

Horror films: repulsive yet appealing

John Amorose
Collegian Staff

The element of horror has been present in film as long as film has been around. Black and white images of Frankenstein, Dracula, and the Wolfman have terrified audiences for most of the twentieth century. The monsters in these movies were mostly hideous mutations of man, and loved to kill, kill, kill. Enter the "hero"—the hero discovers the monstrous creature's weakness: Dracula hates sunlight, silver bullets can kill the Wolfman, etc. Using his newfound knowledge, the hero then devises a plan and defeats the monster, usually saving the gratuitous "helpless female." This all usually takes place in the last quarter of the movie. Sound complicated? No, not really. But people flocked to see these movies.

The 1950's brought forth the master of fright, Alfred Hitchcock. With classics like *The Birds* and *Psycho*, Hitchcock is recognized as the godfather of horror. Like Beethoven's composing of symphony number five or Shakespeare's writing *King Lear*, Alfred Hitchcock wove elaborate tapestries of horror like no other, complete with dynamic characters, both male and female, and legendary scenes (as though anyone hasn't seen the murder in the shower in *Psycho*).

The 1970's and 1980's brought forth the heyday of horror movies. Monsters became more than just senseless killers. Each was given its own charismatic personality and history. Audiences, for the first time, could see their favorite Duke of Dismemberment perform curtain call after curtain call, as horror sequels ran wild. The most prolific, the *Friday the Thirteenth* series, spawned nine sequels. These movies featured the world champion of horror icons, Jason Vorhees, who spent more than a decade terrorizing unsuspecting teens who dared venture to Camp Crystal Lake. Donning his signature hockey

mask, Jason used whatever he could pick up and swing to put his unintelligent victims out of his or her perspective miseries. The *Friday the Thirteenth* series was a microcosm of scary movies of this time. Each movie was chockful of paper thin characters, cheesy dialogue (to say the least), and most of all, lots and lots of gratuitous sex.

Fans soon found out, though, that if they avoided Crystal Lake, they would be all right, save for Mr. Vorhees' trip to Manhattan in movie number eight.

Enter Freddy Krueger and the Wes Craven 1984 horror classic *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. Vastly different from Jason, Freddy would enter into his victims dreams to do his bidding. With the use of humor, creativity, and the signature "claw," for seven years and six sequels Mr. Krueger decimated those who dared fall asleep. (Well, seven if you count *A New Nightmare*, though it wasn't very good).

But hands down the most graphic, gory, and controversial horror movies of this time, possibly of all time, are those in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* series. This, in my opinion, is what horror is all about: no plot development, no interesting dialogue—just Leatherface wielding a chainsaw like a maniac at and through anything or anyone that has the misfortune of getting in his way.

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Rentals lists at video stores, especially this time of year.

As we enter the final chapter of the twentieth century, horror movies have taken a completely different turn. Seeing frightening, undead monsters wreaking mayhem over many years is a thing of the past. Modern horror movies, such as Wes Craven's immensely popular *Scream*, and more recently *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, feature real-life people in

real-life situations. Characters have become more complex and much more dynamic. Plot, rather than sex and gore, now dominates horror. Women can now be the hero, which very rarely was the case in the past. But, as always, the good-guy or good-gal (whatever the case may be) wins in the end. The monster does make an occasional appearance in the 90's version of horror, such as *The Relic* and *Mimic*—although the plots of these modern-day monster movies are not original, and neither are the monsters themselves, so the films' stay in theaters are usually short-lived.

after close to a century of death, dismemberment, decapitation and disembowling, do audiences still run screaming to and from theaters to watch horror movies? It could possibly be an escape from the mundane. Another explanation could be the feeling a viewer gets when good finally conquers evil. Personally, I think it's the good, old-fashioned feeling of having the living crap scared out of you for a couple of hours.

So on Friday, try to avoid Crystal Lake, don't go down into the basement to see what that noise was, and whatever you do, don't fall asleep.

So the question now is "why?" Why



The film *I Know What You Did Last Summer* is an example of the most recent generation of horror flicks: more complex characters, greater developed plot—yet still with the underlying element of the grotesque.

Haunted Chambers, a worthy scare

Nadine Cross
staff writer

Pig-faced monsters, chainsaw-wielding demons, maniacal surgeons—these are some of the horrifying sights visitors to the Wesleyville Haunted Chambers will have to

face—if they dare to venture in.

