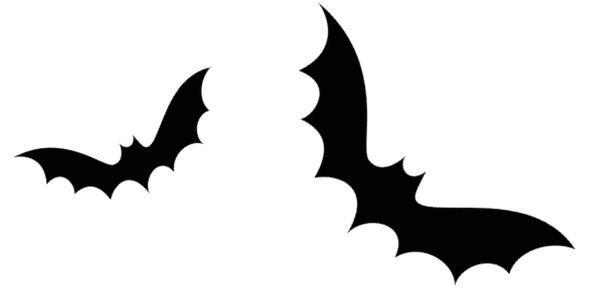


# WRITING HORROR



From what horror is, to marketing your scary stories



with Lydia Peever

# Lydia Peever is...

Lydia Peever is a horror author, web designer and public servant living in Ottawa. Her debut novel, *Nightface*, was published in 2011 and short stories have appeared in *Postscripts To Darkness*, *Dark Moon Digest*, *For When The Veil Drops*, *Memento Mori*, *The Wicked Library*, *Local Haunts*, and her small collections, *Pray Lied Eve 1 and 2*.

In her spare time, she updates the new releases section of the Horror Writers Association website, co-hosts a podcast called *Splatterpictures Dead Air*, and talks horror books on Youtube at *Typical Books*.

Being a big fan of horror music, books, and film; anywhere there is blood, you will probably find her lurking in the corner.

# Horror is a subgenre no matter how you slice it!

Many consider horror a subgenre of **Gothic Literature**.

Horror is also considered a subgenre of **Speculative Fiction** which includes:

- ★ **Fantasy**
- ★ **Science Fiction**
- ★ **Horror**
- ★ **Alternate History**



Horror can be roughly cut in two:

**SUPERNATURAL**

**THE NATURAL**

We will come back to this division. There are blends and exceptions of course. *Some* writers say horror **MUST** have supernatural elements, or else it is not horror!

# Horror is a broad genre...

... even if the common sub-genres of horror appear narrow at first glance.  
R.L. Stine has a Masterclass course on horror and defines six categories:

- ★ Gothic
- ★ Paranormal
- ★ Occult
- ★ Dark fantasy
- ★ Survival
- ★ Science fiction horror



