

Transcript Barbie Joy and the Menemies of Fun (Women Lead Network Podcast)

Denice

Hi everybody. So it's been a minute, right, we've. This is Denice and.

Leona

This is Leona.

Denice

And we've been, I don't know if we've. Been in hiding or. We've been just trying to live our lives without contemplating the plight of anti feminist existence in the world or what. But we felt like we needed to come back because we wanted to talk about this apparent phenomenon of the Barbie movies, so.

Leona

I want to start with that. I love Barbie. I'm the child of an original Barbie girl. So it's not going to be biased per say my thoughts. But just everyone should know. That's where.

Denice

I come. That's your fear. Those are your feelings. Well.

Leona

But those are my deep feelings.

Denice

And a girl in the 70s, when Barbie became an astronaut, I was myself a Barbie girl. So I had the. Corvette and I had the van and then I used to take all my little Barbies over to my friend's house cause she had the townhouse and you know, so it was an alternative to my baby dolls that I had up to that point. So we both actually. Really loved the movie and enjoyed it. Leona, you saw more than once, right?

Leona

Not twice. I might see it again. Anything that celebrates me dressing up in a partial cost. Soon, and making a spectacle of myself, I'm going to jump on that bandwagon.

Denice

Well, and I saw it on a Tuesday night because it was cheap tickets on. A Tuesday night.

Speaker

Oh yeah.

Denice

And I still wear glitter and sparkles, so anytime you can wear. Glitter and sparkles on a Tuesday night. It feels like it's worth it. Well, we thought that we would. Do what we. Normally do, which is, you know, contextualize. Some phenomenon that that's happening in the lives of women within. You know, maybe some, uh, discourse around it, but also what folks are saying in relationship to it so. And what we're thinking in relationship to it, I think that's the most interesting thing about our time together. So I thought that it might. Be a good place to start to just really dive a little bit into. Who? Barbies complicated feminist history? You know, Barbies been around. What is it, 1954? Or something like that.

Leona

Yeah, yeah.

Denice

She the inspiration for Barbie, of course, was a men's sex toy, which was adapted by the I don't remember what her name was. You know what her name? Was the woman Ruth? Yes. Handler is that her name? Ruth Handler, who adapted it to. To a toy for. Children and.

Leona

Was it I'm sorry. Wasn't it, like a gag gift though? Was it technical?

Denice

I mean, I think it was.

Speaker

OK.

Denice

Intended as a gag gift, but I think it was intended to be sort of. Adult before Barbie, right? The doll that it. Was mauled after was intended to be. Fashioned in what we call the male gaze, right. It's feminist. So it was like all about the, you know, what men would see, you know, a good woman to. Look like right? And so she took that which. I think again, you know, we go back to this idea that Barbie history is pretty complicated. I mean, she took that idea and with. With sort of the foundation, at least, this is what she said, right? With this sort of foundation of not wanting especially little girls to be stuck with only baby dolls. Right, which, to her mind, sort of reinforced this idea of maternity, right? Women having to be mothers and to focus only on the mother's. Role so you know, I mean. There's the sort of even the. The foundation of Barbie is sort of complicated, right? And Barbie, you know, held lots of careers. She was an astronaut and a doctor and all kinds of things, you know, feminists, have, you know, tended to focus in on. How her body is built, yeah. But what's really interesting is that some more recent research, I think it was in 2016 or 2015 after. Through the fashionistas line of Barbies came out. Those are the ones that have different body shapes, et cetera. Right? There was some research that was done with young girls who expressed, you know, young girls from like three to 10 who expressed. More positive attitudes towards the sort of. Traditional thin big *****, right? Big hipped Barbies and not the sort of more diverse body Barbies. And so the researcher in that case actually said that, you know, maybe we should consider that. It's not really Barbie herself, right? And. She just ends up being an. Artifact really of our societal ideas about women. I don't know what are. Your thoughts?

Leona

That it's really interesting to me because I would like to see also cross cultural and I obviously didn't. I just want to talk about Barbie and I did like the minimal amount of research that I could do to sound like. I know what? I'm talking about, but so they're this may. Exist. This may actually exist out there, but personally for me growing up with Barbie, I never identified with Barbie. Body I never wanted to have Barbie's body because for me, I never thought of her culturally as having a body that is ideal. Within my culture, as a black person, I was like. She didn't have a ****. She didn't really have hips. She had, like a waist or things like that. But it was always just very much like this is just a this is a body that I don't need to aspire to. So I would also like to see, like, and maybe somebody knows and maybe somebody listens to this and they will respond and they will tell us. But I'd also like to see like. How does that play out across cultures when? You know, Barbies body as a doll, the traditional Barbie's body as a doll is not the archetype of a body for a lot of cultural people.

