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Research article

Mist-Shrouded Beauty: The Subversion and Reconstruction of Female Criminals in *She's Got No Name*

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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT

Throughout the long history of crime films, the image of female criminals has remained shrouded in mystery. Their complex humanity and behavioral logic are often obscured by gender bias and narrative conventions, rendering them elusive flowers in the mist within traditional storytelling. Directed by Peter Chan, *She's Got No Name* employs a groundbreaking narrative strategy to subvert and rewrite this classic motif. Through three innovative approaches, a multi-perspective, jigsaw-like construction; symbolic expressions of bodily narratives; and an open-ended conclusion that leaves room for interpretation, the movie successfully deconstructs and reconstructs a complex individual embodying both perpetrator and victim. This subversion and reshaping of the character not only enriches the character arc dimension of crime genre films but also directly challenges the simplistic judgmental paradigm of traditional judicial narratives and social discourse toward female criminals. By advocating for the complexity of female offenders, it offers an enlightening narrative path for penetrating superficial appearances and exploring the human abyss and societal pathologies underlying female criminal behavior.

INTRODUCTION

The dissemination of the film She's Got No Name has undergone distinct phased transformations. From its 2024 premiere at Cannes to its June 2025 screening at the Shanghai International Film Festival, the film underwent significant content adjustments, accompanied by fluctuating critical reception. At the 2024 Cannes Film Festival, the initial 150-minute cut—produced in just six months—received polarized reviews, with particularly muted international reception. Criticism centered on narrative flaws: drawn-out plot exposition, sluggish pacing, and flat characterization that failed to convey the story's core to global audiences. The turning point came at the 2025 Shanghai International Film Festival. Director Peter Chan restructured the 150-minute Shana version into two parts. The first installment, She's Got No Name, was condensed to 96 minutes and premiered as the opening film on June 14th. The domestic version, enhanced with strengthened ensemble narrative threads and accelerated commercial pacing, was widely regarded as better aligned with market demands, significantly improving its reception. This narrative refinement precisely enhanced the core metaphor of "searching for flowers in the mist." By shedding redundant plot threads, the movie revealed intricate, multifaceted details of its female criminals— details previously obscured, now emerging with the complexity of flowers hidden within fog within a tighter narrative framework.

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The metaphor "searching for flowers in the mist" originates from Du Fu's Tang Dynasty poem "Composed on a Boat During the Minor Cold Festival": "Spring waters carry the boat like a seat in heaven; Old age views flowers as if through mist." Originally describing the act of viewing flowers through a hazy lens, it later came to symbolize the inability to perceive things clearly. Employing it as a methodological metaphor aptly captures the complexity and ambiguity of the female criminal figures in She's Got No Name. In traditional crime films, female criminals are often reduced to "wicked women," embodying society's collective anxiety and moral condemnation of female transgression. Yet under Peter Chan's lens, this figure is shrouded in historical mist, like viewing flowers through fog, where seemingly clear contours conceal complex truths. This article adopts a "searching for beauty through the mist" perspective to peel back the layers of fog shrouding the female criminal archetype. It explores the roots of its stigmatization and examines how the reconstructed first part of She's Got No Name subverts and redefines this image.

THE FLOWER IN THE MIST: THE COGNITIVE FOG SURROUNDING FEMALE CRIMINALS IN TRADITIONAL CRIME NARRATIVES

Throughout the long evolution of crime films, the image of female criminals has remained shrouded in mist, becoming a "flower in the mist" that remains elusive in traditional narratives. From early Hollywood films to crime-themed works across Asia, this figure has been reduced to a simplistic, stereotypical symbol, detached from her true humanity and the complex social factors that shape her. Early Hollywood crime films, such as The Postman Always Rings Twice (1981), portrayed female criminals like Cora as symbols of seduction and evil. Every glance and gesture was imbued with dangerous undertones, casting her as a femme fatale who provokes male crime and disrupts social order. This portrayal reflects contemporary societal biases against women, treating their normal emotions and desires as monstrous threats. Any deviation from traditional gender norms led to swift demonization. Through stark lighting contrasts and suggestive cinematography, directors painted Cora as a femme fatale, forcing audiences to focus solely on her superficial "evil" while obscuring her genuine struggles as a woman trapped in adversity. Sociologist Li Yinghe notes in her research that traditional societies imposed strict gender norms on women, subjecting those who deviated to harsh public condemnation.

