



James Madden teaches you some life lessons he learned from the silver screen.

FIVE FILMS. Five tales of opportunism, faded glory, delusions of grandeur, selling your wife's womb to the devil, and punishing a child with wardrobe accessories. Here are five films that demonstrate there are high prices to pay for the success of fame.

***All About Eve* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950)**

"Fasten your seatbelts, it's going to be a bumpy night."

One of the most famous quotes in movie history was uttered by Bette Davis in the masterful 1950 classic *All About Eve*. The film stars Davis as an ageing grand dame, stage actress Margo Channing, and Anne Baxter as her assistant with sinister ulterior motives, Eve. The saying "with friends like these, who needs enemies" has never been more potent than in this tale of backstage backstabbing.

***Sunset Boulevard* (Billy Wilder, 1950)**

"I am big. It's the pictures that got small."

The year 1950 also saw the release of Billy Wilder's dark tale about Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson), a star of the silent era now living in a derelict mansion with a chimpanzee and her faithful man servant Max (Erich von Stroheim). Enter Joe Gillis (William Holden) and we see Hollywood lampooned as

an opportunistic fair game to all the players in its orbit.

***What Ever Happened to Baby Jane?* (Robert Aldrich, 1962)**

"But you ARE Blanche! You ARE in that chair!"

Sibling rivalry on its own has produced some lunacy in cinema but Bette Davis and Joan Crawford playing two famous Hollywood stars takes it to a new level of insanity. Baby Jane Hudson (Davis) was a child vaudevillian star, while Blanche (Crawford) found success as an actress later in life. Blanche, however, suspiciously becomes handicapped in a car wreck and is put in a wheelchair, relying on her jealous sister's assistance. An insane romp ensues with faded glory being the biggest antagonist in this cult classic.

***Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968)**

"What have you done to it? What have you done to its eyes?!"

Roman Polanski's first foray into Hollywood saw one of the earliest horror films without any special effects. Polanski also manages to throw in stylistic themes such as melodrama, comedy, transgressive

sexuality and a groovy 1960s party scene. Newly married couple Guy and Rosemary Woodhouse (independent cinema genius John Cassavetes and Mia Farrow) have just moved into a historically dubious apartment block. Striking up a relationship with the elderly neighbours, strange things start to coincide with Rosemary's pregnancy. The sounds of covens and Guy's career success also warn Rosemary that perhaps something is supernaturally awry.

***Mommie Dearest* (Frank Perry, 1980)**

"NO WIRE HANGERS EVER!"

Perhaps the biggest lesson we can learn from *Mommie Dearest*, apart from Joan Crawford's aversion to metal hangers, is that your adopted child may one day write a tell-all book about you (so watch out Brangelina!). The movie adaptation of Christina Crawford's best-selling book almost black listed Faye Dunaway from Hollywood. She nevertheless gives a multi-layered and utterly demented performance as screen legend Joan Crawford a performance that lives on through cinema history. Winner of "Worst Film of the Decade" from the Razzies.