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horror, and the bizarre offer a different kind of fear, one that lingers long after the credits roll. The tales are often thought-provoking, steeped in deep traditional horror tropes. The Call of Cthulhu (2005), a silent short film, faithfully adapts Lovecraft's most famous story. In the Mouth of Madness (1994), a direct adaptation, masterfully encapsulates Lovecraftian themes and ideas. The Color Out of Space (2019), based on Lovecraft's short story, brings a disturbing alien presence to a rural family's farm. Other Lovecraftian horror movies include Event Horizon (1997), which infuses Lovecraftian horror into a sci-fi setting; The Mist (2007), a film filled with inter-dimensional creatures and a sense of hopeless dread; and Underwater (2020), about deepwater researchers who awaken an ancient, giant evil. Folk horror is a subgenre that blends horror elements with folklore, pagan rituals, and the eeriness of rural landscapes. These films often tap into the fear of the unknown, the isolation of the countryside, and the haunting power of old traditions. They typically feature a clash of belief systems, often between modern urban characters and the ancient, sometimes sinister customs of a rural community. If you're drawn to the mysteries of folklore, the chilling beauty of rural landscapes, and the unsettling clash between the ancient and the modern, then folk horror is the perfect subgenre for you. The slow-burn terror and atmospheric storytelling often found in these films can create a lingering sense of unease that's subtly disturbing. Folk horror offers a unique way to explore societal fears through the lens of tradition and superstition. The British film, The Wicker Man (1973) is considered a folk horror classic, telling the story of a police officer encountering disturbing pagan rituals in a remote island community, while Witchfinder General (1968) delves into the horrifying witch hunts of the 17th century. More recent entries into the folk horror genre include The Witch (2015), a chilling tale of a Puritan family encountering evil in the wilderness, and Midsommar (2019), which depicts a group of friends ensnared in the disturbing summer rituals of a Swedish cult. Body horror is a subgenre that explores the fear and revulsion associated with transformation, mutilation, or destruction of the human body. It has graphic depictions of gore, decay, and grotesque mutations and often blurs the line between man and monster. These films typically play on the fear of bodily invasion and the anxiety around the fragility of the flesh. They may contain themes of disease, mutilation, or the horrifying consequences of scientific experiments. If you have a stomach for extreme horror and find fascination in the grotesque, then the body horror subgenre is your arena. It offers an intense form of terror that plays upon our innate fear of physical harm and the corruption of the human form. These films often come with a deeper commentary on issues like the human condition, identity, and societal collapse. David Cronenberg is a master of body horror, with films like The Fly (1986), where a scientist gradually transforms into a grotesque human-insect hybrid, and Videodrome (1983), which explores themes of technology as a physical contaminant. Hellraiser (1987), with its tormented souls trapped in grotesque, mutilated bodies, is another iconic example. Other body horror movies include American Mary (2012), which delves into underground body modification, and Tusk (2014), a chilling tale of forced transformation. Action horror is a subgenre that combines the excitement of action films with horror elements. These films often feature high-octane sequences, intense battles, and heroes facing off against hordes of monsters, zombies, or supernatural entities. It's characterized by a fast-paced narrative, high stakes, and often a blend of spectacular stunts, special effects, and terrifying antagonists. If you're a fan of adrenaline-pumping sequences and horror, then action horror will give you the best of both worlds. It offers not just scares but also the exhilaration of fight scenes, chase sequences, and larger-than-life confrontations. These films often provide an escapist thrill ride where you can cheer on the protagonists as they take down the forces of darkness. The Resident Evil series (2002-) is a prime example of action horror, with its protagonist battling zombies and bio-engineered monsters. Aliens (1986) blends science fiction, action, and horror as a team of space marines confronts an alien hive. From Dusk Till Dawn (1996) transitions from crime thriller to full-blown action horror when its characters face off against vampires. Other action horror films include Underworld (2003), which sets vampires against werewolves in an epic conflict, and Train to Busan (2016), a thrilling zombie horror with intense action sequences. Apocalypse horror is a subgenre that features the end of the world as its main theme. It often explores themes of societal collapse, survival in desperate circumstances, and the existential dread of impending doom. The apocalyptic event can take many forms - from pandemics to natural disasters to invasions by zombies, aliens, or other malevolent entities. This subgenre is characterized by a combination of horror, despair, and occasionally, hope in the face of overwhelming odds. If you're drawn to stories of survival, societal collapse, and the human capacity to adapt to global catastrophe, apocalypse horror is your subgenre. These films often provide a grim exploration of the human condition under extreme conditions. They offer a unique form of terror that combines the fear of the unknown with the struggle for survival in a drastically changed world. 