Denice

Yeah, for sure. And you know, we talked just a little bit earlier about and. His sales essay relate who's A? You know a black. Woman who wrote an essay about her feelings. About Barbie Barbie's body. And so it's just that right that you know, she she's sort of. Identifies in some ways with Barbie and, you know, Barbies capacity to be something outside of maternal, but at the same time, you know her, you know, her body really wasn't something that seems to make sense within. In her within her world and. You know it's. Also interesting, she also talks about which I think was really fascinating. That Barbie essentially. Embodies which she found kind of interesting, and I find kind of interesting too. After having read it. Kind of embodies this idea of the ***** Madonna message all-in-one, right? So she's the perfect girl. But at the same time. The ***** . So anyway, I think it's all. It's all very fascinating, you know, Barbie's history is very fascinating. And of course, right, the white centeredness is, you know, requires us to maybe even think about. You know the roots of Barbie within, not just around sexism, right. But also is related to racism. And you know. The our favorite topic uh to discuss capitalism?

Leona

But you know what? It's right because.

Denice

And Barbie's consuming nature.

Leona

The majority of my Barbies were white Barbies because in my head it was like that's Barbie and it could be because my mom her, you know, early. 1st Generation Barbie girl. So her Barbies were white Barbies and Barbies. Name was Barbie and I was always like the black doll is Christie. And then there's Miko who's Asian, and then there's midge and there's like all these other things. And it was always in my head, like they are friends. And then at some point, Barbie was like, no, we're. Just going to name everyone. Barbie, they all get they can all have that name, and that was something that was even like reinforced in the movie. And I found that really fascinating how that shift has happened in my lifetime because for me, the Barbie was. This is what Barbie looks like and she happens. This just happens to be the white one and then these. Are all her friends. And they all have their own names, and they have

their own identities. But now we're like, no, we're going to make everyone because Barbie is an ideal. Everyone is Barbie.

Denice

Right, right. Yeah. No, I found that really interesting in the movie too. Like hi Barbie. Hi, Barbie. Good morning, Barbie. Good morning. Barbie. Yeah. It was really interesting. Well, and so I think you know. Usually we like think about feminist critiques as being really built around sexism, right? But obviously we've. Talked about the racialized aspects of this the consumerism, aspects of this. And then you know something again, that was sort of interesting. As I dug in a little bit to. Understand other people's perspectives. Like you said, I have my own opinion. We always come to this with our own opinions and we try to you. Know do some research. But also related to gender identity, right and sexuality. So you know the. Reality for me is that I didn't actually have a Ken doll for a very long time. Yeah. So my Barbie dolls. My, you know. My 2 Barbie dolls live together. They cooked together. They went to places together, right? So they were almost like a couple. Yeah, as a child. And then, you know, recently I had learned that Hari Neff had actually, who plays. Doctor Barbie in the Barbie movie had. In a letter to Greta Gerwig, who is the director of the Barbie movie, saying how important it was that, you know, she was cast as just a Barbie, not as a trans character, not in some tragic role. But, you know, as a. Barbie, just like every other Barbie. And so, you know, the context of Barbie is very, very broad.

Speaker

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Denice

Yeah, it also.

Leona

Makes me think of like if we're going to segue to this context into the this feminist critique, the way in which Barbie as a female symbol, so not maybe not necessarily always a feminist symbol, but a femme symbol that. Positions her within patriarchy as like you said, like within and outside. So I think about like my mom in the 1950s, early 1960s playing with a doll that had her own car, had her own house, had all of these things when at that time women couldn't have, you know. Credit cards they couldn't have. Well, they weren't credit cards at the time the charge card, right? They couldn't have. You know, bank accounts, like everything was centered around like if you were married, like the your power really came from being married and you. Have this doll. Whose power is centered around her being very firm and presentation right and in some ways, you know, leaning into the male gaze but also having power as she leans into the male gaze. And so, like, is that an example of powerful femininity? And the idea that. You know, she can be all of these things. But do we Create space to recognize that. You know, she creates a really complex. Image of like even in the Barbie movie, what a matriarchy looks. Like it's. It's still like. Constructed rather like it's egalitarian, it's all this. But even the presentation of that is like this. Very. Remedial form of matriarchy and even to the point where one of the things that I appreciated in the movie that when I was watching the Barbie world I was revisiting what it was like for me to create a Barbie world as an 8 year old and my concept my like very unformed concepts of what it means to be a little girl. And to be film and like to play out what power means and not really be prepared when someone's going to come along and crush my concepts of power because I'm existing within patriarchy.