# How do subgenres of horror fit into:

## SUPERNATURAL

Gothic  
Paranormal  
Occult  
Dark fantasy

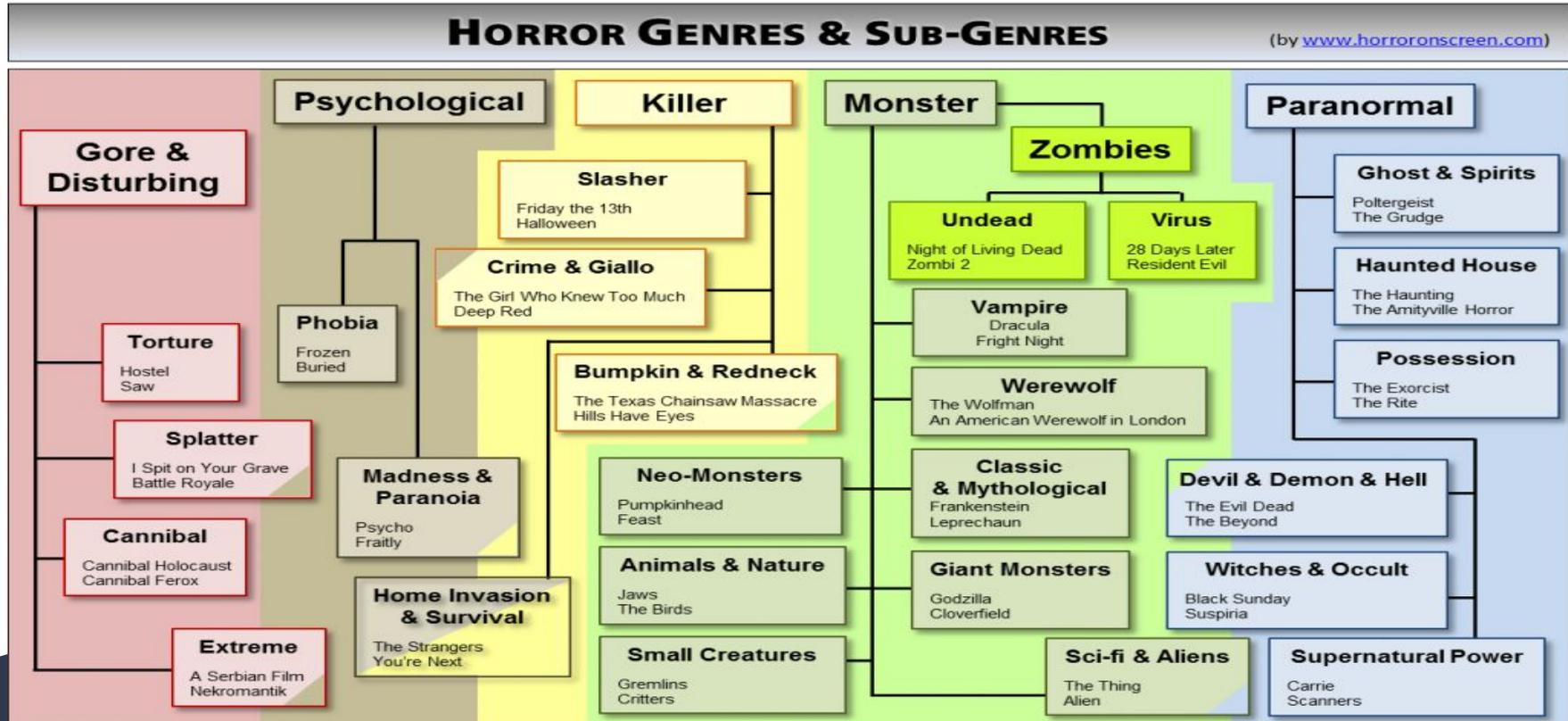
## THE NATURAL

Survival horror  
Science fiction horror

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I am certain you can think of exceptions and many books that fit in both!

# Compare with the many horror film genres...



How do these fit into **The Natural** and **Supernatural**?

Stephen King talks about three kinds of horror in 'On Writing':

**The Gross-out:** the sight of a severed head tumbling down a flight of stairs, it's when the lights go out and something green and slimy splatters against your arm.

**The Horror:** the unnatural, spiders the size of bears, the dead waking up and walking around, it's when the lights go out and something with claws grabs you by the arm.

**Terror:** when you come home and notice everything you own had been taken away and replaced by an exact substitute. It's when the lights go out and you feel something behind you, you hear it, you feel its breath against your ear, but when you turn around, there's nothing there...



## According to the Horror Writers Association...

“Horror can deal with the mundane or the supernatural, with the fantastic or the normal. It doesn’t have to be full of ghosts, ghouls, and things to go bump in the night. Its only true requirement is that it elicit an emotional reaction that includes some aspect of fear or dread.”

If we think of **HORROR** as a super-genre, there can be horror elements in any sort of book, and it allows a book to be categorized within general fiction.

This lends to the panacea/problem in bookstores where the 'horror' section is disappearing. You can find horror in:

Romance, Erotica, Western, True Crime, Biography, Literature,  
Science Fiction, Fantasy, Historical

It all depends on what degree of horror  
is found between the pages

The final subgenre may change while you write.

It will then be classified by your agent or publisher, and again at a bookstore or library, further by readers, reviewers and critics, then again as the zeitgeist shifts....

Let us think of horror in terms of writing style and *degrees* of horror instead.