28 Days Later (2002) depicts the breakdown of society following a devastating virus outbreak. The Mist (2007) features an otherworldly threat that envelops a town and pushes its inhabitants to their limits. A Quiet Place (2018) presents a post-apocalyptic world where making noise can be deadly due to sound-sensitive creatures. Other apocalypse horror movies include The Road (2009), a grim and powerful story of survival in a post-apocalyptic wasteland, and Bird Box (2018), where unseen entities cause anyone who looks at them to go mad. Natural horror is a subgenre that involves nature striking back, usually in the form of animals or plants attacking humans or natural disasters pushing people to their limits. The threats are often derived from the real world - animals, insects, weather phenomena - but are amplified to horrifying proportions. This subgenre highlights mankind's vulnerability against the raw power of nature, often featuring characters in isolated or wilderness settings. If you're intrigued by the thought of nature turning against humanity and find a thrill in the idea of battling against primal forces, then natural horror is right up your alley. These films often combine suspense, horror, and the exhilaration of survival adventure. They offer a unique kind of fear derived from real-world elements, which can make the experience all the more nerve-wracking. Jaws (1975), with its man-eating great white shark, is a quintessential natural horror film. The Birds (1963) takes something as mundane as ordinary birds and turns them into a terrifying threat. Anaconda (1997) and Arachnophobia (1990) feature oversized animals as the horror element. Other natural horror films include The Ruins (2008), which features killer plants, and Crawl (2019), which combines a hurricane with deadly alligators. Dark Fantasy Horror blends the mystical elements of fantasy with terrifying horror themes. It's a subgenre that often brings to life our darkest fairy tales, creating worlds where magic, mythical creatures, and malevolent forces coexist. The stories usually unfold in surreal, gothic, or fantastical settings, and it's not uncommon to encounter haunted houses, castles, cursed objects, witches, vampires, or other supernatural beings. If you're drawn to the mystical, the uncanny, and the macabre, then Dark Fantasy Horror is a subgenre you'll thoroughly enjoy. It offers a different kind of fright - one intertwined with enchantment, curiosity, and an eerie beauty. The blend of fantastical elements with the gruesome realities of horror creates a unique viewing experience that can be as thought-provoking as it is terrifying. Pan's Labyrinth (2006) is a dark fantasy horror masterpiece, merging the grim realities of war with a hauntingly beautiful fairy tale. Crimson Peak (2015) sets a gothic romance in a haunted house with dreadful secrets. Sleepy Hollow (1999) brings to life the chilling tale of the Headless Horseman. Other dark fantasy horror movies include Hellboy (2004), which combines elements of dark fantasy with action, and The Witch (2015), a historical horror film with a chilling tale of witchcraft. Splatter horror, or gore horror, is a subgenre focusing on graphic portrayals of gore and graphic violence. The aim is to shock and repulse the viewer with extravagant displays of blood, guts, and grotesque effects. The narratives often involve mutilation, dismemberment, or brutal deaths, and the genre as a whole revels in the visceral and the shocking. If you have a strong stomach and get a thrill from intense, graphic horror, then splatter horror might be your perfect fit. It offers a level of shock and visceral terror that few other subgenres can match. The films often serve as a form of extreme escapism, testing the boundaries of what can be portrayed on screen. Sam Raimi's The Evil Dead series (1981-) is a collection of iconic splatter horror films notorious for their over-the-top gore. Braindead (1992), also known as Dead Alive in North America, directed by Peter Jackson, is another famous splatter horror hailed for its excessive blood and guts. Hostel (2005) and the Saw series (2004-) are well-known for their graphic depictions of torture and death. Other splatter films include Cannibal Holocaust (1980) and Ichi the Killer (2001). Witch Horror is a subgenre centered around witches, witchcraft, or occult rituals. These films often include themes of pagan folklore, the supernatural, and fear of the unknown. It's characterized by portraying witches as malevolent, powerful beings or as symbols of paranoia and societal unrest. The settings can range from historical to contemporary and often feature a strong atmospheric or creepy tone. I think that if you're fascinated by witchcraft, pagan lore, or the occult, Witch Horror can offer an eerie and unnerving cinematic experience. These films often explore themes of power, fear, and the unknown, providing plenty of psychological horror along with the supernatural. The sense of unease and dread they create can be as potent as any jump scare. The Witch (2015) is a chilling depiction of a Puritan family haunted by witchcraft in 17th-century New England. Suspiria (1977 and its 2018 remake) revolves around a dance academy run by witches. Rosemary's Baby (1968) showcases the terror of occult conspiracy in a modern setting. Other witch horror genre films include The Blair Witch Project (1999), a found-footage horror about a legendary witch, and Häxan (1922), a silent film examining historical views on witchcraft. Here are a few other horror subgenres that you might find interesting: Possession Horror: This subgenre mixes horror and thriller elements through the possession of a character by a supernatural force and leaning into fear, guilt, and emotional instability to raise tension. Notable films in this category include The Exorcist, Insidious, and Prince of Darkness. Haunted House Horror: This subgenre goes beyond the realm of scientific explanation, including ghosts, demons, and hauntings, and set inside