

Horror books more frightening than horror films



By
the
Book

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When was the last time you read a really good horror novel; the kind that makes you sleep with the light on, check behind the closet door and listen anxiously to the suspicious creaks of your house?

Horror or supernatural fiction holds a special fascination for some readers: those who enjoy the thrill of being frightened, the emotional and spiritual response to the story being the secret to its success.

The appeal of horror is not then to the intellect, but a truly visceral reaction. However strongly the reader feels he can distinguish between reality and fantasy, a truly effective horror story generates a response that negates this feeling. The reader loses control of his reality and his response to it increases the tension of the plot.

It is in horror novels rather than films that the reader can lose himself in the story. The imagination is part of the process and the author is counting on the reader to "fill in" with their own terrifying responses.

In films, the terror has been manufactured and, while there are certainly some terrifying movies, the viewer does not really participate in the plot, but merely observes it.

Why then do we read them? One theory is that as adults we are faced with horrific images daily and as a result become almost desensitized to them. Horror fiction can restore our human response to these images and, in the

process help us deal with our fear of real-life horrors. If we can face the terror between the pages of a book, then perhaps our real-life situations are really not that frightening.

Another theory is that horror novels are merely a type of fairy tale for grown-ups, a journey through a frightening plot, only to emerge restored and stronger for

■ Please see page 9 ■

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