

Horror Comedy:  
Make your readers laugh and  
scream!

PRESENTED BY ANGELA SYLVAINÉ  
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Angela Sylvainé  
*author*

- ▶ Author of dark fiction and poetry
- ▶ Short work/poetry published in/on over fifty anthologies, magazines, and podcasts
- ▶ Books include
  - ▶ Chopping Spree, a retro '80s YA Mall slasher
  - ▶ Frost Bite, a retro '90s sci fi horror comedy
  - ▶ The Dead Spot: Stories of Lost Girls, a sad girl collection
- ▶ Experience with indie press publishing
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Horror Comedy  
Agenda

- ▶ Intro
- ▶ What is comedy?
- ▶ What is horror?
- ▶ Where the two meet
- ▶ Key Elements
- ▶ Subgenres and Tropes
- ▶ Movie Examples by Category
- ▶ Submission Round Up
- ▶ Q&A



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**Intro**

- ▶ Knock, Knock
- ▶ The first horror comedy
- ▶ The psychology behind horror comedy



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**What is Comedy?**




**Comedy is designed to elicit laughter**



**Uses exaggeration of the situation, language, action, or characters**

Heavily dependent on timing



**Comedic forms**

Physical/Slapstick  
Surreal  
Deadpan  
Parody/Spoof/Satire  
Black/dark comedy

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**What is Horror?**



**Designed to scare or uses elements of horror**



**Uses exaggeration of the situation, language, action, or characters**

Heavily dependent on timing



**Common elements**

Use of tropes  
Focus on setting  
Focus on selfing  
Impending doom  
Mystery of unknown  
Disturbing themes  
Character sins/transgresses  
Final showdown

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### Where Horror and Comedy Meet

- ▶ Exaggeration
- ▶ Cinematic
- ▶ Shared scaffolding
  - ▶ Jokes and jump scares
  - ▶ Tension and release
  - ▶ Rhythm and pacing
- ▶ Most common combinations
  - ▶ Horror Parody
  - ▶ Dark Comedy
  - ▶ Extreme/Grotesque Horror
  - ▶ Creature Horror
- ▶ Twisted horror sub genres and tropes



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### Key elements

- ▶ Concept is key!
- ▶ Trope heavy
- ▶ Meta concepts work well: plays on tropes and horror rules
  - When playing with genre/trope it's good to know the rules
- ▶ Selling
- ▶ Characters
- ▶ Dialogue
- ▶ Blood and gore
- ▶ Plot vs Theme
- ▶ Mundane + fantastic
- ▶ Horror and comedy balance
- ▶ Reminders
  - Careful of being cruel or stereotypical in a way that's not self aware
  - Should still have depth, themes, emotional resonance