Denice

Yeah. Yeah. No, it's interesting because as you were talking about that, I was thinking. About the ways. In which we. Create ideas of feminism and what? Almost in. Really elite ways of what it means to look like a feminist or be a feminist, or be part of feminism, and I'm I've. I'm thinking about the ways in which. Stem power plays out in a variety A diverse variety of cultures, right? How you know, we often think about feminism and you know, a powerful feminist as being sort of loud, right? Taking up space, working their way up to the. Top of a corporation or in politics. But you know, as you point out, this idea of powerful femininity lends itself to a deeper cultural analysis intersectionally across cultures. Right, because. It's not appropriate or even truthful to say that some countries where women can't serve in political positions, that there isn't. Power within farm communities, right? It's just that that power looks differently. And I'm thinking about a. I was fortunate to travel to a school. I did a Spanish language immersion school in Mexico and God seems like forever years ago. Let's not take this to think that I'm. Like bilingual and. Spanish. But so I don't want I. Don't want us to think that, but I did get the opportunity to go to this program and it was a women in social change program that was being conducted in in Mexico. And we stayed with it. It was a home stay program and so we stayed with a family, right? A man and a woman. And the, you know, man who was head of the household. What, you know, really sort of embraced this idea of machismo, right. Was very sort of boisterous and loud outside. Of the home. But what struck me when we were inside of the home is that you know, when we think about the things that really sustain us as societies, things like food, children and a roof over our head, right, that was the domain of that what we called. Our, our, our mother right in that environment and. She used those. You know, she used dinner. She used the. Home to display. You know. Like to display different icons of power to talk about political issues that she wanted her husband to change his mind on right within the context of the home. So and I was, you know, having been raised in the US and being a white woman who's, you know, sort of. Understanding of feminist develop feminism developed by looking at. That white feminism? Yeah. It was an interesting way to think about. Power and I think. That speaks to what you're talking about, right this idea of. You know how. Certain behaviors are assumed to not be powerful, but that women, including Barbie. Right used. I mean if you. If you think about the way that they were able to overthrow patriarchy, right in Barbie land, yes. Was by using the things that men expected of them so that they could again have power within their. Own world.

Leona

That makes me think about an article, so you know, I did do some research, so I just people listening. It's not all coming out of. My *** but. One of the articles I read around this and this idea of feminine power talked about four distinct feminine behaviors that are often viewed as negative. So like. Yielding like this perception of giving in, not really. Making too many waves redirection when something is uncomfortable or like, you know, redirecting the way in which someone relates to you or your situation, vulnerability being vulnerable, being open is often from a from a feminine perspective, thought of as weak and then establishing connections is not ever really valued. Because it's, you know, patriarchy is really about singular power and not collective power, yeah.

Denice

Right individualism.

Leona

But in this article it talks about. But what if these also are strengths, and this article actually interviewed? Dancers. They identified them as exotic dancers in the article and like home health workers, and they were saying that in the study, when they looked at both of these groups and they, they used these two groups because they deal with difficult situations. They have to negotiate, like, intense situations they experience. Actual harassment. And they're also like viewed as not holding that much power within larger society, but they were like, but what have those? Those behaviors are actually really great behaviors because they're centered around the connections, and the humanness and the ways in which your power can, you know, be more fluid than what we think. And oftentimes, when we are coming from like, some of those like. You know. Early thoughts around feminism and feminist critique. We had a tendency to look down on those behaviors because we saw them only through the lens of patriarchy. And as you were saying in your visit and as we saw in the Barbie movie, it was like, OK, we could go in with guns blazing and we could match that energy. Right. And it could be, like, more chaos or we could utilize, like, we yield in a way and redirect and are vulnerable. And we establish these connections so that that we can make some change. Directly and get the good that we want out of it. And I put that out there because there's still critique within that, right. And the degree to which when do you know that you're yielding? With yielding for your strength and power for good, or when are you able to know when you are yielding for the purpose of like the patriarchy, and for other people? And I don't know if we've ever gotten to a place where we can make that distinction right, because that means that we have to have really intense and intentional conversations around. What is valuable? What is viewed as collaborative and what is viewed as power. But I did appreciate it because for me it like helped highlight, you know, this is how Barbies, the Barbies, got their world back, using behaviors that are all. Then you know if you're being all girl boss, you are trained to not do. You want to make sure that you have power.