# Degrees of Horror

- ★ Quiet and Literary Horror
- ★ Thrillers and Crime
- ★ Psychological and Gothic
- ★ Occult and Paranormal
- ★ Monsters and Killers
- ★ Extreme and Splatterpunk

**LEAST HORRIFIC**

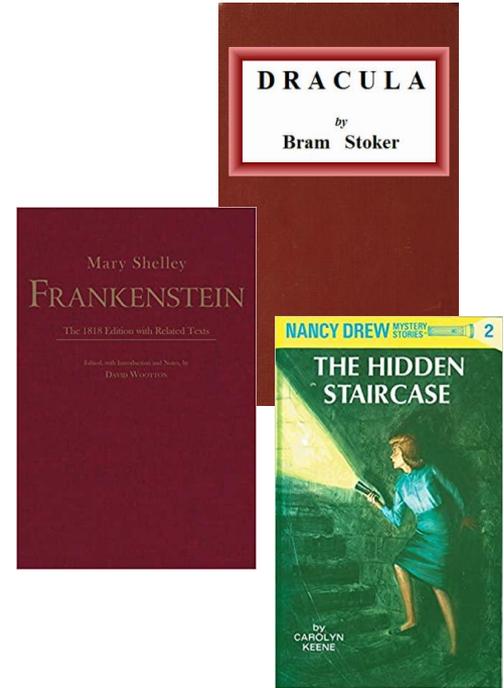


**MOST HORRIFIC**

# Quiet and Literary Horror

The oldest horror novels fit in here.  
Dracula, Frankenstein, and the work of  
Poe and Lovecraft too.  
Those who consider V.C. Andrews or  
even Nancy Drew Mysteries horrific could  
fit them here.

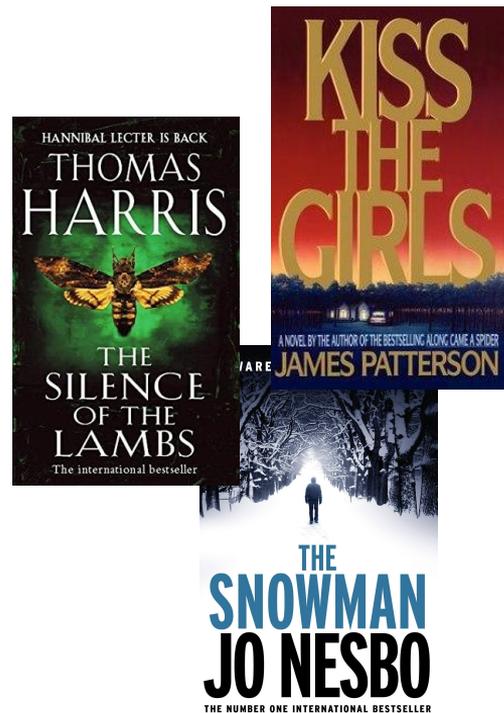
These stories rely more often on  
The Natural and Terror.



# Thrillers and Crime

From John Patterson to Thomas Harris, Jo Nesbø and Janet Evanovich; historical can be found here, along with western and romance since crime transcends era and blends many intrigues and appeals.

These stories rely more often on The Natural and Terror with a smattering of The Gross Out.

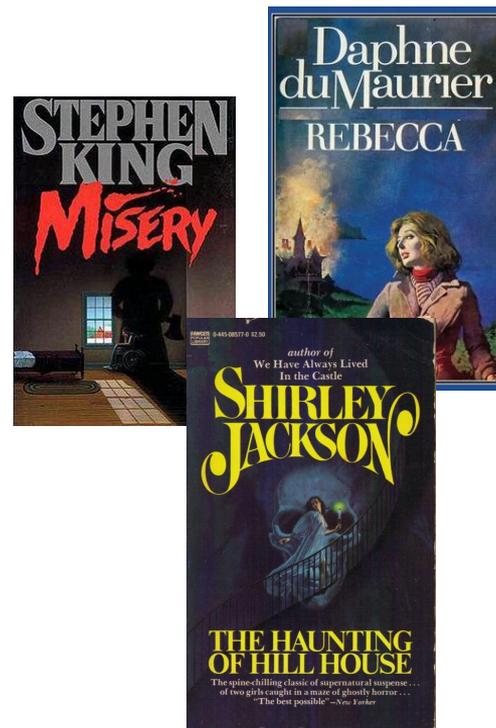


# Psychological and Gothic

Daphne Du Maurier, Shirley Jackson, Robert McCammon and Stephen King write powerful stories in this degree.

These stories rely more often on The Natural with a touch of supernatural (which is often imagined)

and Terror with a touch of Horror (which is sometimes imagined).