In Asia, Naomi from the Japanese film The Daylight Demon (1966) similarly embodies a terrifying female criminal archetype. The film emphasizes her madness and cruelty, attributing her crimes solely to psychopathy while glossing over deeper causes like her upbringing and societal pressures. This narrative reflects Asian culture's avoidance and resistance toward female criminality, reluctant to explore the complex social and psychological factors behind it, instead simplistically defining such women as deviants who violate moral norms. Influenced by traditional Confucian thought, Asian cultures emphasize feminine docility and virtue. When women commit crimes or deviate from societal norms, they face severe social rejection and are often crudely labeled as "evil." Hong Kong cinema is no exception in this portrayal. For instance, in Daughter of Darkness 2 (1994), portrays the female criminal as driven by lust, simplistically attributing her motives to sexual desire and revenge against her husband, while ignoring the oppression and injustice she endured in a feudal rural society. The film satisfies audience curiosity by emphasizing bloody violence and the female criminal's twisted psyche, yet offers no reflection on the deeper causes of female crime. Research in mass media studies indicates that media outlets, in pursuit of sensationalism, frequently present exaggerated and one-dimensional portrayals of female criminals, reinforcing stereotypes.

Within these traditional narratives, the construction of female criminal characters often follows a fixed pattern. Their criminal acts are tightly linked to their gender characteristics, with excessive emphasis placed on the negative influence of emotions and desires, casting them as dangerous deviants who violate social norms. Narratively, the tragic fates of female offenders are used to reinforce moralistic lessons about "karma," rarely exploring the complex social, familial, or economic factors behind their crimes. Visually, exaggerated performances, jarring sound effects, and disturbing imagery are employed to highlight their "evil," further cementing these stereotypes in viewers' minds. As American journalist Walter Lippmann observed: "The system of stereotypical images of women may be central to our personal traditions and a safeguard of our social status, but it must never be confused with the real-life experiences of women." (Lippmann, 1922) This one-dimensional portrayal of female criminals is, in essence, a tangible manifestation of gender bias and an implicit operation of patriarchal mechanisms perpetuating gender inequality. As Friedrich Engels noted in The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State, the development of private property granted men economic dominance, gradually degrading and enslaving women (Engels,2021). Against this social backdrop, the one-dimensional portrayal of female offenders serves as a disciplinary and repressive tool within patriarchal society, burying the true image and complex inner worlds of female criminals beneath this fog of misperception.

MIST ENVELOPING FLORAL BEAUTY: THE SURVIVAL DILEMMA AND SYMBOLIC CAGE OF FEMALE CRIMINALS IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

She's Got No Name sets its story in 1945 Shanghai, where this specific historical space becomes the pivotal backdrop for revealing the survival predicament of female criminals—as if layers of mist tightly shroud their true forms.

The Shackles of Feudal Marriage Systems

The tragedy of Mrs. Zhan Zhou seems foreshadowed from her very "namelessness." The movie's English title, She's Got No Name, pierces precisely the truth of women's existence in that era. Upon marriage, she took her husband's surname, becoming "Mrs. Zhan Zhou." She lost her own name, reduced to an appendage within her family and a blurred figure in society—even "selfhood" became a luxury. In the soy sauce factory's ledgers, she was "Mrs. Chan"; in official records, "the wife of a criminal"; among neighbors, merely "that woman." No one remembered her original name, Zhou Chunlan. This pain of name-deprivation cut deeper than any physical shackle. Behind this lay the shared predicament of women in that era. Their names were overshadowed by their husband's surname, their sense of self eroded by societal conditioning, their social identity perpetually tethered to a man's existence—rootless like floating duckweed.

Sold as a child, Zhou Chunlan was betrothed to Zhan Yunying at seventeen, becoming known as Lady Zhan of the Zhou family. This feudal arranged marriage placed her in an unequal position from the start, stripping her of any autonomy within the union and reducing her to a mere appendage to a man. After marriage, Zhan Yunying's infidelity, gambling, alcoholism, and domestic violence plunged Lady Zhan into endless darkness. Her attempts to earn a living were systematically crushed, and she was even forced to deal with her husband's mistresses. These details reveal the dual torment—physical and psychological—endured by women under the feudal marriage system. Their bodily autonomy and even the right to express emotions were ruthlessly stripped away, making them victims of feudal ethics.

