

HORROR FILMS



Horror Films

RHODA NOTTRIDGE

Crestwood House
New York

Titles in this series

Adventure Films

Animated Films

Horror Films

Science Fiction Films

Warning: The nature of horror films is to be frightening, and they are usually meant to be watched by older teenagers and adults. If you want to watch a horror film it is advised that an adult is present.

Cover: Freddy Krueger, from the series of *Nightmare on Elm Street* films, is one of the most popular modern horror characters.

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The fascination of horror



ABOVE The series of *Friday the 13th* horror films told the frightening story of a masked and violent killer terrorizing teenagers.

WHY are horror films so fascinating to watch? Maybe it is because they are based on one simple, terrible human feeling – fear. We fear what we do not know or understand. We live in a world full of mysteries. For every piece of understanding about life and death that humans have discovered, there are a thousand unanswered questions. Is there life after

death? Are there evil powers in the world? What we cannot explain can seem frightening.

Horror films remind us of our fears. Why should we want to be reminded? Making real fears into films to watch at movie theaters has a strange effect. If we watch a horror film, we may be scared while we watch it. But, at the end of it, we feel better because we realize it was just a story and not real life. It is like being in a nightmare and then waking up. Real life does not seem anywhere near as scary as the nightmare. So, a horror film makes the horrible seem more comfortable because it is not real, it is only a story.

When movies first became popular, films seemed the ideal way of retelling old horror stories and creating new ones. From the first *Frankenstein* film produced in 1910, horror films caught on.

The American film industry, and later the British, became the world's biggest producers of horror

films. Universal Studios in Hollywood made hundreds of successful horror films. In Britain, a small company called Hammer became famous for its Hammer House of Horror **productions**.

In 1972, some 189 horror films were produced worldwide. The number being made today is far less. Yet horror films are not dead. Horror keeps reappearing in other types of films, from thrillers to adventure productions. They may not be called horror films, but they use many of the scary and gory elements of horror to shock their audiences. These shock tactics have been used in recent war films, such as *Apocalypse Now* (1979) and *Platoon* (1986), to bring home to the audiences the films' antiwar messages.

BELOW *Hellraiser* (1987) used gory makeup and special effects to tell the horrifying story of a teenage heroine battling against evil forces.



The Frankenstein story

RIGHT In *Frankenstein* (1931) Boris Karloff gave the most famous performance of the menacing monster created by the mad Dr. Frankenstein.



ONE version of how the story of Frankenstein and his monster was born goes as follows: One rainy evening in 1816, the famous English poet Lord Byron sat reading ghost stories aloud with a group of friends. Inspired by the tales, Byron suggested that each of his friends try to write an exciting ghost story. One member of the group, Mary Shelley, really liked the idea.

As the conversation moved on, it set Mary thinking. Her companions were discussing recent experiments with electricity. Electricity could bring a machine to life. Perhaps, they argued, it could be used to bring a human corpse back to life, too.

