

Que la Bête Meure

(UK = "Killer!"; "This Man Must Die"; US = "The Beast Must Die")

France / Italy : 1969 : dir. Claude Chabrol : Films de la Boétie / Rizzoli : 113 min

prod: Andre Genoves : scr: Claude Chabrol & Paul Gegauff : dir.ph.: Jean Rabier

Marc di Napoli; Stéphane di Napoli

Michel Duchaussoy; Caroline Cellier; Jean Yanne; Anouk Ferjac; Maurice Pialat; Guy Marly; Lorraine Rainer; Dominique Zardi; Louise Chevalier

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	□	≠	Z	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"A widower's young son is run over by a road maniac. The father seeks out the culprit's identity to take revenge and discovers that his death would be a liberation to those around him. Across the board a well acted and suggestive psychological thriller which, with great conviction, gives expression to Chabrol's concern for the family's influence upon the child, here the son of the culprit, for whom the avenger begins to feel a responsibility of his own. ***½ "

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996 review:

"Outstanding film about a man who sets out to find the person who killed his young son in a hit-and-run accident and the complications which ensue. This may be the best of many fine Chabrol dramas; Yanne and Cellier are unforgettable, the photography beautiful. ***½ "

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"Whatever the two English titles, this twisty thriller, set in Normandy, is based on *"The Beast Must Die"*, by Nicholas Blake (i.e: C. Day Lewis). A journalist (Michel Duchaussoy) seeks the hit-and-run slayer of his son; the damaged auto he thinks responsible leads him into an affair with a television actress (Caroline Cellier), whose brother-in-law (Jean Yanne), he is increasingly sure, was driving the car at the time. ** "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"Claude Chabrol has fashioned another stunning crime tale. This time his main character is a man who vows to take revenge on the hit-and-run driver who killed his son. Duchaussoy plays the father, and Yanne the insidious and much-hated killer. ***½ "

The Time Out Film Guide review:

[WARNING - contains a plot spoiler]

"Chabrol's most Langian film - the end is a virtual recreation of that of *"MOONFLEET"* - *"QUE LA BÊTE MEURE"*, like Lang's *"RANCHO NOTORIOUS"* and *"THE BIG HEAT"*, is dominated by the themes of revenge and destiny. However, in contrast to those films, whose heroes are trapped within their desire for revenge, Chabrol's protagonist (Duchaussoy), at first determined to kill the murderer (Yanne) of his son in a hit-and-run accident, finds his self-imposed task less and less appealing as he closes in on his prey. Finally, after Yanne's son kills his boorish, tyrannical father, Duchaussoy claims responsibility for the murder in order not to lose his second, substitute son. A masterful film, all the more powerful for the fact that so much of its meaning is contained in the camera's perspective of what happens rather than simply what happens."

Video Movie guide 1993 review:

"Claude Chabrol pays homage to Alfred Hitchcock with this outstanding thriller about a man who sets out to find the hit-and-run driver responsible for the death of his son. Complications ensue as the father encounters the murderer's sister, whom he seduces. A riveting shocker with a startling climax. Dubbed into English. **** "

The Virgin Film Guide review:

"One of Chabrol's best films. When Duchaussoy's son is killed by a hit-and-run driver, the quiet author of children's books can only think of revenge. He begins a search for the killer, recording each step he takes in a diary. First, he meets a farmer who tells him that on the day of the accident he saw a damaged sports car in which TV personality Cellier was a passenger. Duchaussoy travels to Paris and meets Cellier. Soon the two are having an affair, and the writer learns that Cellier's brother-in-law (Yanne) runs an auto repair shop. Immediately, Yanne becomes Duchaussoy's prime suspect.

Eventually Duchaussoy grows close to Yanne's son (Marc Di Napoli), who tells the writer that he plans to kill his father. Duchaussoy then takes Yanne out on a sailboat to drown him. However, Yanne pulls a pistol on the vengeful writer, saying that he's read Duchaussoy's diary. Duchaussoy leaves Paris with Cellier, but the plot twists don't end there. Another of the quietly handled but solidly engrossing melodramas Chabrol was making at the time, and well worth the effort. **** "

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995" or "Variety Movie Guide 1993"]

Evening Standard review:

"A father vows revenge on the man responsible for his son's death. French drama, starring Michael Duchaussoy [sic]. "

Not to be confused with the 1974 English film "**THE BEAST MUST DIE**", which is a silly retread of "**THE HOUNDS OF ZAROFF**" with miserable werewolf effects. French cinema would quite often trawl English pulp thrillers to produce films of a higher calibre than their source material. This is a prime example, a fairly shoddy revenge tale transmuted into something altogether more subtle and nuanced.

As if to underline the ambiguities which grow out of the central figure's newfound relationships, Marc Di Napoli (±10) plays Philippe Decourt, the angry son of his quarry, while Marc's brother Stéphane appears earlier on as Duchaussoy's own son, Michel Tenier, who is killed at the outset. Marc had starred the previous year in "**LES AVENTURES DE TOM SAWYER**" (about which I currently have no other details), and in 1975 made two films with Cristian Sofron [qv]: "**INSULA COMORULOR**" and "**PIRATII DIN PACIFIC**". Stéphane, meanwhile, made "**LA FEMME INFIDÈLE**" in 68.

See subject index under **DEATH / DYING CHILDREN, SPECIAL FRIENDSHIPS** and **VENGEANCE / VIGLANTEISM**.