Oppression Under Colonial Economy

1940s Shanghai existed within a complex interplay of colonial rule and indigenous economy. During the city's "occupation" from 1941 to 1945, the entire metropolis fell under Japanese military control. Social production and material circulation were forcibly integrated into the Japanese invaders' war machine, with every major economic sector becoming an instrument of plunder. Normal economic ties between the city and the outside world were nearly severed, and the fundamental conditions necessary for economic operation collapsed. As the war progressed, Shanghai's industrial production capacity suffered unprecedented devastation, with output plummeting precipitously. The commercial system was shattered, and logistics channels descended into paralysis and chaos. The entire socioeconomic development stagnated in a quagmire, while citizens endured daily life amid scarcity and turmoil, living in constant displacement and struggling to survive. Although "Shanghai finally emerged from its status as an occupied zone after the end of the War of Resistance in 1945, multiple forces continued to intertwine within it." In the four years following the war, Shanghai coexisted with several starkly contrasting realities. On the surface, it presented a modern spectacle of revelry and prosperity, yet beneath lay rampant corruption, the suffering of the oppressed, and the surging undercurrent of leftist forces. These elements vied for dominance, rising and falling in a complex interplay that wove an intricate tapestry of coexistence within the city. Shanghai's colonial economy at this juncture exhibited a quintessential dual dependency. It was simultaneously anchored to the global division of labor system of Western colonial capital while also forming an economic dependency on the lower strata of society through control over local resources. As historian Poshek Fu noted, Shanghai's colonial economy had crystallized into a "three-tiered structure." At the apex were British, American, and French trading firms and multinational corporations, dominating critical sectors like finance, shipping, and industrial core technologies. The middle tier comprised comprador elites and local merchants dependent on colonial capital, responsible for resource transshipment and distribution. The base consisted of tens of thousands of laborers—particularly female workers—forming the "labor foundation" of the colonial economy. This structure was particularly acute in traditional handicraft sectors. The movie vividly illustrates colonial oppression through the experience of Zhan Zhouzhi, who worked in a factory to survive, inevitably becoming part of the colonial economic machinery. Colonial capital monopolized the means of production, transforming autonomous factory production into dependent processing, with all extracted profits divided among colonizers and the comprador class. A portion of the output was distributed to local poor at rock-bottom prices, yielding barely enough to sustain factory operations—a perpetual cycle of exploitation. This predatory system trapped factories in a survival squeeze of high investment and low returns, with female laborers at the bottom of the production chain suffering the most devastating losses. Their labor was exploited at every level, their fate as fragile as a candle flickering in the wind, teetering on the brink under the crushing weight of the colonial economy.

Symbolic Violence in Public Discourse

Following the incident, Ms. Zhan Zhou found herself engulfed in a torrential storm of public opinion, whose

intensity and destructive force were no less devastating than the physical violence itself. Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theory of "symbolic violence" posits that this form of violence operates through symbolic channels, exerting non-physical force at an unconscious level via social power differentials (Bourdieu, 1991). It reinforces power relations through language, imagery, and symbols, compelling the subjugated to internalize inequality. In Zhan Zhou's case, the media and public opinion combined to inflict this covert yet devastating symbolic violence upon her.

She's Got No Name interweaves fragments of contemporary media coverage, such as reports from the Shen Bao newspaper, like multiple blades piercing Zhan Zhou's already shattered life. Newspaper headlines like "Poisonous Woman" and "Wicked Wife" stood out starkly. These highly derogatory terms simplistically and brutally defined Zhan Zhou as morally corrupt and malevolent, completely ignoring the long-term persecution she endured in her feudal marriage and the exploitation of colonial economics. The coverage was rife with bias, sensationalizing her act of killing and dismembering her husband while glossing over the complex social factors behind it. For instance, the reports employed exaggerated descriptions of the dismemberment scene to create a horrifying atmosphere, portraying her as a terrifying monster while ignoring the daily trauma of domestic violence and the desperate economic hardship she endured after marriage. Such one-sided and manipulative media coverage constructed a powerful public opinion field, dragging Zhan Zhou into the abyss of moral judgment. The neighbors' reactions were an extension of this symbolic violence. In the movie, neighbors whispered in the alleyway, their discussions about Zhan Zhou astonishingly uniform, filled with condemnation and contempt. Their gazes toward Zhan Zhou Shi carry cold contempt. This collective pressure embodies societal norms and prejudice. Traditional expectations demand women be docile and submissive; Zhan Zhou Shi's act of killing her husband gravely violated this so-called "norm." Thus, neighbors instinctively positioned themselves on moral high ground to condemn her. This verbal violence from her neighbors left Zhan Zhou with nowhere to hide within her own community. The once-familiar alleyways now felt like a trap of hidden arrows with every step she took.