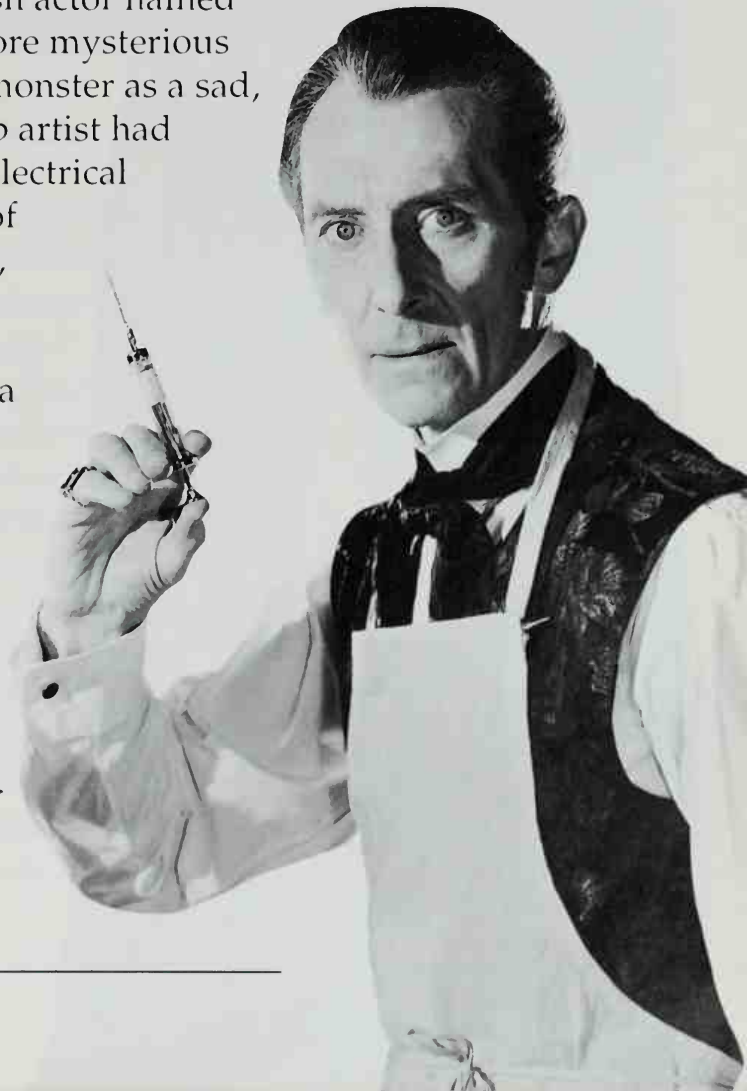
Could electrical **impulses** be the secret of life? That night, Mary lay awake, imagining a vision of a monstrous human brought to life by a scientist using electrical impulses. It would be a ghastly creature, because a human attempt to copy what she felt was the real creator of life, God, would be bound to be a hideous mistake. The foolish scientist would be unable to control the monster he had made. Mary sat down to write her scary night thoughts as a ghost story called *Frankenstein*.

In 1910, nearly 100 years after Mary wrote her book, the first, **silent** *Frankenstein* film was made. Many more were to follow.


The 1931 film of *Frankenstein* is one of the most loved versions of the story. A British actor named William Pratt, who adopted the more mysterious name of Boris Karloff, played the monster as a sad, pathetic creature. Karloff's makeup artist had researched surgery, **anatomy** and electrical impulses to try to picture the sort of creature the scientist, Frankenstein, would have come up with. The result was the square-headed, clumsily stitched monster. He had a bolt through his neck that became the **stereotype** for Frankenstein's monster in later films.

By the 1950s, *Frankenstein* films were made in color and tended to show gory details, such as severed heads. The scientist creator had become an evil man and the monster itself a cruel killer. *Frankenstein* films were never the same after that.

BELOW In more recent films, such as *Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell* (1973), the original story was changed to allow Dr. Frankenstein, played here by Peter Cushing, to become even more evil and out of control.



Dracula arises



THE idea of Dracula is based on an extraordinary, real human illness called vampirism. The illness causes the sufferer to commit dreadful crimes due to a lust for blood. Thankfully, this condition is so rare that only a handful of humans are known to have ever suffered from it. The name Dracula comes from a 15th century Transylvanian ruler, Vlad Drakula. Although he was not a drinker of blood, he was feared because of his enjoyment of cruelty.

The film versions of vampires and Dracula owe more to myth than to facts. Film vampires sleep in coffins and loathe sunlight and **crucifixes**. At night, they can turn from humans into bats. They suck blood from the necks of their victims, who may in turn become vampires themselves.

The first vampire film was *Nosferatu*, a classic silent film made in 1922. Nearly ten years later, *Dracula* (1931) became the film that really gave vampires a place in horror film history.