Speaker

Right, right.

Denice

Yeah. And I think that. So as we often talk about in these podcasts, you and I rarely come up with solutions. We just sort of present talking critiques, right. We just wanna talk about it. We wanna sort of figure it out and I mean I think. Interestingly, some of the most. From within feminism, some of the most scathing critiques. Of the movie. Were related to that exactly right to the ways that the that Barbie got. The Barbie land deconstructed patriarchy like took their lives back right? And I don't think. I don't think that we can ever know whether or not we're yielding because patriarchy makes us or we're yielding because it's our own power until we completely have a flat line by completely deconstructing patriarchy, which you know in my whole 55 years has not happened. And obviously feminism is much older than that. But here's one. Thing that I do think is really interesting. Susan Faludi. We all know from backlash, right? Who was who has herself a complicated feminist history made, I think, a very interesting statement. She was interviewed. I think it was for the New York Times or something, and a statement that I think is interesting. And true, you know, one of the things that I figured I would hear in the article was that she was, you know, going to critique the movie. But what she said was it's essentially evidence of, you know, 30 years of. Feminist discourse, right? Without, you know, us or, you know, deeply diving into you know. 30-40 fifty years of conversations about women's roles and patriarchy. We would have never even had the movie Barbie where we could illustrate that not only is patriarchy problematic for

women, but it is just problematic. You know, like there's no, you know, like ohh. It's all about women getting more power, no? It's just problematic so. I think that it's an interesting. Consideration to think about right. The powerful femininity as, as you know, you identified, right. What does that look like these behaviors yielding redirection vulnerability and connection? You know, oftentimes when we see. The sort of image and we saw this in the Barbie movie. Of course, the image of patriarchy. It really.

Leona

Sort of looks.

Denice

At individualism, right, how people achieve individually. So in the movie we see, you know, the Ryan Gosling can right as being the. Powerful Ken, who's trying to be more powerful than the other. Kens, right? So you know this idea of singular Ness and individualism versus connection. So what's more powerful, you know?

Leona

I did appreciate it and I don't know if they did this on purpose, but the fact that he was like so in love, of course. Yes, but there is a joke about horse girls, right like.

Denice

Is there? Yeah. That was so bizarre to.

Leona

Little girls, little girls, did you?

Denice

Me, I didn't know.

Leona

That was about.

Speaker

Did you?

Leona

Did you know? Do you? I don't know if that was what it was about, but I thought that was really funny because I always think about a love of horses being something that little girls go through. Like, did you? Love horses? A little girl.

Denice

I like I did not. Oh.

Leona

You didn't have, like, horses the dolls. That you played with. Oh my God, I.

Denice

Sporty had a horse, didn't she?

Leona

Yeah, I loved horses so much and there is like, a terminology of like horse girls. And you either had a horse. Are you around horses? And that is like a lot of your identity or you are obsessed with horse. As a girl. And they're like, so many personality things that are supposed to be associated with horse girls. So I saw that. And I was. Like this is so fascinating. Me because he, like, really loves horses. But he's been living in Barbie land where it's all these women and being a horse girl is a thing but that. May be like. Just even too much of a deep dive than even. They was intended that isn't.

Denice

Well, that's even a deeper, too deep of a dive. For me, you know.

Leona

That's just me being. Like this is so weird.

Denice

Well, Speaking of things that girls love. It's a good segue into thinking about. You know, just the fun that women. Had with Barbie like.

Leona

So much fun. Take a picture in the box I got in the. Box no, because.

Denice

Box I went with my spouse, who is the enemy of all things girl funds. So he was not about to let me take. A picture.

Leona

In the box took a picture. In the box, the first figure I went to. Did not have a box which is. It's fine, but the second one I went to had a box I got in. I posed. It was exciting. I think. We should all. Have an opportunity to get in the box.

Denice

I agree I can hardly wait. I think you and I are gonna have to go see. Barbie together because I did not. I was the only one who was having fun. I have to admit that she laughed a couple of times, but she was definitely not into the disco dance. Scenes like I was as I was.