The audience's behavior during the court hearing was equally chilling. They treated Zhan Zhou's case as a farce, a subject for casual judgment over tea and snacks. French philosopher Guy Debord noted in his theory of the "society of the spectacle" that the masses are easily shaped by media representations (Debord, 1967). In this trial spectacle, spectators were captivated by the case's sensationalism, completely overlooking the suffering and struggle of the woman behind it. They regarded Zhan Zhou with indifference, occasionally interjecting with mockery or gossip, as if she were not a victim of tragedy but a clown on stage for public amusement. This collective apathy and condemnation further deprived Zhan Zhou of any opportunity to defend herself. While enduring familial suffering, she also faced the judgment of society at large, plunging her into a desperate isolation with no one to turn to.

Within this historical context, every act of resistance by Mrs. Zhan Zhou appears feeble, each struggle ruthlessly suppressed. Trapped by the feudal marriage system, colonial economic oppression, and the symbolic violence of public opinion, she resembles a flower shrouded in thick fog—unable to reveal her true form. Her life distorted, her dignity trampled, she ultimately turned to crime. Her attempts to plead her case in court were drowned out by biased media coverage, neighbors' prejudices, and the indifference of spectators, her voice lost in the clamor. The symbolic violence of public opinion became the final straw that broke her spirit, plunging her deeper into darkness. This tragedy also laid bare the plight of women in that era—forced to endure not only economic and familial oppression but also the merciless judgment of society, leaving them trapped in the shackles of fate.

CLEARING THE FOG, REVEALING THE TRUTH: THE RECONSTRUCTION AND BREAKTHROUGH OF FEMALE CRIMINAL PORTRAYALS IN FILM NARRATIVES

In She's Got No Name, director Peter Chan employs ingenious narrative techniques and cinematographic language to dispel the fog shrouding female criminals, reconstructing and breaking through this stereotype to reveal their authentic selves.

The Fog-Dispelling Power of Multi-Perspective Narrative

The movie never fixes its spotlight on any single character. Within this ensemble narrative, Peter Chan employs a highly distinctive audiovisual language to excavate an extraordinary case from eighty years ago from the dust of history. The resilience of Lady Chan (Zhang Ziyi), the awakening of Xilin (Zhao Liying), and the defiance of Wang Xumei (Yang Mi)—this ensemble of diverse women profoundly reflects the survival struggles women face in the cracks of their era. As feminist film theorist Laura Mulvey observed, the true reconstruction of female representation begins when the camera ceases to treat women as mere "objects of the gaze" and instead allows them to participate in the narrative through multifaceted roles(Mulvey, 1975). Their destinies intertwine: Zhan Zhouzhi's still-water-like endurance and Xilin's concealed pregnancy form a spiritual relay through Wang Xumei's hoarse cries outside

the courtroom, collectively addressing how women affirm their identities in desperate circumstances.

The movie employs a multi-perspective narrative, centering on Xue Zhiwu—portrayed by Lei Jiayin—the deputy chief of the Shanghai Police Bureau under the puppet regime, investigating the Zhan Zhou case. Interspersed are viewpoints from Zhan Zhou herself, neighbors, lawyers, and others. Each perspective offers distinct information and insights, collectively piecing together the case's full picture. Within this shared narrative space, diverse consciousnesses and voices coexist equally, with no single figure established as an absolute authority. As Xue Zhiwu records "Zhan Zhou" as the perpetrator in the archives, her memory of her husband's fist shattering the frame's integrity flashes by. When a neighbor testifies with a wry remark, "She seemed pretty honest," a flashback reveals her witnessing Zhan Zhoushi being chased and beaten, only to turn away and shut the door—a starkly ironic use of the word "honest."

Zhan Zhou's own account bears the hallmark fragmentation of traumatic memory. When describing her husband's violence, the footage abruptly shifts into color dissonance—a water-stained, blurred effect reminiscent of old photographs—creating a profoundly jarring visual impact. As Judith Herman noted in Trauma and Recovery: "The expression of traumatic memory is often fragmented because the brain cannot integrate extremely painful experiences into a coherent narrative." Through this visual dissonance, the film precisely replicates Mrs. Zhan Zhou's inner turmoil, allowing viewers to glimpse the abyss of suffering beyond words. The neighbor's account is saturated with class prejudice. She repeatedly emphasizes the employer's generosity toward subordinates while downplaying her own witnessing of Zhan Zhou's beatings, revealing how social stratification shapes perception. Individuals in specific societal positions unconsciously interpret reality through lenses aligned with their class interests. As a low-income citizen dependent on her employer for survival, the neighbor upholds the narrative of the "benevolent boss" to preserve the order that secures her livelihood, unwittingly becoming an accomplice to oppression. The account of the lawyer, meanwhile, profoundly exposes the darkness and injustice within the judicial system. While reviewing case files, he discovers that Zhan Zhou had filed three reports with the police station, all dismissed as domestic disputes. This detail starkly exposes the judicial system's disregard for women at the time. During the trial, 198 of the 237 letters received from readers were written by women, many stating "I was beaten too" or "I want to escape." Yet judges routinely dismissed women's appeals as "domestic matters." When the judicial system refuses to provide women with protection, so-called self-defense becomes nothing more than an illusion.