Many foreign actors in Hollywood played in silent films, but they found themselves at a disadvantage when the **talkies** began. They spoke English with accents that American and British audiences found difficult to understand. Hungarian actor Bela Lugosi was an exception. His voice



LEFT Kiefer Sutherland starred as the leader of the group of teenage vampires in *The Lost Boys* (1987).

added a mysterious feel to the part of Dracula.

There have been over 600 vampire films made, and the Dracula character has made over 150 film appearances. But no one has ever matched the charming and evil Dracula acted by Lugosi.

Serious Dracula films slowly went into decline, and a new breed of half-comedy, half-horror vampire films rose out of the grave in the 1970s, with Count Yorga films among others.

Some filmmakers tried to bring vampires into present-day settings. Two such examples are the Australian film *Thirst* (1979) and *The Lost Boys* (1987), which portrayed vampirism as a teenage cult in an American vacation resort. During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of films had women playing the leading roles of female vampires, such as *The Hunger* (1983), which starred Catherine Deneuve.

OPPOSITE
Christopher Lee, wearing fangs and a black cloak, is immediately recognizable as the evil Count Dracula in *Scars of Dracula* (1970).

The werewolves bite



ABOVE In *Werewolf of London* (1935) the werewolf, played by Henry Hull, could be uncontrollably violent.

LIKE vampirism, the origins of werewolf stories can be traced to a kind of extremely rare madness, thought to have been more common in medieval times. A human believed him- or herself to be a wolf and behaved like a wild beast, howling and attacking people. The sufferer may even have sought out the company of wolves.

In medieval times, people believed that humans could actually change into wolves. Terrified by tales of these creatures, they hunted out humans they believed to be werewolves. Anyone with long, clawlike nails was a suspect. It was even believed that werewolves turned their skin inside out in the

daytime to hide their rough, hairy wolf skin. Victims of the werewolf scare would have a patch of skin removed by their accusers, to see if it was hairy on the inside. Like witches, many people were burned to death in those dark ages, accused of being werewolves.

Werewolves joined the horror film scene fairly late, with the 1935 film *Werewolf of London*. Bela Lugosi, Lon Chaney Jr. and Oliver Reed have all played thrilling film werewolves. In films, the werewolf is supposedly a human who turns into a mad, frenzied, wolflike creature during the full moon. Werewolf films appeal to our fear that it may be possible for a usually sane human to be taken over by a madness that is beyond their control.

The werewolf was an obvious target for the improved special effects used for films in the 1980s. Actors could appear to change into wild, wolflike beasts on screen. Werewolf films remained chilling, but like vampire films of the 1980s, they introduced comedy, as in *An American Werewolf in London*. This was a film where the makeup artists deserve to be mentioned. It took them ten hours to complete the makeup for the werewolf, making it the longest makeup job in the history of cinema.

Ideas for werewolf-type films continue to thrive in various forms. *Howling III – The Marsupials* even turned the theme from wolves to wild Australian **marsupials!** The idea that a human could turn into a beast continues to thrill.

BELOW *Teen Wolf* and *Teen Wolf Too* made the werewolf story into a comedy by showing how being a teenage werewolf made a shy boy into a school celebrity.



Zombies - dead or alive



ABOVE Terrifying and mindlessly violent zombies run riot in *Return of the Living Dead II* (1987).

ON the island of Haiti, in the Caribbean, you can still find some people who claim to have seen and believe in the existence of zombies. Zombies are supposed to be corpses that have been brought back to a kind of half-life, as obedient slaves to living people. Their eyes appear dead and their faces are expressionless. They do not speak.

The origins of zombies can be found in the voodoo religion.

Voodooism was brought to Haiti by West African slaves on the sugar plantations.

Voodoo worshipers believe that when we die, a god takes over our bodies. First, a person's soul has to leave the body and find an alternative place to live. A voodoo priest carries out a special ceremony to see that this takes place. But if an evil **sorcerer** carries out the ceremony, the soul of the dead person is not guided into a new place and the body does not get taken over by a god. This body becomes a zombie.

