

DARK GIFTS: *The talented Anne Rice rises with new novel*

by Michael Frawley
managing editor

Lestat stirs again in Anne Rice's enveloping tale, *Merrick*, the newest book in Rice's continuing "Vampire Chronicles." After finishing her very successful Vampire series, Rice put out three other vampire books, separate from the originals. *Armand*, *Pandora*, and *Vittorio*, however, were not as well written or as well received as the original series. But Rice has redeemed herself with this newest dive into her dark realm of blood and passion in an exceptional crossover of her two most popular series, the "Vampire Chronicles" and the "Tales of the Mayfair Witches."

Rice is best known for these two award winning series. Both ended with room to continue each respectively, but Rice ingeniously decided to join the two in a masterpiece of a crossover. Witch versus vampire, who will win?

This book features the exploits of one of Rice's newest vampires, David Talbot, who has become a main character in newer vampire books. As those of you who are familiar with the vampire series will

know, David was made a vampire by Rice's old main character and the brat prince of the vampire world, Lestat. David meets with an old friend from his mortal life, Merrick, the title character of the book.

Merrick is a member of a little known bloodline of the great Mayfair witches clan, and the book deals with the vast history between David and Merrick. The story climaxes when Merrick maneuvers David's vampiric friend Louis (the vampire who was interviewed in *Interview With the Vampire*) into giving her the "Dark Gift," bringing her into their vampire coven.

The book ends, as most of her books do, with room for another book to follow. Lestat wakes from his stupor brought about by his trip to Heaven and Hell in *Memnoch the Devil* to lead his small coven back into new adventures with a new enemy, the Talamsca, an organization which watches and studies paranormal phenomena.

While it may seem that you would have needed to read her earlier books to make sense of her newest offering, this is not the case. While reading these earlier books would greatly enhance the understanding of the novel, Rice gives just enough

background in *Merrick* to make it easy to understand.

All in all, this book is a great trip back into the dark and seductive haven of Anne Rice's vampiric underworld. Her characters are so well developed that you feel their pain and share in their joy. Her world is so vividly portrayed that it makes one wonder if vampires really do walk among us. Who knows, you could be next.

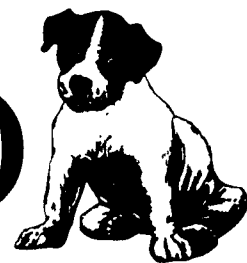


Author Anne Rice

FILE PHOTO

Sic' Em FIDO

by Deanna Symoski



Idiots Revolt!

How 'dumb' is taking over America

I never liked Tom Green. Not only did I think he was mean-spirited, he was a complete idiot and I couldn't believe anyone would waste their time watching this guy, even though lots of people did. However I softened, eventually—or crumbled—under the popularity of Tom Green. I even began to watch entire segments from time to time. Sometimes, I even laughed. Admittedly, the K-Mart loudspeaker show was kind of funny, and I did enjoy the episode where he painted his parents' house plaid. *Plaid*. They were teenage pranks, and no one really got hurt. Besides, I thought, this is just a phase. Stupidity this severe will never catch on.

Hey, what do critics know?

From *Jackass* to "Jay Walking," the new trend in television isn't violence or sex but outright stupidity. More and more, people are reveling in their dumbness and television execs are falling all over themselves to get it on tape.

What started out as a popular segment on *The Tonight Show* has perhaps kickstarted the idiots' revolution. Leno takes a camera crew to the street and asks random people to identify world leaders or answer basic history questions. It is obvious information, and people at home are baffled that these "random people" don't know the first president of the United States was George Washington. To put people's priorities in perspective, he then asks them pop culture trivia, like who the president of the WWF is--this they get.

It was funny for awhile, and I enjoyed those segments because I couldn't believe people were so dumb. But then I realized that those people looked a lot like me. They were often college students, "hot and trendy" like those of us here at Behrend, and they didn't know jack! Nice image for the rest of us. The show, however, latched on to the success of the segments and ran with it, exploiting stupidity and turning it into the ultimate joke.

Watch any of MTV's programs these days, and the music channel (term used loosely) would have mainstream America believing GenXers are all a bunch of hair-brained daredevils. The show *Jackass*, hugely popular since its premiere this season, has taken stupidity to new extremes. Not only are the stunts dangerous and often disgusting, in some cases they are downright cruel.

I can't begin to imagine what thought process prompts someone to cover themselves in human feces, and I don't really care because I have the option of turning the channel, which I do. The disturbing part is that so many people find this entertaining.

Playing with "poo" is something my moronic friends would have done in the early part of our high school years. It might have been funny then, but eight years later, these sorts of stunts have lost their appeal. What's scary is that we have all suddenly become so proud of our collective lack of brain power.

The state of things must be bad when I am forced to think that Tom Green is mild. Did I mention I don't like Tom Green. I don't, but compared to the base, brainless things I have seen idiots carry out on television, Tom Green doesn't seem so bad. *Plaid*, at least that's creative.

