



## Gift books, movie tie-ins are selling in fiction area

By LAURI REESE  
Senior Staff Writer

From romances to mysteries to science fiction and fantasy books, fiction is selling better than ever, according to Merchandise Bulletin, published by B. Dalton Bookseller.

Sales of children's books, at least in B. Dalton stores, are growing rapidly and will continue to grow as the baby boom soars, according to the bulletin.

"Care Bears" books were successful in the last few months, along with Judy Blume books, "Chronicles of Narnia," the "Little House on the Prairie" series, E.B. White's books, "Anne of Green Gables" and "Walt Disney World" according to the bulletin.

Parents have been buying books they read as youngsters for their own children, the bulletin says.

A current trend is the "Sweet Valley High" series, featuring twin sisters, one spirited and the other good and studious, according to the bulletin, and books about friendship, like "Nothing's Fair in Fifth Grade," are becoming as popular as teenage romances.

The multiple-ending, reader participation books have been enjoying a wide readership for several years in the picky marketplace of 9 to 13-year-olds, according to the bulletin. This winter two new series have been introduced. One is part

novel and part game. Each book comes complete with combat system, monster encounters and score sheet. The reader supplies the imagination, dice, pencil and eraser. The price of the books is \$1.95 each. A few titles are "Warlock of Firetop Mountain," "Citadel of Chaos," and "Forest of Doom."

In the "Time Machine" books, the reader is assigned to a far-off place, is given a certain background of facts and survival gear, and through their own wit and cunning, the hero — who is the reader — must make choices that either advance or hamper the story toward the one correct ending. These books also cost \$1.95.

According to the bulletin, in 1983, sales of books with a Christmas theme increased by 75 percent in 1982. In the best sellers familiar characters like the Grinch, Santa Mouse, the Berenstain Bears, and the Littlest Angel starred.

Five of B. Dalton's list of 15 Christmas Specific Bestsellers had a religious theme and three versions of "The Night Before Christmas" made the list.

Gift books for all ages like the "Velveteen Rabbit" in all editions and the "Giving Tree" are selling well, according to the bulletin.

David Hamilton works at Book Land, in Post Oak Mall. He says he has noticed a trend in books being made into mini-series on television. In February

alone, three consecutive series were aired, based on the books "Celebrity," by Tommy Thompson, "Lace," by Shirley Conan and "Master of the Game," by Sidney Sheldon.

HBO's recent mini-series already has provided strong sales for the book "All the Rivers Run" and demonstrates the effect of strong promotion, according to the bulletin.

Many movies have come out or are coming out in the next few months that are based on books and should really boost sales, according to the bulletin. In March, *Hotel New Hampshire*, *Romancing the Stone*, starring Michael Douglas and Greystone will be released. *The Natural*, starring Robert Duvall and Robert Redford, *The Bounty*, starring Laurence Olivier and Anthony Hopkins and *Firestarter*, based on a Stephen King novel, should be released in May.

During the summer, the release of several movies based on books is planned. Some are *Pope of Greenwich Village*, *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*, *Stephen Spielberg's Gremlins*, *Last Starfighter*, *Conan: King of Thieves*, *Naked Face*, based on a Sidney Sheldon novel, *Supergirl*, starring Faye Dunaway and Peter O'Toole and *Stick*, starring Burt Reynolds, George Segal, Candice Bergen and Charles Durning.

According to the bulletin, the See "FICTION" page 11

## Horror writer reveals secrets

By LAURI REESE  
Senior Staff Writer

"I recognize terror as the finest emotion and so I will try to terrorize the reader. But if I find that I cannot terrify, I will try to horrify, and if I find that I cannot horrify, I'll go for the gross-out. I'm not proud," Stephen King, one of today's most popular horror story writers, says in one of his books.

The book, "Danse Macabre," gives what he calls "an informal overview of where the horror genre has been over the last 30 years."

He says good horror stories are a dance — a moving, rhythmic search for the place where the viewer or reader lives at his most primitive level.

It is a search for the room which may sometimes resemble the den of a Victorian gentleman, sometimes the torture chamber of the Spanish Inquisition, but — perhaps most frequently — the simple and brutally plain hole of a Stone Age cave-dweller, he says.

"The good horror tale will dance its way to the center of your life and find the secret door to the room you believed no one but you knew of," he says.

King, the author of current best seller "Pet Semetary," and horror stories like "Carrie," "Christine," "Cujo," "The Dead Zone" and "The Shining," to name a few, says books which have been the most successful almost always seem to play upon and express fears which exist across a wide spectrum of people.

Such fears are often political, economic and psychological rather than supernatural, he says in "Danse Macabre." Terror often arises from a pervasive sense of disestablishment — a sense that things are in the unmaking.

King says horror doesn't horrify unless the reader has been personally touched.

Horror in real life is an emotion that one grapples with all alone, he says. "It is a combat waged in the secret recesses of the heart," King says.

Horror, terror, fear and panic drive wedges between people and make them alone, he says.

King says horror movies and horror novels always have been popular but every 10 or 20 years they seem to enjoy a cycle of increased popularity and visibility, usually coinciding with periods of fairly serious economic and/or political strain.

For example, horror went through a boom period in the 1930s as people watched Boris Karloff creep through the dark with his cape up over his mouth in *Dracula*, he says.

Horror appeals to people because it says things they would be afraid to say themselves, King says. It gives them a chance to exercise emotions which society demands they keep closely in hand.

He says the horror film or novel is an invitation to indulge in deviant behavior by proxy — to commit gratuitous acts of violence, to indulge in dreams of power and to give in to the most craven fears.

Perhaps more than anything else, King says, the horror story says it's okay to join the mob — to destroy the outsider.

All tales of horror can be divided into two groups: those in which the horror results from an act of free and conscious will — a conscious decision to do evil — and those in which the horror is predestinate, coming from outside, he says.

Psychological horror stories that explore the terrain of the human heart almost always revolve around the free-will concept, King says.

Novels and horror stories which deal with "outside evil" often are harder to take seriously, he says. In the end, the nasty invaders from outer space are repelled or at the last possible instant the handsome young scientist comes up with the perfect solution.

Frankenstein, written by Mary Shelley when she was 19, probably has been the subject of more films than any other literary work in history, King says. Movies include *Frankenstein*, *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf-Man*, *The Revenge of Frankenstein*, *Blackenstein*, *Frankenstein 1970* and many more.

The thing, the vampire and the werewolf account for a large block of modern horror fiction, King says.

Creating horror is much the same as paralyzing an opponent with the martial arts, he says. It's the business of finding vulnerable points and then applying pressure there.

He says the most obvious and universal psychological pressure point is mortality.