Zombies are said to be used as cheap labor. There are risks, however, in owning unhappy zombies. If they are given salt to eat or blood to drink, the zombies will realize what they have become and will kill anyone they think is responsible for making them a zombie.



Fictional zombies did not appear in horror films until 1932, when *White Zombie* was screened. They soon became popular with filmmakers. As zombies did not speak and only shuffled around, the cheapest actors could be hired, keeping the filmmakers' costs low. Zombie films were popular with audiences too. Since we all die and may choose to be buried, the idea of a graveyard mishap is something we can all imagine.

However, by the 1950s and 1960s, people were tiring of zombie films. Zombies had been portrayed as harmless creatures, controlled by evil people. It was time to turn the tables and let the zombies

ABOVE *White Zombie* (1932) was one of the first popular films that used zombies as horror characters.

wreak their revenge. The turning point in zombie films was *The Night of the Living Dead* (1968), directed by George Romero. It was a brave attempt to alter the conventions of zombie films and was shot on a very low budget. Even the business people who loaned Romero the money to make the film ended up spending their weekends playing the zombies in the film, since that cost less than using real actors.

Romero disregarded the **vogue** for color films. He chose to make the film in black and white, which is much cheaper. It also added a sense of real-life drama, as we identify black and white with photographs of real events we see in newspapers.

To add to the feeling of everyday life, the film was set in the present, in a very ordinary city in Pennsylvania. Setting the scene in this way made the audience identify with the apparently normal world they were watching. Suddenly, a human-flesh-eating zombie appeared and attacked a very ordinary American boy who had been joking to his sister about graveyard ghosts. The audience's world was turned upside down and a new type of horror film, set in our own backyard, was created.

Romero also gave *The Night of the Living Dead* an uneasy ending. The hero is shot by a stupid policeman who thinks that he is a zombie. The subtle message given was that organizations such as the police could no longer be trusted to be on the side of good.

Since *The Night of the Living Dead*, screen zombies have become increasingly bizarre, bloodthirsty and even **cannibalistic**. One thing is for sure – zombies in various forms remain very much alive, in the movies and in audiences' imaginations.

OPPOSITE
The Mummy
(1932) began a series of popular films about the shrouded bodies of ancient Egyptian kings taking their revenge for their tombs being disturbed.

Mad mummies





ABOVE Hammer House of Horror made a version of *The Mummy* (1959), which starred Christopher Lee.

IN ancient Egypt, it was the custom to preserve the bodies of the dead and bandage them up to prepare them for the afterlife. These bodies were called mummies. The mummies of wealthy, powerful kings were placed in fabulously decorated **caskets** and put in sealed tombs, or burial places. They were surrounded by their worldly riches to take with them on their journey to the afterlife.

Placed in **pyramids**, it was vitally important that these tombs should not be disturbed. However, many disrespectful explorers have ignored these warnings, unsealing the tombs

to plunder them for their treasures or simply out of curiosity about the past.

In 1922, the tomb of King Tutankhamen was uncovered by a British expedition to the pyramids. They ignored warnings against disturbing the tomb, which was believed to have been **curse**d. Almost immediately, some of the explorers suffered personal misfortunes while others suddenly died. It seemed as if the tomb was indeed cursed. The public was fascinated by the idea of a mummy's curse.

There had been one or two early films on this theme, but it was not until the 1930s that mummy films became really popular. Mummies rarely appear in films today, except in comic roles. However, the idea of curses from beyond the grave remains common.

Magnificent monsters

WE all fear the strange and unknown. For this reason, we shudder at the idea of monsters. The creatures of our nightmares and wildest imaginings seem to come to life when we see monsters on the screen.