specific buildings or locations. Classic examples of this subgenre are Poltergeist, The Amityville Horror, and The House on Haunted Hill. Torture Horror: Films in this subgenre primarily focus on graphic depictions of torture, aiming to instill disgust in the viewer. Memorable films in this subgenre are Saw and Hostel. Holiday Horror: These stories unfold around specific holiday seasons like Halloween or Christmas, often casting a sinister shadow over traditionally joyful occasions. Well-known films in this category are Halloween and Black Christmas. Disaster Horror: This subgenre brings together elements of disaster films with horror. These films showcase large-scale catastrophes and their horrific aftermaths. Noteworthy examples include Cloverfield and The Mist. Vampire Horror: Focusing on the mythology of vampires, this subgenre blends gothic and supernatural horror elements. Iconic vampire films include Nosferatu, The Lost Boys, and Let the Right One In. Werewolf Horror: Centered on the lore of werewolves, these films often depict a character's struggle with their inner beast. Standout examples are An American Werewolf in London, Dog Soldiers, and The Howling. Mockumentary Horror: These often comedic horror movies are part of a genre that playfully deconstructs and mocks the clichés and conventions of horror while being presented through a documentary or news-report lens. Examples include What We Do in the Shadows (2014) and Troll Hunter (2011). Survival Horror: This subgenre pits characters against overwhelming odds in isolated or claustrophobic settings, focusing on the fight to stay alive, as seen in The Descent and A Quiet Place. Elevated Horror: Characterized by its focus on atmosphere, character development, and thematic depth, elevated horror takes the genre to new intellectual and artistic heights, like in Get Out, Jacob's Ladder, and Hereditary. Arthouse Horror: This subgenre blurs the line between horror and art, focusing on aesthetics, style, and often ambiguous narratives to create unique, thought-provoking horror experiences, such as The Lighthouse and Midsommar. Techno Horror: Centered around emotionless, technological entities gone rogue, these films, including M3GAN, The Stepford Wives, and Videodrome, deliver scares that reach beyond the realm of the living. Western Gothic Horror: This subgenre combines elements of horror, gothic, and Western genres, typically portraying grim and desolate frontier settings that harbor eerie, supernatural threats. Examples include Bone Tomahawk, Ravenous, and my own novel, Iron Dogs, which I hope to add to the list of movies one day soon. Here are some places where you can find some fantastic horror films and books to watch! Listen to the Horror Community: There are many online communities and platforms where horror fans gather to discuss their favorite films, books, and podcasts. Platforms like Reddit, Facebook groups, or horror-specific forums can be great places to get recommendations. Remember, horror is incredibly diverse, and what scares one person might not scare another, so keep an open mind! Follow the Masters: Pay attention to the creators behind the horror film genre. If you find a film that truly scares you or leaves you unsettled, look up the director, writer, or production company. Chances are, they've done more in the genre that you might enjoy. Streaming Platforms: Many streaming platforms have horror sections that are further divided into subgenres. This can be a great way to explore different types of horror. Netflix, Amazon Prime, Shudder (a streaming service dedicated entirely to horror), and Hulu all have a wide variety of horror films. Podcasts and Books: If you're more into literary scares, there are many horror-focused podcasts and books that cover a range of subgenres. Podcasts like "Pseudopod" and "Something Scary" offer a variety of horror stories, and authors like Stephen King, Edgar Allan Poe, and H.P. Lovecraft have created classic horror works that span various subgenres. You can also learn more about my own horror-Western novel, Iron Dogs, here! And there you have it - a trip down the dark, twisted lanes of the horror genre. There's definitely a type of horror, you'll get bragging rights as the horror guru among your friends! Horror films are characterized by their aim to evoke fear, horror, and terror in audiences. They often involve an antagonist or a scenario that embodies our deepest fears and anxieties, such as supernatural entities, psychotic killers, or terrifying situations. Additionally, horror films frequently use suspense, atmosphere, and surprise to enhance the frightening elements. The "scariest" genre of horror is highly subjective and depends largely on individual fears and preferences. Some might find psychological horror the scariest due to its deep exploration of the human mind and its capabilities, while others might find supernatural horror the most terrifying due to its inclusion of unknown and uncontrollable beings. Others might find body horror films and slasher films with jump scares to be scariest. Whatever type you choose, you can try using some of my horror story prompts to help you get started in creating your own scary story! The first horror film is widely recognized as Le Manoir du Diable (aka The House of the Devil), directed by Georges Méliès in 1896. This three-minute silent film from France is a fantastical piece that includes elements we now associate with horror cinema, such as transformation scenes and phantoms. Although it's more humorous and magical than terrifying by today's standards, it set the stage for the evolution of the horror genre in the film industry (see trailer below). Love the horror genre? Check out these other great articles! The 40+ Best Horror Gifts for Horror Movie Fans 30+ Best Indie Horror Movies of All Time [Reviewed] Best Evil Horror Movie Mothers [Top 10 Scariest Moms]