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### Subgenres and Tropes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SUB GENRE EXAMPLES TO EXPLORE:</li> <li>• SCIFI /ALIEN</li> <li>• SUPERNATURAL</li> <li>• HAUNTINGS</li> <li>• DEMONS/POSSESSIONS</li> <li>• MONSTERS</li> <li>• ZOMBIES</li> <li>• SLASHER/ MASKED KILLER</li> <li>• SPLATTER (GORE)</li> <li>• BODY HORROR</li> <li>• FOLK HORROR</li> <li>• FOUND FOOTAGE</li> <li>• NOSTALGIA HORROR</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TROPE EXAMPLES TO EXPLORE:</li> <li>• VAMPIRES/ZOMBIES/DEMONS</li> <li>• SPOOKY CHILDREN</li> <li>• TEENS IN PERIL</li> <li>• DEAD BODY</li> <li>• A DEADLY PRANK</li> <li>• LIVING TOYS/ POSSESSED OBJECTS</li> <li>• CREEPY CLOWNS</li> <li>• CREEPY MASKS</li> <li>• POSSESSED/INFECTED ANIMALS</li> <li>• CREEPY TOWNS</li> <li>• REMOTE LOCATION/CABIN</li> <li>• CANNIBALS</li> </ul>
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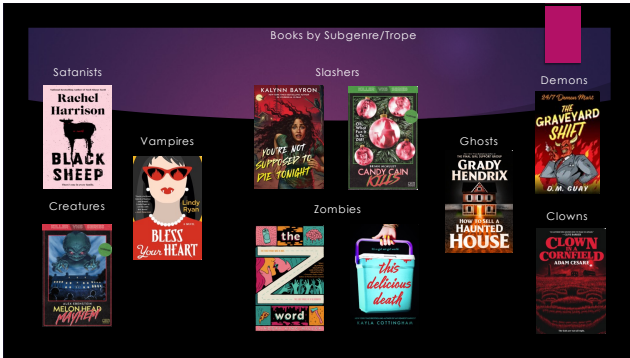
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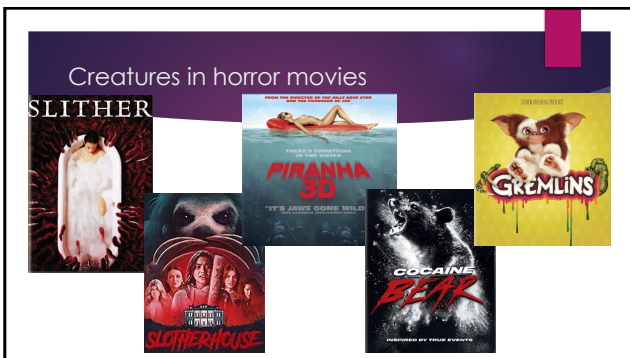
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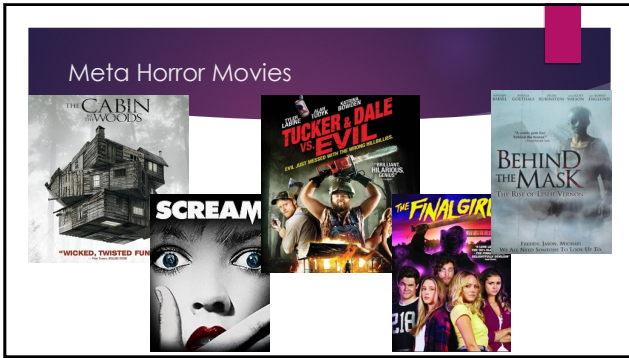
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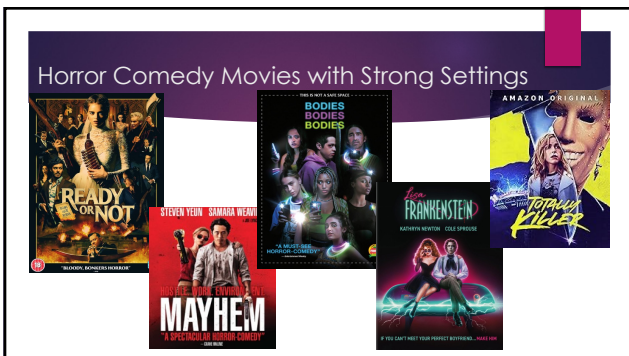
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Submission  
round up!

- ▶ Undertaker books- Winter horrorland (close 10/15)
- ▶ Ghoulish Tales (opens October)
- ▶ Tales from the Moonlit Path- Halloween Issue (closes 10/12/24)
- ▶ Whisperhouse Press- Dread Mondays- workplace horror (closes 10/31)
- ▶ Burial Books- Inanimate things (closes 12/1)
- ▶ Crystal Lake- The Joining: scene of wedding terror (closes 3/1/25)
- ▶ No Sleep and Tales to Terrify Podcasts (open)
- ▶ Spooky Magazine- like cozy, fun, playful horror (currently closed)
- ▶ Die Laughing (currently closed)

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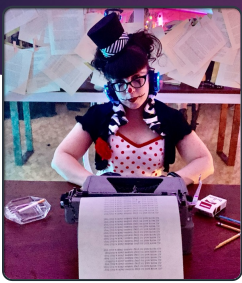
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Q & A

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