Monsters have been a part of the human imagination for a very long time. Many myths from ancient civilizations such as Greece and China feature extraordinary, evil creatures. There are many stories of how humans have battled to defeat them. Most humans dream of being heroes, able to control the uncontrollable in a world of hidden dangers.

One of the earliest and most moving monster films was *King Kong* (1933), which was remade in 1976. Like many horror films, *King Kong* drew on ancient myths. Kong, like the **minotaur** of Greek legends, has to be fed a human sacrifice, played by Fay Wray in the 1933 version. However, *King Kong* falls in love with the girl, which reminds us of the fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast." Although Kong, like Frankenstein's monster, shows a vulnerable, or good, side he is also destructive and eventually

BELOW *King Kong* (1933) has become a classic monster film because of its trick camera work and good story.



OPPOSITE *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954) appealed to audiences' fear of the unknown.

has to be killed. Humans have to be allowed to win in the end. In the exciting final scenes of the film, King Kong is tragically shot down by fighter planes from the top of the Empire State Building in New York City.

Films like *Them!* (1953) featured a monstrous army of huge ants that had been created by nuclear experiments. This fantasy was based on the very real fear of the uses of nuclear substances. Fear of insects was also a theme for many 1950s films, with larger than life insects or spiders, such as *Tarantula* (1955).

In 1975, *Jaws* brought back the sea monster, which had not been seen since the 1950s. In those days films like *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms* and *The Creature from the Black Lagoon* had been popular. *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms* was another monster that was meant to be a product of a nuclear explosion. All these films were based on our fear of what lies in the unknown depths of the oceans. *Jaws*, about a huge killer shark, was so popular that several sequels followed it.

As humans probe farther and farther into space, people are becoming increasingly anxious about what may exist beyond our planet. From the 1950s on, science fiction films rose in popularity. Monsters were quickly making an exit from horror films and starring instead in new and increasingly weird roles on the science fiction scene. Films, such as *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* (1958), mixed human horror with outer space. The sophisticated special effects of *Alien* (1979) and its 1986 sequel, *Aliens*, grasped audiences' imagination and with great success continued the theme of space monsters.



Devils & demons



ABOVE *The Witches* (1989) used fabulous makeup and special effects to show how two young children manage to get rid of a group of evil witches.

FOR centuries people have been fascinated by the idea that there are both good and evil forces at work in the world. Today, the idea of the devil is rarely of a **cloven-footed**, horned monster. But the idea that evil powers haunt the world still lurks in the darkest corners of our imaginations.

The workings of evil powers can be found as a theme in all horror films. In the last 20 years, specific aspects of evil have been particularly popular. The idea of possession by the devil, where a person is taken over by evil, was best portrayed in the film *The Exorcist* (1973). The film dismayed many religious people

but also became the biggest horror film box office hit. *The Exorcist* was an ambitious film, costing \$12 million to make.

Many special effects were used to create a suitably frightening atmosphere. A specially refrigerated room was used as the possessed girl's room, so that the actors' breath steamed in the scenes where they faced the power of evil. The actress herself, Linda Blair, wore yellow contact lenses to give her eyes a strange, jaded look. The special effects unit even cooked up a mixture of

oatmeal and pea soup, which Blair appeared to spew out as a green, devilish slime.

The Omen (1976) began a **trilogy** of films that had the devil's son growing up to be a world leader. As the three films unfolded, the powers of evil seemed to become invincible, that is, until the last nerve-racking scenes of *The Final Conflict* (1981) showed that the powers of good would triumph.

Modern-day witches were also a popular theme for 1970s horror films. Humans have a long, deep-rooted suspicion of witches. In the 16th and 17th centuries, over 250,000, often innocent, people were killed as fear and panic of witches swept across Europe.

Films such as *The Witches of Eastwick* (1987) and *The Witches* (1989) have moved the witch away from the horror film into a new type of role as something more mischievous than frightening.

