she ends up killing Vidal. And you can interpret her wrapping of that knife in a couple of ways. Is that a self-defense knife that she will use if she has to? Or is she keeping it ready for murder? Either thing you decide about that knife is satisfying. And I sort of imagined both of those as being true.

I really love her relationship with everyone in the kitchen. Like, that scene where—"Oh, god. Vidal says his coffee's burned." Like, she goes back into the kitchen and she's like "Alright, guys. He didn't like the coffee." Everyone knows the score.

[Ben laughs.]

Like, Vidal cannot be satisfied by anything. "This fucking asshole. Time to re-make the coffee." I love how she can both be friendly and conspiratorial with people who work with her, but also totally a different kind of conspiratorial with the Maquis. And I really liked how multidimensional her character had to be in order to survive. A really great character. And a great performance by Maribel Verdú. So she's my guy.

01:14:50 Ben Host Good guy!

01:14:52 Adam Host Who's your guy, John?

01:14:54 John Host There were a lot of good guys in here. When the locomotive blew up and the captain ran out to visit it, he was talking to the engineer or the—I'm sorry, the fireman, probably, or the brakeman, whoever. And he was like "What did they steal?"

And the guy's attitude was just like *[nonchalant]* "They didn't steal anything!"

[Ben laughs.]

And he was so... he was so just like, Groucho about it. Just like, "Yeah, I don't know, man. They didn't steal anything, so, I don't know. Take that... with ya."

01:15:27 Adam Host It was neat meeting someone in this setting who did not give Vidal the respect that he was used to, and the fear that he was used to.

01:15:36 John Host Right. It—

01:15:37 Adam Host That was a character just didn't know him.

01:15:38 John Host It felt like because he was in—because he worked for the railroad...

01:15:42 Adam Host Yeah.

01:15:43 John Host He's really the only townsman we meet! A, you know, like, regular Spaniard.

01:15:50 Adam Host Mm-hm.

01:15:51 John Host Who was just like "Yeah. Yeah. What can I tell ya?"

[Adam chuckles.]

But... he's not my guy. I liked him.

01:15:59 Adam Host Oh! Fake-out guy!

01:16:01 John Host Yeah. The two biddies, the two women who were obviously like, part of the respected class, who were totally shitty.

01:16:09 Adam Host Yeah.

01:16:10 John Host Mocking our—our mom. I felt like were great characters together. The two of 'em. You know, the crones. The—the harpies. But they're not my guy.

My guy... was mandrake baby.

01:16:26 Adam Host *[Whispers]* What?

[Ben cracks up.]

01:16:31 John Host Mandrake baby crying in a puddle of milk. Because mandrake baby was the moment in this movie where I was like "Okay, all in!"

Mandrake baby was such a good baby!

01:16:43 Adam Host Yeah.

01:16:44 John Host Sounded like a baby, acted like a baby.

01:16:45 Adam Host Yeah.

01:16:46 John Host But it was a mandrake root. And you know, mandrake is... a hallucinogen?

01:16:52 Adam Host Mm!

01:16:53 John Host It's a narcotic root, used in ye olden times.

01:16:58 Adam Host So is the mom kind of micro-dosing mandrake—

01:17:01 John Host Yeah!

01:17:02 Adam Host —in order to, uh—in order to feel better?

01:17:04 John Host The mandrake baby was taking the sickness outta the mom.

01:17:07 Adam Host Yeah!

01:17:08 John Host And the mandrake baby needed a little bit of blood. A milk bath and a little blood every day, to do its job. And its job was just to be a—just to be a baby!

01:17:18 Adam Host Would you know mandrake smell by entering a room?

01:17:21 John Host I don't think so.

[Ben laughs.]

01:17:23 Adam Host Yeah.

01:17:24 John Host Well, it's just a root. It's not like the mandrake baby was ground up or anything.

01:17:27 Adam Host Well, I mean Vidal smelled the mandrake and thought it smelled awful!

01:17:31 John Host Yeah. I don't—I'm not sure. I think—I feel like—

01:17:35 Ben Host But that was probably the milk, 'cause it had been there for a while.

01:17:37 John Host Bad milk. Bad milk.

01:17:38 Adam Host Yeah.

01:17:39 John Host But then the mandrake baby gets thrown on the fire. And I felt like... I mourned that mandrake baby.

01:17:47 Adam Host It's another squirm scene in this movie!

01:17:48 John Host What a terrible way for a mandrake baby to die. So... I'll always ride for mandrake baby.