Leona

Can we please bring back musicals? And so then like? I read all about like. How they used a particular camera technique to make it look like a Technicolor like movie from like the 50s and 60s. And I was just like, give me more of this please.

Denice

I know it was so much fun. And I think this is the thing that. You know, obviously we. I think we're going to, you're probably going to talk a little bit more about this. We can be killjoys, feminist killjoys, you know, and really be willing to deep dive into some of the way, the complicated ways that Barbie, just in general presents herself to the. World, but it was fun. I went when? We went on a Tuesday night. I got to wear sparkles on a Tuesday night. So, I mean, this is a thing like if forever. I'm gonna wear sparkles on Tuesday. And there were so many groups of. Women that went. There were even. A lot of. Groups of women who had a few men with them. I even there was even a group of men that were there just sort of hanging out and laughing. I don't think that they were, you know. Kind of being obnoxious laughing. I think they were, like, just having a good time. So like this, this idea that it's fun, it also, you know, we talked about this it. I didn't think it was any sort of revolutionary feminist manifesto. But it did bring attention to patriarchy in a. Sort of palatable. Way it made it. Not quite as scary for people.

Leona

Yeah, well, you know, it's interesting. So I another article I read was looking at this idea of how laughter fits within feminist theory. Feminist discourse, and in it talks about like, you know, we think about. How the ramping up of consumerism and to be fair, it existed before, but the degree to which we can see it post industrial societies becomes really stark because now you have an environment where people have access to wealth. And I'm talking about wealth as like just money in a way that they didn't. Previously have and with that access to wealth, there is like a desire for consumption because that fuels industrialism that fuels capitalism.

Speaker

Right.

Leona

But in this article it talks about how women's pleasure was really instrumental to the growth and expansion of 20th century capitalism. And so you even think about, like early advertisement, right? It's always centering like.

Speaker

Yeah, of course.

Leona

One praying on women's insecurities. Like are you a good enough wife? Are you good enough? Mother, are you pretty enough? Girl, are you any of these things? But it created a space in which women were more front and center and in engaging into in their wants and desires, even if those ones and desires were like. Contrived and manipulated by a larger society, and so this idea that even like women's enjoyment being part of the thing that contributes to like a global entertainment industry, we see that with this Barbie movie. But one of the critiques that. Of all these often. Weapon is the, you know, like

women are consumers of entertainment, but we don't get these type of Barbie movies that much, right or we don't. You know there been a couple movies like what's the other one that came out that has an all Asian woman cast? It's called joyride I think. It's called joyride. And it's like. It's all about centering their fun and their humor, and then even in this idea, when we have to have, like, critical, like humor, there's like a weird part of like punching down or, you know, not just being in this moment of joy. And so it made me think about how. The Barbie movie is at this aspect of emotional response. And a feminist. Critique of this emotional response where we really are just being joyous and you don't have to punch down, right? Like you. You don't have hypercritical, you can just be really silly. And it is OK. And you're laughter around that is OK now the problem that I have with this is that this is such a global success.

Speaker

Right.

Leona

And now it's going. To be like OK, copy paste. And it's like, no, you don't understand like. This was unique. This was about a particular type of joy, a particular type of wonder, and even a particular type of anger that women experience. Right and. It's like I don't. Want you to copy and paste that. I want you to continue to.

Denice

To invite women to create more. Stories that are that are.

Speaker

To do. It more often.

Denice

You know, I think one of the. You know, I'm not an. Expert in the movie industry, except that. I watch movies, right? But you know, one of the things that it it's always you know, we talk about representations being so important, but it's always this sort of tragic story of women, right. Having to overcome something to just have their basic needs matter having to escape an abusive. Person or whatever, right? But the. This was, you know, really just a story full of joy and celebration and glitter. I mean, obviously there were these components that, you know, for women especially. Like when you know Barbie goes into the real world, right, and Ken starts looking around and she's getting whistled at by, you know, construction workers and, you know, he's starting to sort of puff up and sort of walk with this. This sort. Of a dangerous power, right? The way that he starts carrying himself like I think for many women that was. Too close to home. Right. So we did, you know, there was this joy and play, but there was still this sort of understanding that. You know, I thought to my this is. What I thought to myself as soon as. Barbie went into the real world and saw the construction workers and she. Got out of. Her car and she's going to go over and ask them for help. The first thing I thought was no Barbie, don't ask them for help. Right? Because. As a woman walking through the world. Right. I understand that. So there's you know that. The story that is often told by the movie industry of women is this sort of tragic story, and hers was just really, you know, really joyful. Now, there are people who. Have called it a 2 hour Mattel commercial. OK. I mean and then there's, you know like this.