I like to laugh as much as anyone else, but it's important to realize what we are laughing at. The media may well be turning our generation into a joke, and we, apparently too stupid to notice, are ignorantly agreeing by buying into the punchline. I'm not saying we all have to watch *Frasier*, but *Ed* might be a welcome change for those of you who don't still play with crap.

Blame Canada

Eminem's presence on the "Anger Management" tour upsets Ontario

by Clifford White
staff writer

Rap superstar Marshall Mathers III, better known as Eminem, was almost banned from performing in Ontario at Canada's SkyDome Thursday, November 2. As one of the performers on the "Anger Management" tour with Limp Bizkit and Papa Roach, he was almost blocked by the Ontario Attorney General Jim Flaherty.

The controversy started after a Canadian woman downloaded the rapper's lyrics from the Internet, then filed a complaint with the hate crimes unit of the Toronto Police. The woman, Valerie Smith, claims that Eminem's derogatory words on "Kill You," promote violence against women and also violate Canada's hate crime law under the "public incitement of hatred" code.

"His lyrics seem to be a little bit over the line," said Smith. "One example is 'I invented violence you vile, venomous, vomital b****.' If you replace the gender insult with racial insults, you get hate propaganda."

Flaherty asked that federal immigration officials keep Eminem from crossing into Canada. "The federal government is looking into the status of [Eminem] entering Canada with the possibility that [he] would come here and advocate violence against

women," Flaherty said.

Since Ontario's hate crime legislation excludes women, it was likely that Eminem would not be kept from entering the country, however. Besides, says Derik Hodgson of Canada's immigration office, "If all people who made bad music were kept out of Canada, we could've stopped Disco."

Despite the controversy, Eminem has performed twice in Toronto in the past two years. Of this performance, the rapper and his entourage said, "the show will go on."

And it did. In true Shady form, Eminem appeared on stage donning a goalie mask and chainsaw. While most comments on the situation were held until the end of his set, he did dedicate a song to Smith.

Fellow performer and Vice President of Interscope Records (Em's label) Fred Durst, said that Limp Bizkit has also been banned in some American cities. "It's always gonna be like that," said Durst. "I don't really know what to say, except I've seen Eminem's show and I listen to his records, and so has my daughter and so has my mother, and you know what? They giggle and laugh at it," he said. "They don't really take it to heart. Some people do. Everybody's different, I guess."

DMB delayed

New album scrapped

by Deanna Symoski
a&e editor

It might not be such a merry Christmas for those of you expecting the new Dave Matthews Band album in your stocking. The band had nearly completed the album with a staple of DMB production, Steve Lillywhite, in Charlottesville, VA., but at the last minute decided to scrap the 13 Lillywhite cuts.

Originally, the new songs were supposed to be released before the band's summer tour, where much of the material was showcased. However, production bumps delayed the album

until December. Now in Los Angeles, DMB is working on an entirely new album with pop producer Glen Ballard.

"They wanted to go to the next level as songwriters and musicians," says Bruce Flohr, RCA A&R executive. "Plus, even the hardcore fans have never heard these songs, and it's hard to keep anything this band does a secret. Glen is giving the band a focus and tightening every song."

This new album is likely to include the cuts "Angel," "When the World Ends," and "I Did It," and is now slated for a February release. A Valentine's Day present, perhaps?

Napster settles

BMG funds new version for part ownership

by Clifford White
staff writer

Napster and Bertelsmann music company, have called a truce. The two companies will create a new regulated version of Napster. Bertelsmann, which also owns BMG, will loan Napster the money to develop the new and improved program and will become part owner. They will also establish a royalty payment system under the new system and make BMG's catalog available for trade. Bertelsmann has also agreed to drop all charges in their copyright infringement lawsuit against Napster.

Thomas Middelhoff,

Bertelsmann's chairman and CEO said, "Person-to-person file sharing has captured the imagination of millions of people worldwide with its ease of use, global selection of content, and community features. Napster has pointed the way for a new direction for music distribution, and we believe it will form the basis of important and exciting new business models for the future of the music industry. We invite other record and publishing companies, artists and other industry members to participate in the development of a secure and membership-based service."

New Releases

Movies

Little Nicky
Men of Honor
Red Planet
Billy Elliot
11/10

Video*

Annie Get Your Gun
Fantasia 2000
Perfect Storm
Pokemon 2000: The Movie

Music*

Dru Hill
The Offspring
Usher
Babyface
Beatles
Bone Thugs-N-Harmony
D-Cru
Marilyn Manson
Ricky Martin
Prodigy
Sade

DVD*

Annie Get Your Gun
Fantasia
Fantasia 2000
Perfect Storm
Pokemon 2000: The Movie

Fall into
The Money Pit,
the 1986 comedy
starring Tom Hanks,
Wed. @ 8 p.m.
and Thur. @ 4 p.m.
on Comedy Central

* release date 11/14