

Paperbacks from Hell: The Twisted History of '70s and '80s Horror Fiction

Grady Hendrix

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As trends in genre fiction go, you'd be hard pressed to find a more indelible example than the paperback horror novels of the 1970s and 1980s. All manner of depravity, from Nazi leprechauns, psychic spawn, ghost trains, and flesh-eating Vikings to trained killer mantises, swarms of killer moths, feral frogs, and silver-coated rabbit gods—you can't make this up. Oh yes, they did.

Paperbacks from Hell, from genre-bending novelist Grady Hendrix, is a hugely entertaining history of the horror books from those fear-filled times. June of 1971 marked the breakouts of Thomas Tryon's *The Other* and William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcist*, which stayed on the New York Times bestsellers list for fifty-five weeks, and suddenly it was game on for another twenty-plus years, until *Silence of the Lambs* "convinced marketing departments to scrape the word horror off spines and glue on the word *thriller* instead."

In addition to Hendrix's tales of how the publishing industry and Hollywood exploited the horror wave, *Paperbacks from Hell* colorfully reprints 350 of the most outrageous, creepy, and gruesome covers.

MATT SUTHERLAND (September/October 2017)

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