Another idea that became a temporary fad was for a **demonic** kind of film that featured a particular date in the year when evil forces appear. *Halloween* (1978) was the first and perhaps best of these films. Like the later, gory *Friday the 13th* (1980), a number of sequels followed the original film. The theme of evil powers causing havoc to ordinary peoples' lives remains a big box office draw.

BELOW The series of *Halloween* films picked up on the belief that evil is all around on Halloween night.



Ghosts & haunted houses

BELOW In the *Poltergeist* series of films a family is terrorized by angry spirits who were disturbed when houses were built on the site of a cemetery.



HAUNTED houses and gruesome ghosts have remained a constant theme in horror films. While other horror themes have come and gone, there has always been a fairly constant, small number of ghost films in production.

Ghost stories have always been popular, particularly in **Victorian** times. This explains why many modern haunted house films tend to have haunted houses that are of Victorian origins.

One feature that may explain why ghost films are popular is that they always include a puzzle that needs to be solved. The audience is required to assume that ghosts exist. Then they can join an important character in piecing together clues about events in the past. These will usually explain why the ghost is still around.

The extremely successful *The Amityville Horror* (1979) includes many of the elements common to ghost films. The story was taken from a best-selling novel that claimed to be based on fact. In it, a family cannot believe their luck when they buy a house in a small town at a bargain price. As slime comes down the walls and a series of strange events take over the family, they start to piece together the house's past.



It turns out to have been the site of a mass murder, among other things.

Haunted houses, boats, prisons and even airplanes have been themes for many ghost films. *Poltergeist* (1982) was one of a new type of film that moved the ghost story into a different setting. A family moves into a newly built home, which is obviously not haunted. However, the house has been built over an old cemetery. The message is clear: One can never be safe. Ghosts can appear anywhere.

In 1984, *Ghostbusters* was the most successful film in the United States and a hit worldwide. Continuing the idea that ghosts can appear anywhere, they turn up in the middle of New York City. It is then up to three eccentric scientists to turn into professional ghostbusters, capture the ghosts and save the city. *Ghostbusters* is more a comedy than a horror film but borrows the old idea of ghosts. However, serious ghost films continue to appear every now and then and will probably do so for as long as people continue to love spooky stories.

ABOVE
Ghostbusters
(1984) and
Ghostbusters II
(1989)
successfully
combined fast-
talking comedy
with excellent
special effects for
modern ghost
stories set in New
York City.

Human horrors



ABOVE Anthony Perkins starred as Norman Bates in the original *Psycho* (1960) as well as its sequels, *Psycho II* (1982) and *Psycho III* (1986).

IN early films, a human who had a warped and evil mind also had a monstrous appearance, such as Lon Chaney in the *Phantom of the Opera* (1925).

By the 1940s, mad humans could appear normal, but symptoms of their madness, such as wringing their hands together, would be shown.

In 1960, the famous director Alfred Hitchcock produced a different kind of film. In *Psycho*, an apparently harmless, shy young man turns out to be a murderer. He is suffering from a mental disorder that makes him behave like two different people.

Psycho began a whole new trend in horror films. In the film, the character Norman Bates is a murderer who the audience initially thinks is a very ordinary person. The monsters in these kinds of films are the insane thoughts inside a person's head, which are not outwardly displayed.

Films like *Psycho* require that the audience becomes involved in working out the plot. To guess who the murderer may be, the audience first has to guess his or her motives.

Hitchcock considered **suspense** to be such an important part of his film that he would not allow latecomers to enter the theater. Everyone thought this meant that a murder would occur at the beginning of the film. It does not, but viewers were on the edges of their seats, waiting to see what would happen! To add to the frightening effect, the sound track includes an orchestral piece played



LEFT Behind the mask is Lon Chaney, who played the evil and horribly disfigured *Phantom of the Opera* (1925).

only by stringed instruments, which shriek, sounding like frightened birds.

