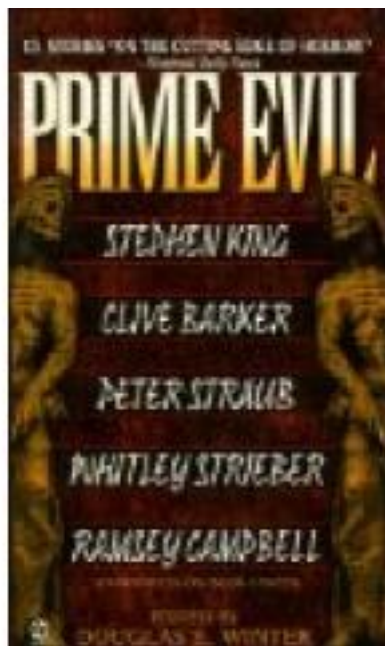


# Prime Evil: New Stories by the Masters of Modern Horror



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What makes great horror fiction?

As a critic and reviewer, I have been called upon regularly to pass judgment on the writing of horror fiction's leading talents. I've probed the phenomenal success of Stephen King in a book-length study, and

I've also published a history of contemporary horror, as told through the lives of its brightest and bestselling writers. As a compulsive reader and filmgoer, I've experienced nearly everything the field of horror has to offer. My own fiction returns with regularity to themes of violence and fear.

Nevertheless, I'm tempted to answer this question with the unblinking certainty of Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, who once offered as his definition of obscenity that he knew it when he saw it.

Many readers see the horror story as something that is packaged only in repetitive paperback editions, replete with potboiler prose, lurid covers, and corny titles that seem always to begin with the word "The." And most of the time, they are right. Today's tales of terror rarely offer anything new. Few plots bearing the "horror" label are fresh and exciting; indeed, most editors lament how easily these stories can be pigeonholed into recognizable types. (T.E.D. Klein, the original editor of *Twilight Zone Magazine*, once told me that he could fit over ninety percent of the submissions to his magazine into ten cliché categories). The writing itself is, on average, slick and superficial; at worst, the stuff of pulp adventure, written to the lowest common denominator.

作者介绍:

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