

IT'S GONNA BE A SCREAM

CONTINUED

by Sean Hanson



THE SHINING (1980)

First, a bit of movie lore: Stanley Kubrick, notorious for taking liberties with his adaptations, never actually finished Stephen King's 1977 bestseller before he began work on *The Shining*. And good on him. He replaced topiaries with hedge mazes, a roque mallet with an axe and an apologetic abuser who eventually proves he's a worthy dad (a Mary Sue for King, as he wormed his way through the dark tunnel of alco-logic) with a patriarch who remains cruel to the bitter end (a Mary Sue for Kubrick, the grade-A asshole who never grew tired of tormenting his actors). In doing so, he created the quintessential American horror film, a churning, elegant beast that hasn't aged a day in 37 years.



THE THING (1982)

John Carpenter's 1978-1982 hot streak would make Alfred Hitchcock quiver with envy: *Halloween*, *The Fog* and *The Thing*, all equally great and pretty much interchangeable

on any list of great horror films. But *The Thing* edges out the competition with its amorphous monster, its unsettling blend of claustrophobia and paranoia, and the impossible puzzle at its core: Who is the monster by the final scene?

FROM BEYOND (1986)

This low-budget queasy-magenta nightmare is the most quietly influential horror flick of the '80s, with a monster that still gets copied in blockbuster films and games. The best part? Writer-director Stuart Gordon stretched the definition of "adaptation" even further than Kubrick, turn-



ing the title and most basic premise of an entirely sexless H.P. Lovecraft story (look it up: the man was absolutely terrified of sex and probably died a virgin) into the best possible psychosexual monster movie.

INSIDE (2007)

Fair warning: You should probably avoid this French shocker unless you're already a jaded horror junkie. And even if you are, this will make you squirm — not because of the gore, although there's quite a bit of that, but because the filmmakers fully commit to their premise, in which a woman sets out to steal an expectant mother's baby ... a few hours before he's due. Far more than an effective home-invasion thriller, the directors have spun a demented political allegory about the nationalist tensions in France,



which makes it timelier than ever. (If you're ready for this, make sure you watch the 79-minute unrated version.)

SESSION 9 (2001)

If film lists were wine menus, *Session 9* copy would read: "Pairs well with *The Shining*." It's another tale of potentially supernatural forces driving men insane, but the real kicker is the atmosphere. Director Brad Anderson shot on location at Danvers State Mental Hospital, a real abandoned asylum, and the horrors of the past seep into every frame. A wheelchair parked before a picture window, the stainless steel hydrotherapy tubs, the sheen of standing water, the cracked paint of cartoon animals, the gleaming lobotomy pick — all found objects, all tools that Anderson uses to get under your skin. ■



Sean Hanson co-owns the Broadway Metro, writes about film for Front Row Central, and would probably go up the staircase.

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