Sponsored by the North East area radio station STAR 104, the Haunted Chambers open at 7 p.m. every night until Halloween and are located near the Wesleyville Country Fair on Station Road. After paying the admission price of \$4 for adults and \$2 for

children, brave souls wait in a tent amidst costumed monsters and ghouls to enter the Chambers in groups of ten. The anticipation only heightens the fear because the visitors can hear victims screaming; the average half-hour wait adds uncertain excitement whether or not one is scared. Once

inside, the group feels its way along a pitch black maze until reaching a frightful creature who leads them from room to room where visitors see an ax murder, a beheading, and a spoof on the Hollywood film, *Candyman*, among other horrifying scenes. The scariest part of the experience comes at the very end when a deformed man with a buzzing ... well, I'll let you see for yourselves.

The best part of the experience is the "tour" aspect of the Haunted Chambers. It was much more exciting to see a "show" in each room rather than just trying to find the way along dark passages like other haunted houses. The actors' costumes seemed to be well-prepared—in other words, the clothing was nicely mangled and grime-covered and the detached limbs were nicely bloodied—and their scripts were, for the most part, rehearsed. The only problem was that some of them would speak in their normal voices and say things like, "Sorry for stepping on your foot, but I can't really see through this mask." That kind of takes the edge off things. Some of the scenes were too obviously fake. For example, during the beheading scene, a mad prison guard was supposed to cut off a man's head; however, when his severed head was shown to the group, it was the head of a female doll.

The Haunted Chambers are definitely worth a visit. It is surprising how frightened one can become just being in the haunted house atmosphere even while knowing that the blood and severed limbs are just part of an act. Some words of warning: visitors will get splashed with indescribably disgusting liquids and the monsters will come up and get right in the spectators' faces and/or touch them. Also, go on a dry night and dress warmly because the admissions line begins outside and one may get wet and will most certainly be cold.

The darker the leaves, the more nutritious the salad. (i.e., iceberg lettuce provides virtually no nutrition). Opt for spinach or endive instead.



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- ACROSS
- 1 Lager
 - 5 L.A. athlete
 - 10 War god
 - 14 Stew-filled pot
 - 15 Oil source
 - 16 Border on
 - 17 Leave out
 - 18 Musical sounds
 - 19 Facilitate
 - 20 Of holy character
 - 22 Placard
 - 24 Singles
 - 25 Horned animal
 - 26 Packer of food
 - 29 Soldiers on guard
 - 33 Whitney and Wallach
 - 34 Joined
 - 36 Theater part: abbr.
 - 37 Excavation
 - 38 Nerve or laughing end
 - 39 Fourth caliph
 - 40 Hurt
 - 42 Nips
 - 44 Crisp cookie
 - 45 Get back
 - 47 Owns up to
 - 49 Press
 - 50 A Muse
 - 51 Kind of mill
 - 54 Made duller
 - 57 Blue-pencil
 - 58 Brainless one
 - 60 Makes haste
 - 62 Fork part
 - 63 Code name
 - 64 Gaelic
 - 65 Farming need
 - 66 Ceased
 - 67 Check

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- DOWN
- 1 Scary yell
 - 2 Shade trees
 - 3 "Essays of —"
 - 4 Gives sparingly
 - 5 Game of chance
 - 6 Bitter drug
 - 7 Type
 - 8 Holiday time
 - 9 Reply

- 10 Man at the podium
- 11 As blind as —
- 12 Trick
- 13 After young or pun
- 21 Dir. letters
- 23 Cereal grass
- 25 Web-footed birds
- 26 Fragrant wood
- 27 Wonderland girl
- 28 Dark
- 29 Glide over ice
- 30 Tehran native
- 31 Brilliance
- 32 Sends
- 35 Pointed arch
- 41 Burst forth
- 42 Make unclean
- 43 Greeted, militarily
- 44 Suffocate
- 46 Wrath
- 48 Racket
- 50 Neck-and-neck

answers on next page

- 51 Animal friends
- 52 Miss Adams
- 53 Yearn
- 54 Cageling
- 55 Hibernia
- 56 Mr. Arnaz
- 59 Put on
- 61 Lawmaker: abbr.

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