

Frightmares: A History of British Horror Cinema (Studying British Cinema)

Ian Cooper

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Ian Cooper : Frightmares: A History of British Horror Cinema (Studying British Cinema) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Frightmares: A History of British Horror Cinema (Studying British Cinema):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Best of British By TheBooksofBlood As the author of Frightmares states in the introduction, British horror cinema has been much maligned. Horror is seen as even more of a third class

genre than in the United States. There is the expectation that British cinema should be serious high drama. Throwing in the persecution of horror by the BBFC and their censorship of video nasties and you can see why horror has had such a difficult time. Coverage in the book begins in the 1930s with *The Ghoul*. As you would expect, there is considerable coverage of the Hammer horror era. This includes examination of titles such as *The Satanic Rites of Dracula*. The Video Nasty era was another section of particular interest to me. You will find lots of gems as the author moves through the decades. There were many titles I never heard of that I now want to catch up on. From the modern era he takes a look at *Dog Soldiers* and *Eden Lake*. It isn't an exhaustive book covering everything. It's more a look at what the author feels are the most significant films. It is a fairly academic title in that there are lots of quotes and notations. He examines themes and influences on British horror, both political and from other cinema. There are some black and white stills from films. It's an interesting read but due to the niche nature, possibly not as accessible to all horror fans. I'd say you have to be interested in the subject to enjoy the book fully.

The horror film reveals as much, if not more, about the British psyche as the more respectable heritage film or the critically revered social realist drama. Yet, like a mad relative locked in the attic, British horror cinema has for too long been ignored and maligned. Even when it has been celebrated, neglect is not far behind and what studies there have been concentrate largely on the output of Hammer, the best-known producers of British horror. But this is only part of the story. It's a tradition that encompasses the last days of British music hall theater, celebrated auteurs such as Alfred Hitchcock and Roman Polanski and opportunistic, unashamed hacks. *Frightmares* is an in-depth analysis of the home-grown horror film, each chapter anchored by close studies of key titles, consisting of textual analysis, production history, marketing and reception. Although broadly chronological, attention is also paid to the thematic links, emphasizing both the wide range of the genre and highlighting some of its less-explored avenues. Chapters focus on the origins of British horror and its foreign influences, Hammer (of course), the influence of American International Pictures and other American and European filmmakers in 1960s Britain, the 'savage Seventies' and the new wave of twenty-first century British horror. The result is an authoritative, comprehensive and, most importantly, entertaining survey of this most exuberant field of British cinema.

About the Author Ian Cooper is a Germany-based writer and screenwriter and the author of *Witchfinder General* and *Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia*. He is currently completing a study of Hitchcock's *Frenzy*.