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The Shining Book PDF Summary -

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already do not overlook the opportunity presented by the publication of

, the sequel, to revisit one of the best ghost stories of our time. The appearance of the follow up offers a perfect justification for stepping through those bat-wing doors for the first time.

It has been a lifetime since I read

for the first time, over thirty years ago. I enjoyed it then for its effectiveness in

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for the first time, over thirty years ago. I enjoyed it then for its effectiveness in telling a scary, no, a very scary story. Reading it now is colored, as is all of life, by our accumulation (or lack of accumulation) of experience. We see, or appreciate colors, textures, shapes, structures, and feelings with more experienced, educated eyes. We have seen, or are at least aware of real world things that are scarier than any fictional spectres. So, what does it look like through old, cloudy lenses?

Nandakishore Varma

Quite simply put,

is the best horror story I have ever read. It scared the hell out of me.

Over a period of time, I have noticed certain standard "motifs" in horror stories. One of these I call "The Lost Child". Such stories will typically involve a child, who can see what the silly grownups cannot see (or, even if they do see, don't acknowledge because it goes against reason and logic): and who fights, however high the odds stacked against him/ her are. Danny Torrance is such a boy.

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Danny can read minds. He can see the frightening thoughts inside his Dad's and Mom's heads ("DIVORCE", "SUICIDE") but is powerless to do anything about it. Danny does not know that he has a gift; he takes it as a matter of course, until Dick Halloran of the Overlook Hotel tells him that he "shines on".

Jack Torrance, Danny's Dad, reformed alcoholic and struggling writer, is trying to put his life back together after a tragedy. He gets what he sees as the ideal chance when he lands the job of caretaker of the Overlook Hotel for the winter. In the snowed-in hotel with only his son and wife

Wendy, Jack assumes that he will get enough quality time to be with his family, patch up old quarrels, and write that breakout novel.

But the Overlook has other plans. The hotel, which feeds on and grows in strength from the evils committed on its premises, wants Danny-permanently-to join its crew of ghostly inhabitants. And to do that, it needs to get to Jack...

Jeffrey Keeten

For a guy like myself who loves to read and write taking the job as a winter caretaker of The Overlook Hotel sounds like a dream job.

The time requirements for the job are miniscule leaving me plenty of time every day to work on the next "great American novel". Before leaving for this foray into isolationism I would calculate just how many books I would need to sustain me through the winter and then increase it by "... or so. Jack Torrance makes the case that because he is an educated man he is better suited for the job.

Now Jack may be an educated man but he is carrying around more baggage than any one bellhop could ever get delivered. He has a double helix of trouble an alcohol problem intertwined with a really nasty temper. He has lost jobs. He has beaten a young man senseless. He has broken his son Danny's arm, little more than a toddler, because he messed up his papers.

Jack is always sorry.

When not drinking he wipes his lips so often he makes them bleed.

His father was a violent man and King does give us some background on Jack's childhood which may have been intended to lend some sympathy for Jack. Just because we follow the threads back to why he is the way he is doesn't mean that he is anymore likeable or for that matter less dangerous. He may be an educated man, and he may have made the case as to why he is more qualified to be a caretaker cut off from the world, but as it turns out he wasn't suited for the job, not suited at all.

I was sitting in an American English class at the University of Arizona, what seems like an eon ago, when a woman, older than the rest of us by probably 15 years or so, raised her hand and asked the teacher why we weren't reading Stephen King for this class. I remember distinctly peering at the syllabus and seeing Steinbeck, Faulkner, Hemingway and Fitzgerald among others. It was the canon of American Literature about to be explored by some of us in depth and by some of us only by way of Cliff Notes or Sparks Notes. Some in the class I could almost pick them out by their shiny

perfect teeth, which I found abhorrently boring like trees planted in perfect rows, belonged to the Greek Houses and would be showing up to class only to turn in their papers carefully culled from the vast files of papers written by past Sorority Sisters or Fraternity Brothers who had received As in this class for their efforts. After all it isn't about learning, but about passing. I'm there probably feeling slightly nauseous from the flashing brilliance of pearly whites from the orthodontically challenged when the teacher turns to me and says "Jeff why do you think we aren't teaching King in this class?"

Here I am thinking about this woman wanting to wedge King between my literary hero F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. I don't think I'd even read King at this point, but I'd been working in a bookstore for many years and knew how important he was to providing me with a paycheck. He developed cross genre appeal bringing horror forward from being a subspecies of science-fiction and away from residing in a spinner rack of books at the back of the bookstore for those social abnormals dressed all in black.

I didn't really know how to answer the question except in the most bland way possible. I said he hasn't stood the test of time. I could tell my answer was about as satisfying as a week old bagel to the woman, and I was hampered by the fact that I really didn't want to insult the woman. The teacher also looked mildly disappointed. I could tell she was hoping to see blood in the water and I failed to be the shark she thought me to be.

The woman's question does show the issue about Stephen King that is debated in most literary circles whether they are a book club down at the local library or the academic break room at a major university. He has legions of fans. He makes millions every time he puts out a new book which feels like four times a year. The problem is he is a genius. He isn't a genius in the way that Pynchon, Gaddis, or Wallace are geniuses. He is a genius storyteller. So if so many people are reading him he really can't be any good...can he?

Raeleen Lemay

2.5/5

Soooo I wasn't a huge fan of this. There were a few things about it that I enjoyed, but overall I found it to be boring and overly drawn out. Also not scary AT ALL which was my biggest disappointment.

I'll probably pick this up again someday, but I'm really not in the mood for this right now. Reading Harry Potter alongside this kind of ruined it for me.... Oops.