Our last battle pitted two former child stars against one another. Drew Barrymore of *Firestarter* vs. Linda Blair of *Hell Night*. It was a teensy-eensy turnout at that battle’s polling place, but nonetheless, a victor has been named. Drew Barrymore as little Charlie will be moving onto the semi-final battles. Which means that everyone’s favorite devil possessee – Linda Blair – will not be returning to the ring. We appreciate what she had to go through to defeat the Garth family in *Hell Night*, but her strength was not enough to beat out the telekinetic gifts of Drew Barrymore’s talented tyke.

Final tally? Barrymore: 19 Blair: 10.

Where were you voters? Well, hopefully this next battle will intrigue you enough to spread the word and get out the vote!

And a fun bit of trivia that escaped me when I placed Barrymore in the ring with Blair. They were both in the original *Scream*. Obvious, right? Go ahead and take away my horror fan card.

So let’s move on! This next battle is called “Rabid Dogs vs. Horny Spirits”.

As Donna Trenton in Stephen King’s classic story and Lewis Teague’s effective thriller *Cujo*, Dee Wallace could give our previous contestants in the “Gimme Back My Kid” battle (Sigourney Weaver as Ripley in *Aliens* vs. JoBeth Williams as Diane Feeling in *Poltergeist*) a hearty run for their money in the ultimate horror mother competition. But, we feel a little less sympathy for Wallace’s Donna – since she’s been having an affair. On top of that, she chooses to take her kid out onto the open road (admittedly it’s only a 6-mile drive) in a clunker car which is gasping for its final breath. Not exactly mother of the year material, Ms. Trenton.

At any rate –

Donna Trenton is a triumph for Wallace in many ways. There’s a lot of soap opera nonsense in the film, leading up to the 3-day siege on her decrepit car. But even in these “movie-of-the-week” expository scenes, Wallace provides a terrific performance. A few of these early moments will be discussed and then we’ll get into the grueling, gory and gross scenes as she battles the rabid St. Bernard.

It’s a great and simple dialogue exchange as she and estranged husband Vic (the uber-sexy Daniel Hugh-Kelly) confirm that she’s been having an affair. A very quick, “Yes or no?” from Vic. Wallace turns to him and with relief, defeat as well as exhaustion, she replies, “Yes.” It’s an effective little moment from Wallace.

The first time her lover (Wallace’s former husband in real life – the late Christopher Stone) shows up at the house (obviously a carpenter/handy-man for the Trenton family), Wallace is cooking at the stove, her back to the camera. As soon as he speaks, she pauses, slightly tenses and then goes about her work. It’s subtle, but we’ve already well established how much I love these little moments.

It’s the first big physical fight between Donna and Cujo where Wallace goes balls-to-the-wall and gets primal. The dog is hiding underneath the car as Donna exits – hoping to go for the bat. But just as Donna takes a step forward – she realizes her miscalculation. As soon as I saw it on this most recent viewing, I knew I had to bring it up. She stops. The slight bit of hope in her eyes vanishes – and she knows she’s screwed up. She quietly squats down to check underneath the car. Finding nothing, she relaxes, only to hear Cujo behind her. And then there’s the struggle. It’s all sold very well – in the camera-work, the stunt-work, the presumably fake dog in some shots. But nothing is more terrifying (this scene is out of control in the best way possible) as Wallace’s squeal when Cujo actually bites into her thigh. Not sure where Wallace dug up this beauty of a reactionary scream, but it’s a highlight in her performance. And by the way when Tad (Danny Pintauro) reaches to her and touches the wound itself – *ouch*.

But my personal favorite moment from Wallace comes later in the car siege. Little Tad has basically lost it (can you blame the tyke?) and in one of the exchanges, he won’t stop crying and continually whines, “I want my daddy, I want my daddy.” As calm as Donna’s been throughout – the heat, the thirst, the terror and her son’s crying have finally gotten to her – she finally also loses it and screams at him, “Okay, I’ll get your daddy!” It’s another of those gloriously primal moments and completely justified.

*Cujo* holds up very well and there are plenty of reasons to watch it – but Wallace’s terrified and realistic performance is why you need to see it – or see it again.

And Ms. Wallace’s competition in this battle, is Barbara Hershey in *The Entity*. She’s not battling a dog like Wallace is in *Cujo*, but you know the old saying, “Men are dogs”? Well, I think we can safely assume that it’s a male spirit which continually and graphically rapes Hershey’s character. A gross comparison? Sure. But men are dogs. And Cujo’s a dog… and a male dog too. I think you get my point.

Ms. Hershey’s got a lot on her plate as Carla Moran. Carla’s a financially struggling single mother with three children. She works all day and goes to night school. On top of all of this, one night she is randomly attacked and molested by a violent entity. These attacks continue, even as she seeks mental health treatment. Eventually, parapsychologists enter the picture and drastic measures are taken to assure she is never again violated by this spectral rapist.

So bottom line, Carla Moran is a tough character pill to swallow. My most recent viewing of *The Entity*, to prepare myself for this article and to find Hershey’s best moments in the picture – left me feeling like it wasn’t the best performance of her career, or of this competition. That being said, there are some moments in the film which are flat-out amazing. Just as a whole, this look back didn’t totally impress me.

First and foremost is the scene where Carla is left alone in the home of her friend Cindy (Margaret Blye) and Cindy’s jackass husband George (Michael Alldredge). She quietly sits on the sofa – vacant, exhausted and terrified. The windows all blow in with incredible force, things fly violently about the room and Carla takes cover on the floor. Just as things are at their worst, her friends return to actually witness a portion of the events. And other than Carla’s children, they are the first people to see this firsthand. And now there is someone on “the outside” who can corroborate her tall tales. Her friend crouches down in front of the blank-faced Carla and confirms that they’ve seen it. In what is clearly Hershey’s best moment, her fallen expression lights up, the tears flow and a wide smile crosses her lips. “You saw it? You saw it?” Over and over again she asks this same question. A tight embrace with her friend and there is an overwhelming relief and a joyful vindication in Carla’s reaction. Hershey nails this scene. Absolutely nails it.

I’m not a big fan of the scenes where she calls out to the entity, taunting it – since she’s now got the parapsychologists to back her up. It’s frankly the more “helpless” scenes where her acting star shines. In particular, when her boyfriend Jerry (the great Alex Rocco – who passed away just a few days after my recent screening of the film) witnesses her in one of the more graphic rape scenes. She’s just taunted the ghost and now the ghost is pissed. She’s pinned down, her breasts are being massaged (a terrifying effect) by invisible hands and with her eyes full of tears, she desperately whispers to Jerry, “Help me.” It’s chilling.

Hershey won Best Actress at the 1983 Avioraz Fantastic Film Festival for her performance in *The Entity*.

A bit of trivia – both films in this battle contained scores by Charles Bernstein (also the composer for the original *A Nightmare on Elm Street).*

So who will be your choice this time at the voting booth? A woman who is attacked by a rabid, drooling dog? Or a woman who is attacked by an invisible, malevolent ghost?

Make your choice and cast your vote. Do so here on the site, over at our Facebook page, or with the good folks of Twitter (Ultimate Horror Lady and then #deewallace or #barbarahershey).

Make your voice heard!