The success of Hitchcock's human horror films has been continued on the screen in a variety of forms. Men generally played the parts of warped killers until the 1970s. Then a new group of films, such as *A Woman under the Influence* (1974), gave women a chance to play the central character of the disturbed murderer.

To give human horror films an even more scary side, some of them were based on real-life killers. *The Honeymoon Killers* (1970) was based on the real case of a man who would marry lonely women and then kill them for their money. Jack the Ripper, who killed many women in London in the 1890s, has featured as a character in many films. The knowledge that the horrors on screen may have actually taken place is possibly the most terrifying thought of all.

Nightmare nasties

RIGHT The series of *Nightmare on Elm Street* films has been hugely successful and has made the character of Freddy Krueger almost as well known as Dracula.



IF dreams come true, is it possible that nightmares can too? The big Hollywood film studios thought the idea would not sell. A director called Wes Craven did not agree and would not give up. He made a film called *Nightmare on Elm Street* (1984), based on this theme. It became one of the most popular horror films ever made.

The roots of *Nightmare on Elm Street* lie in the human horror film tradition, where the workings of the mind are of utmost importance. In the story, Freddy Krueger (played by Robert Englund) was a child murderer. He was burned to death by his victims' parents. Now he has returned to Elm Street

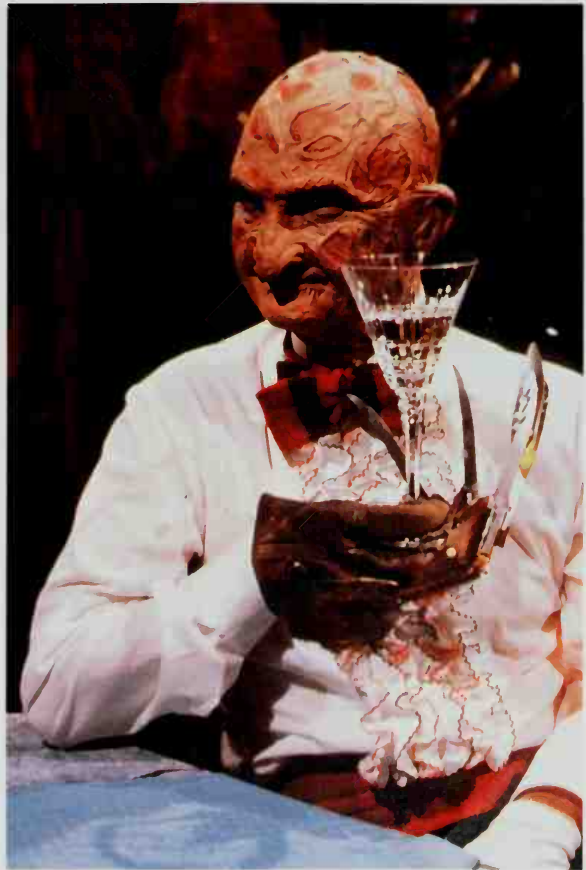
to get his revenge. He lives on by entering the dreams of teenagers living on Elm Street, when they are asleep.

When a girl dreams she is being chased by a badly burned figure, who then slashes her with hands that have knives for fingernails, she wakes up relieved. It was only a bad dream. Then she sees that her nightdress really has been slashed, as if by knives.

The idea of waking from a nightmare only to find that it is real, and the nightmare continues, is a thought that grips our imagination. Then comes the importance of the power of the human mind. Nancy, the heroine, has to overcome Freddy Krueger by bringing him out of the world of dreams and getting rid of him in the real world. Her strength of mind wins against the evil Freddy.

Nightmare on Elm Street is in many ways typical of more recent horror films. It uses gruesome makeup effects but also contains a comic element. Like many horror films of the time, the central characters are teenagers, and the film itself is popular with young people. Like other more recent horror films, it also contains an ending that suggests that the nightmare might not be over. This allows the filmmakers to continue the story with several sequels to the original film.