Leona

I love the Mattel and I was good so.

Denice

Whole critique of, you know, capitalism and in particular low capitalism, right? We love that word these days. I mean, the reality is that if capitalism's going to exist, which of course we. Know it is, I'd. Rather, it be woke than not, right? I'd rather there be some empathy or understanding of the experiences of people who aren't sitting around that gazillion dollar table making decisions. So obviously we can't take away. You know, the fact that Mattel's stock went up or that they produced it right or that they're gonna sell a lot of **** as a result and. They probably already have, but.

Leona

I mean, I want the weird. Barbie, I'm just gonna put that.

Speaker

I love it. I tried to.

Denice

Get her. But she's already. Sold out so. Anyway, right. It's this idea that. You know we. Have to acknowledge that, but also why can't we just have? Some fun like I think about. You know the same thing happened when Wonder Woman came out, right? That you know, it was first of all the Wonder Woman. Nobody thought that a film that was that had a central powerful figure as a woman was going to even be able to make the money.

Leona

Yes, yes, yes.

Denice

Fact that it was spent on it, right, and we can dissect Wonder Woman too, and the actress and all the problems associated with. That but it's. But the same reaction, right? This sort of deep critique about, well, not only a feminist critique, but also the sort of anti feminist critique about, you know, how it downplayed men's capacity, et cetera.

Leona

I know. I mean well, I'm. I'm going to stay talking. Joy. But also I would. Like to point out that another part of it was even. Like in Joy, we talked about this a little bit and now as we're talking more, I'm really conceptualizing this in. My head like. Even the joy of playing like, because there were parts of the movie where it was like I felt like, yes, this is how I played Barbie. Like when they were in Barbie world and how they conceptualized things. And if my Barbie. Was to walk out in the world and I was still controlling her. This is the way it is, but we think about America Ferrera's character where Barbie is starting to change because she's having, like, all of these hard feelings that, you know, a child doesn't. It isn't able to conceptualize it. And what happens when it all falls apart? And I also think that it was. Interesting that the people who brought joy back were the maternal figures.

Speaker

Right.

Leona

And this idea of like how does. That fit in feminism because the movie opened with you don't have to be a mom. You know, you don't have to do anything. But then at the end of the day it. Was like the person who. Brings you joy. The person who can make things safe for you is this maternal figure. If you have a healthy maternal figure in your life, right? And those two examples were like, this is what it means to have this healthy maternal figure. And I found that it was fascinating. And I don't know if I have any other thoughts.

Denice

And it.

Leona

Beyond that was just what I observed, but I found it very interesting. OK.

Denice

Well, I think to your point right of you know, this idea of a maternal figure, I think it really speaks to the wholeness of. Women's experiences, right? Because if you don't have those safe and caring maternal figures, then you turn to yourself right to be that safe and caring maternal figure you. Have to do. Your own work and that you know in that relationship. And so I think you know the thing that's interesting about. Barbie and the Barbie movie is this idea that. You know the Madonna Horror Complex that she represents? The childlike understanding of the world, the you know, sort of adolescent bravery that it takes to exit Barbie land and go try to figure out what's happening in your life. The Yeah, the mothering right. That happens like all of these are different aspects of women's lives, at which point we can all. Be joyful, right? Sometimes they suck, but other times they're. Joyful. You know the idea, like I keep going back to the. You know the sort of scene where Barbie gets out of her little car and goes over to the to the construction workers, right?

Leona

Oh, she was on her roller blades.

Speaker

Ohh 10 days.

Denice

No where she when they first get, they get out of the car. Right. They first get out of the car and they she's. They're like trying to figure out where they are and.

Leona

No, they're on their rollerblades.

Denice

OK, well anyway, when she goes up to talk to the well, you've seen it. Twice so I. Can't argue with you. But she decides that somehow. These construction workers are the people who are going to help her figure out where she is and where to find whoever she's looking for, and she sort of, you know, goes up to them with this. Confidence of an adolescent right and maybe. Even a child. Yeah. And when they are rude and. Obnoxious to her, she's still joyful. She's. Like Ohh what is what was?

Speaker

That I don't.

Denice

Get it? Like, why were they acting like that? But she still has that joy? Right. So I do think that that she's a she's more of a well-rounded character. Then we met. I want to.

