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Annotated Bibliography: Horror

The Genre of Horror in Young Adult Literature

Horror is a very popular subgenre of fiction. Horror is a genre that can allow teenagers to delve into their imaginations and explore a world of mythical creatures, spirits, religion, death, the afterlife, crime and detective work. Horror is beneficial for young adults to read because it can expand one’s knowledge and creativity. Though, many horror books have a large component of fantasy in their plot, realism also exists within many of these storylines. Many of these books are based on events that are realistic or that are inspired by real events. Horror and mystery are extremely valuable to young adults because some might find solace and refuge in this genre, as some might have experienced dark and tragic events such as the ones depicted in the books. Some young adults may find the content in horror and mystery books so creative, that they may become inspired enough to create their own pieces of literature. The following ten novels are books that I have read and believe are some of the most valuable pieces of horror books to adult literature.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, written by J.K Rowling is a book that forms part of the Harry Potter series. In *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, Harry Potter, a wizard, is struggling living in his relatives’ home, as he is constantly disrespected and criticized. The young wizard decides to run away but things do not improve in his life, as he could have imagined. Later, Harry Potter and his best friends, Hermoine Granger and Ron Weasley, discover that Sirius Black has escaped prison of Azkaban,and is planning on finding Harry and killing him. The story takes an unexpected turn and Harry Potter and his friends make many startling discoveries towards the end of the story. Additionally, Harry Potter and his friends demonstrate personal growth as they age and live unique experiences. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azakaban* is beneficial for young adults to read because it revolves around the lives of young adults who are experiencing constant change and facing difficult situations such as having an unstable home life, breaking up with one’s friends, and reaching the decision of seeking independence. Young adults might relate to many of the above themes presented in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azakaban* and might find hidden lessons of friendship, family, and bravery, among other possible themes. This book displays Exeter Quality number seven because it chronicles the lives of three teenagers who are developing both physiologically and emotionally. Their experiences while fighting evil as a team impact these characters’ personal growth.

*Frankenstein*, writtenby Mary Shelley is horror book about Dr. Victor Frankenstein, a scientist who has a passion for learning about the unknown and decides to create a monster out of dead animal body parts. The creature successfully comes to live but instead of teaching the monster and helping him become a member of society, he rejects him. After, society and Dr. Frankenstein, disrespect, neglect and bully the monster, the monster seeks revenge and commits atrocious acts against his creator and family. In *Frankenstein*, the monster experiences feelings of loneliness, sadness, and feels like an outlier in society. Like *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, *Frankenstein*, depicts themes that relate to coming of age and transitioning into adulthood. This book displays Exeter Quality number four as the story is filled with fantasy but the fictional monster displays emotions and frustrations that humans experience and can learn from.

*Psycho*, written by Robert Bloch, is a novel that tells the story of Norman Bates, a motel caretaker, who has a troubling life. Norman Bates has suffered since childhood because of the treatment of his mother against him. He is forced to live a life of manipulations and judgement coming from his mother, which leads him to become mentally ill and commit many murders, including the murder of a female guest at his hotel. *Psycho* displays Exeter Quality number six, as the main character, Norman Bates lived a traumatic childhood that creates consequences for his adult life and his mental health, leading him to become a psychopath. The story of Norman Bates depicts conflicts that are experiences by people globally.

*Twilight*, written by Stephanie Meyer is a novel about Isabella Swan, a seventeen-year old woman who moves from Phoenix, Arizona to Forks, Washington, without knowing the adventure that would lie ahead of her. In Washington, she befriends and falls in love with Edward Cullen, a vampire that will bring danger to her life. *Twilight* is an example of Exeter Quality number two, as the vampire novel shows a plot of action, surprise, and tension, while depicting the inconvenient romance of Bella Swan and vampire Edward Cullen.

*Amity*, written by Micol Ostow, is a novel about a family that moves to Amity, an isolated and mysterious house. Upon moving to the house, Connor begins to experience terrifying incidents in his life, as he begins to have horror-filled nightmares of violence, revenge, and overall evil. Other characters that are later presented in the story, such as Gwen, also move to Amity and begin experiencing similar horrifying feelings, just like Connor has. *Amity* displays qualities of Exeter Quality number two because it has tension and secrecy that stem from the fact that characters live in a haunted home that has a life of its own.

*There’s Someone Inside Your House*, written by Stephanie Perkins, is a novel that revolves around high school students that attend Osborne High School. There is a mysterious killer on the loose and his identity is unknown. Its target seems to be the students of Osborn High School as every student is getting murdered but a secret is later revealed in the novel that may help students discover the motivation behind the killer’s crimes. This novel displays Exeter Quality number 3, given the fact that the story revolves around the lives of high school students who are coming of age, and beginning to go through adult experiences, such as romance and sex.

*Escape from Asylum*, written by Madeleine Roux, is a novel that tells the story of a troubled teenager that is wrongfully condemned to being interned at the Brookline Psychiatric Hospital. The teenager is determined to find a strategy of escape, especially as he discovers that the hospital’s motivation is not to cure and rehabilitate its patients. Instead, a warden conducts experiments on the asylum’s patients and kills them. This novel displays Exeter Quality number four, as it showcases some fantasy but ultimately, shows that injustice and evil may be experienced anywhere and by anyone.

*Pet Semetary*, written by Stephen King, is a novel that tells the experiences of Dr. Louis Creeds and his family, while living near a pet cemetery. It is common for pets to be killed in the road that Dr. Creed lives in, so children created a cemetery for their furry loved ones. Interestingly, the family cat dies and the family decide to bury the animal in another mysterious burial site near their home. The animal returns to life but its personality changes in a negative way. Dr. Creed’s son also dies in a tragic accident, and exasperated, the doctor decides to bury his son at the same burial site as the cat, so he returns to life, but he does not suspect what will happen upon doing so. *Pet Semetary* mainly exhibits Exeter Quality number four, as the novel depicts unusual circumstances (such as the dead coming back to life), but it depicts relatable themes, such as resignation, death, family relationships, and the loss of a child.

*The Long Walk*, written by Stephen King, is a novel that depicts the tale of contestants of a walking competition, in which there could only be one winner. Though, the winner is the only person that is allowed to survive. This story takes place in the future in the United States and in the story, the only winner of the competition is awarded whatever they decide they would like to enjoy for the rest of their lives. *The* *Long Walk* exhibits characteristics of Exeter Quality number seven, as it depicts its’ characters’ constant battle against death and shows lessons of perseverance and determination. These lessons may have the ability of inspiring personal growth.

The *Graveyard Book*, written by Neil Gaiman, depicts the story of a young boy who is the only living human who calls the graveyard his home. The boy is raised by ghosts, spirits, and werewolves and therefore, learns how to act like the supernatural creatures. He must decide if it is worth calling the supernatural or human world his permanent home. *The Graveyeard Book* exhibits characteristics of Exeter Quality number four because it depicts a fictitious plot, as the story is about a boy who was raised by supernatural creatures in a cemetery. Though, this fictitious plot contains themes of independence, exploration, decision making, and determinations. These fictional characters found in the *Graveyard Book* display themes that some may find to be realistic.

The horror works selected above are pieces that are very different, yet very valuable to young adult literature because even though, they are filled with fantasy and unrealistic events, they are all filled with themes that many humans may relate to, as it is natural for humans to experience a diversity of emotions and events in their life time.

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