The interweaving of these diverse perspectives breaks the limitations of traditional single-lens narratives, allowing audiences to understand the case from multiple angles and grasp the complex causes behind Zhan Zhou's crime, gradually dispelling the fog shrouding her. Amidst these narrative fissures, She's Got No Name refuses to passively accept the "wicked woman" label. Instead, it actively reconstructs the complete image of a victim of humiliation and harm—this is precisely the most powerful force for dispelling the fog in Peter Chan's lens.

The Emergence of Bodily Narrative

Within traditional crime narratives, the female body is often stripped of agency, reduced to a symbolic tool serving plot conflict or the male gaze. Yet in The Case of Mrs. Chan, Mrs. Chan's body becomes the most devout vessel of narrative. This "devotion" signifies a fidelity to individual experience. As French philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault incisively revealed in Discipline and Punish: "The body is the battlefield of power discourse." (Foucault, 1977) Those scars, tremors, and resolute bodily performances speak more plainly than any dialogue about her life trajectory. The subtlety of this bodily narrative lies in its circumvention of language tainted by power, allowing the audience to directly feel the authentic pulse of a woman pushed to the brink.

The film's persistent close-ups of Zhan Zhouzhi's hands form a hidden emotional thread. During factory labor, her knuckles turn as white as dried bones, thick calluses form where her palms meet the wooden handles, and each exertion carries a mechanical numbness. Under the dual discipline of feudal marriage and colonial economy, physical labor in survival's abyss had become an unconscious bodily instinct, as if even pain were suppressed into muscle memory. Yet when her husband violently shoved her to the ground late one night, the trembling of her fingertips suddenly shattered this numbness. Her nails carefully avoided the wound's edges, her fingertips gently rubbing the bruised area. Beneath that restrained tenderness lay a surging tide of pain. This juxtaposition revealed the dual contradictions within her body—both an object of oppression and a vessel for maternal instinct. This sense of dissonance foreshadowed the impending eruption.

The most impactful physical narrative unfolds in the instant she grips the knife handle. The cold glint of the blade contrasts sharply with the sweat beading on her palm. Veins bulge from the intense pressure in her fingers, and even her wrist trembles slightly. This isn't the decisive resolve of a "femme fatale" in traditional crime films, but the final, desperate struggle of a woman driven to the edge, using her body's last ounce of strength to resist annihilation. The bodily resistance of the oppressed is itself an act of speech. Zhan Zhouzhi's grip on the knife embodies this practice. When words fail to plead and the law offers no shelter, the body becomes the final weapon—declaring unyielding defiance through trembling yet resolute posture.

The courtroom scene where she rolls up her sleeve to reveal her scars elevates this bodily narrative to its climax. On Zhan Zhouzhi's exposed forearm, overlapping bruises and scars spread like a map. There were blocky, dark-blue marks from blunt blows, linear indentations from rope restraints, and even circular burns from cigarette butts. These wounds transcended personal suffering, becoming a shared bodily memory for women of that era. Significantly, Peter Chan does not linger on the grotesque wounds. Instead, his camera slowly pans across the reactions of female spectators in the gallery. A woman in a qipao instinctively presses her own arm—perhaps concealing similar scars. A maid arranging her hair quietly tears up, recalling the fear of her employer's scolding. "The narrative of female bodily suffering can spark cross-class empathy among female viewers." At this moment, Mrs. Chan's physical scars transcend individuality, becoming an anchor that awakens collective memory. The grievances concealed by taking their husbands' surnames, the silent cries suppressed by the admonition that "family shame must not be aired outside," all burst through the long silence in this instant.