01:17:54 Adam Host You learn this in the Eagle Scouts. If you burn a wet-with-milk mandrake, your smoke will be dark.

01:18:01 John Host Hmm.

[Ben laughs.]

01:18:03 Adam Host It'll attract attention.

01:18:04 John Host Hmm!

01:18:05 Adam Host And ensure your rescue.

01:18:08 John Host Mm-hm...

01:18:09 Adam Host Right? Weren't you an Eagle Scout, Ben? Is that true?

01:18:12 Ben Host I never earned my mandrake baby patch, though.

[Someone laughs.]

01:18:16 Adam Host That should be our pin! Mandrake baby patch!

[All three laugh.]

01:18:21 Ben Host Too late. Far too late.

01:18:22 Adam Host Yeah, that's gonna be next year!

01:18:23 John Host Yeah! But in the style of a Boy Scout patch. Mandrake patch.

[Laughs.]

01:18:29 Adam Host Is Mandrake Baby Patch the name of the children's music band that the guy from the Presidents of the United States of America is doing?

[All three laugh.]

01:18:40 Music Transition Brief clip of "War."

War!
Huh!
Yeah!

[Music stops.]

01:18:42 Ben Host Should we pick what our next movie is, guys?

01:18:45 John Host Wait a minute! There's a—there is a—there's a quote in the Bible that says—

01:18:49 Ben Host Oh, yeah, I forgot. Bible study and then we pick the next movie.

01:18:52 John Host *[Laughs.]* That says "Let us get up early to the vineyards. Let us see if the vine flourish where the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. There will I give thee my loves. The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits new and old, which I have laid up for thee, oh my beloved."

Where the—where the fuck was that quote, Guillermo del Toro? Quoting Kierkegaard.

01:19:18 Ben Host Fuck.

01:19:19 Adam Host "The mandrake produces yellow berries that smell fruity, but are more similar in flavor to tomatoes. And its leaves smell much like fresh tobacco."

01:19:29 Ben Host It's in the nightshade family!

01:19:31 John Host Yeah. Magics are—mandrakes are used in magic and witchcraft. According to the legend, when the root is dug up it screams.

01:19:37 Clip Clip Clip of a mandrake screaming, from *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*.

01:19:39 Adam Host *[Whispers]* What?

01:19:40 John Host And kills all who hear it!

01:19:42 Adam Host Wow!

01:19:43 Ben Host Fuck. See, I would have known this if I'd paid attention in Eagle Scouts.

01:19:48 John Host There are way—*[stifles laughter]* ways to dig up a mandrake root so that it doesn't scream.

01:19:54 Ben Host You've been warned, *Friendly Fire* listeners.

01:19:56 John Host You know how you do it? You did around the mandrake, and then you tie a dog to it.

[Beat.]

And then—

[Ben laughs.]

—you run away from the dog, and when the dog chases you, it pulls up the root. But then the dog dies.

01:20:09 Adam Host Oh, no!

01:20:10 John Host This is what—this is how bad witchcraft is, you guys.

01:20:14 Ben Host Wow.

[Adam laughs.]

I feel like a solid 30% of our listeners just dumped us from their support because you badmouthed witchcraft.

[Ben and John laugh.]

01:20:27 John Host No, I think—
01:20:28 Ben Host Should we pick our next movie?
01:20:29 John Host I think the half of our listeners who are conservative Christians are like "Finally, they come out against witchcraft!"

[Ben laughs.]

01:20:35 Adam Host Does the 120-sided die scream when you roll it? Let's find out.
01:20:40 John Host Alright, here we go.
01:20:41 Ben Host I want you to roll it good, John. I want a banger to close it with, because I wanna get those numbers up.
01:20:46 John Host Okay, here we go!

[Die rolls for several seconds.]

Forty-nine! Forty-nine. Seven times seven. Lucky seven times seven! Forty-nine.

01:21:03 Music Music *[Intense, dramatic music plays over the next few lines.]*
01:21:04 Ben Host Shit! Fuck! That is—
01:21:05 John Host *Shitfuck!*
01:21:06 Ben Host Lucky seven squared, man! This is a World War I film set in Arabia. 1962. Directed by David Lean—
01:21:16 John Host Nooo wayyy!
01:21:18 Ben Host Lawrence! Of! Arabia!
01:21:22 John Host *[Celebratory desk-drumming.]*

Wooow!

That's a big one.

01:21:26 Ben Host Well done, my friend. Well done indeed.

[Music fades out.]

Good roll!