BELOW Although they are very scary the *Nightmare on Elm Street* films do have some comic touches, such as the disfigured Freddy dressed in evening wear!



Is horror dead?



ABOVE Recent war films, such as *The Killing Fields* (1984), used horror images to shock the audience.

NOT for the first time in the history of movies, the age of horror films appears to be over, mocked by comedy films. In the 1940s, American audiences adored comic versions of the *Frankenstein* story.

Television has often been responsible for moving horror figures into comedy roles. Audiences are no longer scared by the daunting Dracula. After

all, he has appeared in hundreds of films. Films like *Ghostbusters* and to some extent *Nightmare on Elm Street* continue this tradition of combining comedy and horror. Laughing at the things we do not understand about the world is another way of dealing with the unknown.

The rise of interest in science fiction films has greatly affected the market for horror. Science fiction also deals with our fear of the unknown. Science fiction comfortably explains things we cannot understand with the simple idea that anything strange comes from outer space. It borrows the monsters and magic of horror films to fit our modern fears of what lies beyond our planet.

New kinds of war films also borrow from the horror tradition. In *Apocalypse Now* the setting of the film is the war in Vietnam. The film uses horror images such as severed heads on poles. This brings home the idea that real war can be as gruesome as

horror films. This idea has also been used in recent war films such as *Platoon*.

Even rock music has now borrowed from horror films. Michael Jackson's famous video *Thriller* (1984) used some classic horror film images, such as ghosts and zombies, to create one of the world's highest-budget rock song videos.

As long as there are things in the world that we fear and cannot understand, interest in horror itself is unlikely ever to die. Perhaps there will not be many more horror films made. However, we can be sure that horror and its film traditions will reappear in many other types of films to continue to haunt and fascinate us with our fears.

BELOW Michael Jackson with some of the dancing zombies who were in his successful rock video *Thriller* (1984).



Glossary

Anatomy The science concerned with how people and animals look.

Cannibalistic Eating human flesh.

Caskets Cases, chests or boxes that normally contain valuables.

Cloven-footed A type of animal hoof that is divided down the middle, like a pig's or goat's.

Crucifixes Crosses or images of a cross that symbolize the cross on which Jesus was crucified, according to Christianity.

Cult A group of people who are excessively devoted to one person or way of living.

Cursed To appeal to a supernatural force to bring harm to a specific person or group.

Demonic Having to do with demons, the devil or evil forces generally.

Fictional A story or character that is not real.

Impulses Surges or pulses of electricity, which give power to electric machinery.

Marsupials Types of animals such as kangaroos where the young first grow up in a kind of pouch.

Minotaur The monster in Greek myths that has the head of a bull and the body of a man, and had to be fed on human flesh.

Nuclear Utilizing energy produced by the reaction of atoms. Nuclear energy produces a by-product called radioactivity, which can be harmful to living things.

Productions Another term for films and the process of making films.

Pyramids Massive, triangular-shaped constructions built by ancient Egyptians as the tombs of dead kings.

Sequels Second or additional films that continue a story begun in an original film.

Silent Without a soundtrack.

Sorcerer A person who uses magical powers to control through spells and rituals.

Stereotype The image that we associate with a particular person or thing.

Suspense Not knowing what is about to happen.

Talkies Films that have soundtracks.

Trilogy A story that is told in a series of three parts.

Victorian The period of history when Queen Victoria reigned in Britain, 1837 to 1901.

Vogue A popular style or fashion from a specific time.

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HORROR FILMS

WHY do we watch horror films? Many people are quite happy to sit in a dark theater watching frightening and sometimes bloodthirsty films which bring their worst nightmares to life on screen. This lively book tells us about the origins of some of the most famous horror stories and films, such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Also, it explains how spectacular special effects have added to the appeal of recent horror films, such as the *Nightmare on Elm Street* series, which have made the horror character Freddy Krueger a modern cult figure.

CRESTWOOD HOUSE

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