Leona

Well, and also this idea that and I didn't, I don't have a I know we like to give our little citations but I remember and I didn't find this and it just came in my head. But there was this also I think it's a Ted talk where this woman talks about how joy is only associated with childhood. And our direct expressions of joy. If you if you're an adult who expresses too much joy in this sort of, you know, wonder sense of it, not really tied to. Obtaining power or like having goods like you're just happy. It's viewed as childlike and it's viewed as there's something wrong with you. So even when she had, like, these really hard things, like when the little pack of Mean Girls were thing for her, she was like, OK, I'm going to cry.

Speaker

Right.

Leona

But and it's this idea of like. She was really sad because she was so joyous. To see and like connect and like this and can't even comprehend like well why? Why be mean to me? Like you don't have to be mean to me. But I want to have this joy and like and this idea of people viewing her as like.

Denice

Right.

Leona

Stupid for some reason. Or, you know, not adult like enough and you.

Denice

Right.

Leona

Know the pressure. That puts on adults in general, but particularly women specifically, to not be able to just and how people even talked about all these women are dressing up like, Oh my God, you look like a

child and blah, blah, blah. And it's like, or maybe I'm just an adult woman. Like you said, who likes pink, sparkly things? And it's gonna wear a lot of barrettes and that's OK.

Denice

Well, and I think that this is, you know, you point this out that it's particularly problematic for women, right, because. You know, we as a society are comfortable with men having a quote, UN quote, midlife crisis where they decide they're going to buy a yellow Corvette, right. Or jump out of an airplane. You know, we're comfortable with. Where they call them like Finance Bros, acting like they're a bunch of, you know, middle schoolers at a party, right where they're Downing lots of boos. And, you know, fist bumping each other. Right. But we are not comfortable with sort of the joy of women. Within those contexts, like if you. You know, I go out tomorrow to buy a yellow Corvette, which of course I can't afford. But if I did and I'm driving down the street, you know, the commentary is less of an empathetic or sympathetic. Ohh. You know, she's having a midlife crisis and more of a well. Who does she think she is like? She's too old for that. Right. She's too old to act that way.

Speaker

Which of course.

Denice

Leads us to what? Always impacts women's joy and that is men's insecurity. Yeah. Yeah, so. I was kind of shocked. I talked to my son, after watching this and he had seen it. When I asked him how he liked it. And he was. Like, oh, it was great. He had to, you know, had a great time and I had called him because I had read an article about. In cells like really freaking the **** out over this movie, it was surprising to me and. So I was a little curious. About that. And as I was thinking about it. I thought you know. It is kind of interesting. Because you know, as I mentioned before, I think that the way that patriarchy, patriarchy, and the harm that it causes. Was framed in the movie actually was very palatable, right it. Didn't it didn't. Manifest as you know, a woman being killed by a serial killer. It didn't manifest. By her being. Abused by her husband, but upon close reflection you know Ken'ichi behavior in some ways, actually. He can really culminated in some significant violence, right? So his need to be centered, his need to be seen and paid attention to really became so consuming that he stalks her, right. He she's trying to leave and find herself and he. Appears in her car, which I found to be quite ironic considering that Indigo Girls were playing in her car while they emerged. I don't think they'd be thrilled with that. But also you. Know upon returning to Barbie land, we see. Like men fighting each other, women being subservient, right, forced into subservient roles. So there's almost this like. In cell model in Ken, which I hadn't really thought about until I started, you know, hearing about some of these things.

Leona

Yeah, I it was. So interesting because I have. And this could be because I did have some kids, but they really, like you said they were like there and they were involved in the soap operas. My sister and I created with our dolls. But my focus was always on Barbie. So watching it, it was kind of like, even when he's like, oh, let's do stuff. Once again, like watching it from the my memories of being a child, it would be something like Ken would say. And Barbie. Would be like, no, I'm gonna go. In my Peaches and cream bathtub right now, or I'm going to. I'm going to do these things because it was like he was just not that important. And I, you know, we talked about this and I can understand. Alright. We are building towards

a greater. Equitable and just society, where no one feels left out. No one is, you know. Disregarded. So I get that I get. I just got really annoyed. That she had to like. Make him feel good.

Denice

Ohh God, it was so annoying.