From numb wrists to trembling fingertips gripping a knife in the dark, to wounds suddenly exposed in court, Zhan Zhou's body undergoes a metamorphosis from "enforced discipline" to "active narration." By capturing these bodily details through his lens, Peter Chan also reclaims the voice for those "nameless" women. Their suffering need not be relayed through a male lens; their resistance requires no moral judgment. The tremors and scars on their bodies alone suffice to accuse the oppression of power, rendering words superfluous.

An Awakening That Rejects Simplistic Moral Judgment

Perhaps those years were like the sunless corners of Shanghai's alleys, where damp mold seeps into the bones. Each breath Zhan Zhou Shi took carried this suffocating weight. At the film's conclusion, it deliberately avoids black-and-white moral judgments, instead employing a restrained tenderness to return her fate to the historical context itself. Here, there are no simplistic labels of "criminal" or "hero." As the camera lingers on the empty workshop, morning light filtering through windowpanes onto dust-covered stone steps, unspoken words dissolve into the play of light and shadow. The moment Zhan Zhou-shi raised her knife was never a dividing line between good and evil.

The film's courage in rejecting simplistic moral judgments lies in shattering the stereotype that female crime stems from innate wickedness. When viewers see the old scars on her wrists and the fresh marks on her knife, they understand how the judicial indifference that dismissed her three reports pushed her to the brink. So-called "morality" pales in the face of structural violence. This narrative choice liberates Zhan Zhouzhi's character from symbolic confinement. She possesses cowardice, fear, and, above all, the solitary courage of one driven to the edge of a cliff. Like a wildflower struggling to grow through a crack in the wall, even if stained with mud, its very bloom is the most powerful rebuttal to darkness. Ultimately, as the fog lifts, the audience sees not a defined "criminal," but a "human being" desperately gasping for breath in the cracks of an era. This awakening narrative finally liberates the female criminal from the altar of moral judgment, granting her the complexity and authenticity she deserves within the folds of history. This may well be the most precious tenderness captured through Peter Chan's lens.

CONCLUSION

She's Got No Name never intended to be a simple crime story; its true purpose lies in posing profound questions about the fate of women. Where historical fog distorts female criminals into toxic flowers, Peter Chan's lens pierces the mist like a ray of light, revealing the struggling "precious flower"—a life stripped bare by adversity. Beginning with "Nameless," the movie unfolds the shackles of feudal marriage, the crushing weight of colonial economics, and the siege of social opinion, peeling back layer by layer the systemic oppression behind the female criminal. Simultaneously, through the transformation of her identity—from "Zhou Chunlan" to "Zhan Zhou Shi"—and the progression from numb wrists to the raw exposure of her scars, the movie subverts the flat label of "wicked woman." Through the triple breakthroughs of multi-perspective narration, bodily storytelling, and an open ending, the "female criminal" finally emerges from historical shadows. Shedding her symbolic shell, she becomes a flesh-and-blood human being—capable of love and pain—achieving the arduous return from a defined 'other' to a self-voicing "subject." The value of this narrative choice lies in refusing to reduce history to a black-and-white moral fable. When feudal ethics stripped women of their right to names, colonial economies plundered the value of their labor, judicial systems ignored their survival demands, and public discourse turned their suffering into sensationalist gossip, so-called "crime" might have been merely the final cry from the depths of despair. The female portraits formed by Zhan Zhouzhi, Xilin, and Wang Xumei in the movie reflect multiple possibilities of resistance. Some gather strength through endurance, some pass on faint glimmers of light through awakening, and some tear through darkness through struggle. Their stories clearly demonstrate that women's liberation is never an isolated breakthrough, but a fundamental questioning and structural reconstruction of the entire oppressive system.

When the fog finally lifts, that once-stigmatized "poisonous flower" ultimately reveals its oppressed essence. The narrative of She's Got No Name declares that perceptions of female criminals should never stop

at moral judgment. Instead, they must be placed within specific historical contexts, revealing the desperate circumstances of women whose names were stripped, bodies disciplined, and voices silenced. Much like the process of "identifying the flower in the mist," what matters is not defining the flower's virtue or vice, but understanding the storms that shaped its form. As the figure of Lady Zhan Zhou overlaps with the countless nameless women of history, the audience finally realizes: Peter Chan's lens does more than reconstruct a cold case. It forces us to see that behind every woman who has been insulted and harmed stands a history in desperate need of reconstruction, buried beneath a past that must be confronted. This subversion and reshaping of the female image ultimately reveals a profound truth: only by dispelling the shadows of prejudice can women truly break free from invisible shackles and blossom with the resilient, fiery light of life.

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