# Occult and Paranormal

Demons, ghosts, haunted houses and possession; Richard Matheson, James Herbert, Susan Hill and Darcy Coates are masters of this degree of horror.

These stories rely more often on The Supernatural and...

Terror with a balance of Horror at the climax.



# Monsters and Killers

Werewolf and a maniac, stalker and vampire; monsters, all. Stephen King, Stephen Graham Jones, and Richard Laymon are found here.

These stories have either Supernatural and Natural elements or both with...

Terror and sometimes  
The Gross Out at the climax.

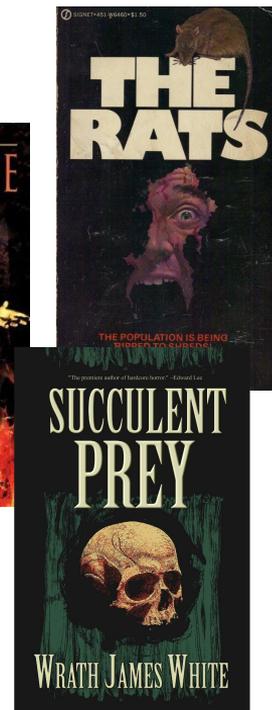
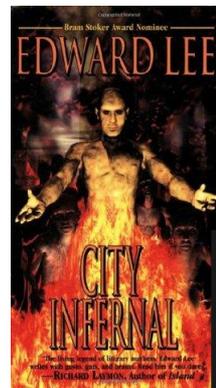


# Extreme and Splatterpunk

The youngest genre, born in the late 1970s.  
Ultraviolence with a socio-political threads.  
Wrath James White, James Herbert, Edward Lee,  
Richard Laymon and Jack Ketchum are notable  
in this degree of horror.

These stories rely more often on  
The Natural with few Supernatural notes and...

The Gross Out with Terror and Horror  
...then some more Gross Out.



# Where to market your horror?

Diabolical Plots or The Submission Grinder

[Thegrinder.diabolicalplots.com](http://Thegrinder.diabolicalplots.com)

The Horror Tree

[Horrorrtree.com](http://Horrorrtree.com)

Ralan.com or Ralan's Web Stravaganza

[www.ralan.com](http://www.ralan.com)

A Writers Handbook - lists all genres

Duotrope - Used to be free... [duotrope.com](http://duotrope.com)

**Many agents list their needs on [manuscriptwishlist.com](http://manuscriptwishlist.com) or under #pitdark on twitter. Also, research horror magazine and book publishers who may have open submissions.**

# Magazines that print horror fiction...

Dark Moon Digest

Black Static

Weird Tales

Cemetery Dance

Apex

Clarkesworld

Shock Totem

Dark Discoveries

**There are *many* more and several web-only magazines so research and read for the perfect fit.**

# Publishers that print horror fiction...

Dark Regions Press

PS Publishing

Silver Shamrock

Bloodshot Books

JournalStone

Cemetery Dance

Simon & Schuster

TOR

Off Limits Press

Wicked Run Press

Omnium Gatherum

Grey Matter Press

Raw Dog Screaming

Undertow Publications

Crystal Lake Publishing

SST

# Where to workshop and network

**The Horror Writers Association (World, USA, California)** [horror.org](http://horror.org)

**Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America (World, USA, Connecticut)** [sfwa.com](http://sfwa.com)

**LitReactor** - Workshops, articles and groups - [litreactor.com](http://litreactor.com)

**Borderland Press Writers Boot-Camp** - [borderlandspress.com/writers-boot-camp](http://borderlandspress.com/writers-boot-camp)

**Montreal Monstrum Society** - Quarterly lectures on horror [monstrum-society.ca](http://monstrum-society.ca)

Conventions with virtual events, workshops and lectures:

Can-Con, Killer Con, Scares That Care, The Outer Dark Symposium,  
NecronomiCon Providence, Camp NeCon... there are many!

and the KGB Reading Series [kgbfantasticfiction.org](http://kgbfantasticfiction.org)

**THANK YOU!**



**AND HAVE AN OOKY, SPOOKY DAY**