01:21:28 Adam Host You guys are so excited! I'm the host of *Friendly Fire* that has not seen this movie. So this will be my first time.
01:21:35 John Host So, you know, every—
01:21:36 Ben Host I haven't seen it either!
01:21:38 John Host What?!
01:21:39 Adam Host Whoa! What?!
01:21:40 John Host Wooow. So—now, listen. There are times in the calendar where the various remaining Cineramas—

01:21:46 Adam Host Mm-hm.

01:21:47 John Host —or Cinesrama...

01:21:48 Adam Host *[Laughing]* Right.

[Ben laughs.]

01:21:50 John Host ...around the West, will show *Lawrence of Arabia* in Cinerama.

01:21:56 Adam Host Mm-hm.

01:21:57 John Host If you can...

01:21:58 Ben Host Fuuuck.

01:21:59 John Host ...go see it in Cinerama. Because that's how it was made to be seen. It is... epic in scope.

01:22:06 Adam Host I plan on seeing it in Feel-Around.

01:22:08 John Host I'll—yeah, I'll show it to you in Feel-Around.

[Adam laughs quietly.]

01:22:12 Ben Host The last thing I saw in Cinerama was *Star Trek: Picard*. With Adam!

01:22:16 John Host Ugh.

01:22:17 Adam Host Yeah.

01:22:18 John Host You guys are such fucking dorks.

[Ben laughs.]

01:22:21 Adam Host Wow. Big ep, guys. I've heard that *Lawrence of Arabia* is the *Rambo III* of, uh, of the Peter O'Toole oeuvre.

01:22:29 John Host I hate you.

01:22:30 Adam Host So...

[Ben laughs.]

01:22:31 John Host Uh, please, uh—please give to [MaxFun.org/donate](https://maxfun.org/donate) to support—

01:22:39 Ben Host Just—it's just [MaxFunkenstein.sex](https://maxfunkenstein.sex).

01:22:41 John Host To—to—*[laughs]*.

01:22:42 Ben Host [MaxFunkenstein.sex](https://maxfunkenstein.sex) is all they need to know.

01:22:44 Adam Host Yeah. That's it! The one place.

01:22:46 John Host Support our show! We love making it for you. And your generous donations help us offset the cost of... hating one another.

[Ben laughs.]

01:22:54 Music Music "War" starts fading in.

01:22:59 John Host The soul cost. *[Laughs.]*

01:23:00 Adam Host It's true, our affection for each other can be bought. Only you can make that happen.

01:23:05 Ben Host We really appreciate it. So we'll leave it with Robs from here, and a reminder: Robs wouldn't have a job if you didn't support the show. So... Keep him employed, also!

01:23:17 John Host Support Robs's jobses.

01:23:19	Adam	Host	You gonna do your famous sign-off, Ben?
01:23:21	Ben	Host	Oh, yeah! So, uh... for John Roderick and Adam Pranica, I've been Ben Harrison. To the victor... go the spoiler alerts.
01:23:30	Music	Music	"War" continues at full volume. <i>Absolutely— —nothing!</i> <i>Listen to me!</i> <i>War!</i> <i>It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker—</i> <i>[Music drops to play quietly as Rob speaks.]</i>
01:23:34	Rob Schulte	Producer	<i>Friendly Fire</i> is a Maximum Fun podcast hosted by Ben Harrison, Adam Pranica, and John Roderick. The show is produced and edited by me, Rob Schulte. Our theme music is "War" by Edwin Starr, and it's courtesy of Stone Agate Music. And our logo art is by Nick Ditmore. <i>Friendly Fire</i> is a podcast that's made possible by the support of our listeners like you! To make sure that <i>Friendly Fire</i> continues, visit MaximumFun.org/join and pledge your support. By doing so you'll gain access to our monthly pork chop episodes, as well as all the other MaxFun bonus content. If you wanna chat about our podcast on various forms of social media, just search for our discussion groups. Or use the hashtag #FriendlyFire . You can find Ben on Twitter at @BenjaminAhr . Adam is found at @CutForTime . John is @johnroderick , and you can find me at @robkschulte . Thanks!
01:24:34	Music	Music	"War" continues at full volume. <i>They say we must fight to keep our freedom But Lord knows there's got to be a better way Oh!</i> <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>God, y'all!</i> <i>What is it good for?!</i> <i>You tell me! Say it, say it, say it! Saaay it!</i> <i>War!</i> <i>Huh!</i> <i>Good god, y'all!</i> <i>[Music fades out.]</i>
01:24:52	Music	Transition	A cheerful guitar chord.

01:24:53	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:24:55	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:24:56	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:24:57	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.