Leona

I was annoyed and I was like I can. I can understand. Like I can understand, right? But. I think the. Issue is this is one of those things where once again people don't have that critical analysis where I then viewed it as OK, we are trying to show that we want to include the inclusive and everyone has the right. To adjust an equitable society, even though in Barbie land, I think Ken the Kent had a great I don't. Really feel like there is any harm perpetuated against them, but do we want like and this is something I always think about this idea of like? If we inherently give women power, are they going to, is it going to be an inherently better place? No, because they've been indoctrinated within patriarchy. So we're not. We're not gonna get Barbie land overnight because there's, like, a deconstruction of all the things that we've internalized. I just was kind of like, could it have been somebody else that consoled Ken, could it have been one of his friends who had an epiphany? And we're like, you know, what? Can we love you? Can the kens. Right. And you're, you know, you're good enough. And maybe the collective group will. Like can we value you as a member of our community? I didn't feel like it needed to be Barbie to be the one to make him.

Denice

Feel good? Yeah. No, I felt like. You know there. Were so many moments in this when I just felt like women's experience was sort of on this gigantic screen, and that was one of them, right? So in addition to the fact that this one. 10 by the way. Really wreaked havoc on and oppressed and harmed systematically the other Kens in his orbit. Right. So there was a. Clear class structure, yeah. In the end, even when he sort of came around it. It was really Barbie who had to negate her whole experience of self discovery and exploration to placate him. Yeah, right. And I think this is. You know one. Of the things. That is so interesting about this process about this movie is that. In the end, it felt just like. A day in the life. Of women, yeah. Like you wake up in the morning and everything's fine. You're jumping off of your Barbie townhouse and not breaking your leg. You take a nice shower and you discover Cellulite, and then you. Have to take a big trek into the world of men to find your place and come back to find. That you know your. Your peaceful home has been destroyed and then you need to in order to avert violence for everybody. Sort of give yourself up to center him. It felt really like sort of the average everyday experience of women on a big screen at moments, yeah.

Leona

And I and I think that that's that idea when we talk about being really radical, like the radical part for me would have been this collaborative, like collectivism, where everyone is. We love you, Ken. We value you. And it wasn't Barbie. It would even Barbie didn't even have to voice it, right? It would have been everyone else in community stepping up and saying. In this sort of restorative justice model, right. So it's like, did this harm? But we still are going to Create space for you and community. And we are going to think about how you hold yourself accountable and how we hold our self accountable to a more just and equitable society.

Speaker

Right.

Leona

And so that's like how that's how I think of it as like that. Would be the next step right? Like that's how we get to this place of, like, we're not gonna completely exclude or kick out or kill the person who caused harm. But as community, we're going to say we recognize that you caused harm. We recognize that it was centered in something else. We want to acknowledge that we also want you to know that you caused harm. And how can we build a better community with each other?

Denice

And this is the reason why, as you say, simply putting women in positions of power and in charge of everything is not really going to solve the problem, right? Because in the end. I mean, you know my first comment to you and you know the rest of us on our on our feminist text chain was that, you know, people really called this subversive cinema. And I just didn't see it as revolutionary feminism. I think that it was an opportunity to engage in conversation. It was an opportunity for women to be seen in their experiences, including, you know. A director who? Well, you know whose film came out at exactly the same time as a film? That centered a man, right Oppenheimer, and, you know, was essentially billed as being the same or equivalent to Oppenheimer Heimer even though. Really exceeded his.

Leona

Yeah, there was. Like there was a little tech issue. I'm probably not going to edit. It out so. If you're listening to. Take issue, I might edit it out, I don't know. We might keep it.

Denice

Going we might have more than one tech issue. Because you know. The cat here is looking at the source of feminine power is really a source of feline power and he wants to know what's going on. Well, anyway, it was an interesting conversation. Again, as always, we don't ever leave with answers. We mostly just want to engage in the conversation.

Leona

And talk about.

Denice

And talking about Barbie, I know and. I really thought long. And hard about what we should call this. One and it. Really felt like Barbie, Joy and the men armies. Of fun really would be a good.

Leona

I love it.

Denice

Title for it. Because people are the memories of fun. Just let us have a good time.

Leona

Good no one got hurt, OK?

Denice

OK. All right, everybody, see you next.

Leona

Well, we have to do our thing. Where we tell them to like.

Denice

Ohh OK well. You can do that, and yeah, that's.

Leona

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Listen to us. Whenever we put one out every quarter. And just like be a. Part of this this moment. With us. And now we're done.

Denice

OK. And now we're done.