

A guide to the references, nods, easter eggs, and homages in

“Look What You Made Me Do.”

As I’ve told nearly everyone I’ve sold this book to, “Look What You Made Me Do” is a love letter to every horror movie I’ve ever watched and fallen in love with. My ambition wasn’t to plagiarize the movies and books that I loved. It wasn’t to pointlessly name drop and quote lines like an annoying fanboy either. My goal was to weave the rich history of horror into the fabric of a plot from which a character couldn’t escape. And yes, to pay homage to the forebears of the genre I so enjoy playing in.

Beyond here lie SPOILERS. Most references are inconsequential or obvious, but if you read all of this before reading the book, you will discover the big plot twist the whole book hangs on. Don’t say I didn’t warn you.

A note on citation. This is not an academic paper, however I want to give credit and thanks and praise to the people who created this mountain of horror upon which I’ve built a dilapidated shack. In order to keep this list decluttered, I skipped the formal “in-text” citations, but included them all at the end. Also, rather than detailing the title, year of release, and production company of every movie in a franchise, I cited the first movie. You can find the rest in the series from there.

The most obvious influences are represented by the locations where Taylor believes she endured “that night.” The “Friday the 13th” franchise occurs perennially at “a cabin up north by a lake.” (Page 96.) Freddy Krueger of “A Nightmare on Elm Street” fame stalks through the dream landscape of “an eternal maze of metal catwalks, dripping pipes, and burning furnaces.” (Page 97.) Michael Myers’ chosen hunting ground was an “old neighborhood” where “quaint, little houses all in rows twisted through the development.” (Page 8.) And the antagonist of “The Shining” might very well be “a sprawling, abandoned hotel.” (Page 6.)

The plot itself borrows much more from two other films: “The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari,” and “A Clockwork Orange.” More than others, these films brought to mind the damage a manipulative mental health practitioner could inflict upon an unwary patient.

But my influences expand beyond that, and beyond the genre of horror even, at an exponential rate. So much so, I can really say what hasn’t contributed to this book. As a matter of fact, one way to sum up this book (with spoilers) is this: Eleanor Shelstrop (Kristen Bell, “The Good Place”), gets Clockwork Oranged into being Jason Vorhees. And of course, there are many mentions of pop singers like Taylor Swift and Miley Cyrus. But that’s not what we came here to talk about.

Below are a list of the easter eggs, homages, paraphrases, nods, and winks I could find. I may have missed some. I may have been unaware of others. But lest someone claim I'm stealing, I present the below as evidence that I am not stealing; I am paying tribute. Here is my taped confession:

The Cover: Yes, even the very title of the book is borrowed. I repurposed the title of the song after my daughter mentioned that "A lot of fan fiction is named after Taylor Swift songs." As soon as she said that, the title sprang to my mind and I was never able to find anything else nearly as fitting.

Page 5: And of course the first name of our protagonist is the second nod to the source of the title. Her last name however comes from a very different personality. From here on out, I'll focus strictly on the horror influences.

Page 5: I wanted to show my work early, and give readers an early clue that while Taylor might not be fan of horror movies, she's definitely, somehow, very familiar with them. "Do you think Nancy Thompson ever stopped having nightmares? What's your bet that Wendy Torrance quit staying in hotels? You really think Laurie Strode grew up to be a well-balanced high-functioning woman who sent her kids out trick or treating?" The movies Taylor's talking about are naturally, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, *The Shining*, and *Halloween*.

Page 6: "The year was One." and "What have they done to him? What have they done to his eyes?" These are lines from "Rosemary's Baby, an early and often overlooked horror film.

Page 9: "Don't you remember how Sally Hardesty looked when she rode away in the pickup at the end of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*? Look me in the eyes and tell me that Ellen Ripley carried on with her life not checking over her shoulder with each step she took. Do you honestly believe that Sidney Prescott ever stopped screaming?" - *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, *Alien*, *Scream*.

Page 10: Dr. Cal Hagari's name is a nod to the movie that ushered horror into the cinema, the 1920 German Expressionist silent film, "The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari."

Page 15: You might be thinking of a certain hockey mask wearing camp counselor killing slather, but Taylor's boss is a nod to Jason Pargin, pen name David Wong, who wrote "John Dies at the End."

Page 16: Robert - Robert Englund, director and actor of "A Nightmare on Elm Street."

Page 16: Roman - George Romero, the father of zombies, famous for his *Living Dead* series.

Page 16: Barbara - As Taylor points out much later, her coworker shares the name of the female lead in "Night of the Living Dead."

Page 22: It might become more evident later on, but Taylor has named her dog after the equally short, squat, snarky, and fictitious “Chucky” from the “Child’s Play” series.

Page 23: “Some warmed-up lentil soup with a nice chianti from the bistro downtown sounded wonderful.” Hannibal Lector also spoke of enjoying fava beans and a nice chianti in “Silence of the Lambs.”

Page 24 (and again on Page 58): Almost as if Ghostface called her up and asked, Taylor volunteers “I don’t like scary movies.” - *Scream*

Page 24: “This one was the one with Jamie Lee Curtis. A Jamie Lee Curtis young enough to play a teenager.” - “Halloween.”

Page 30: Cheryl, Scotty, Ash, Linda, and Shelton are all named after characters in the *Evil Dead* franchise, as Taylor will learn later.

Page 60; “Chuck,” I called through my empty house. I liked my house empty, understand. Without the intrusions. But I was missing my puppers. “Heeerrreee Chucky. Want to play?” Is she anticipating finding a pug that just might answer, “Hi, I’m Chucky. Want to play?” Page 78: Barb’s husband, Wes, is a nod to the legend Wes Craven who created such gems as *The Last House on the Left*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, *The People Under the Stairs*, and most notoriously, *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and *Scream*.

Page 85: Taylor’s last name of “Mosley” is my homage Bill Mosley, the legendary horror movie bad guy who played “Choptop” in *Chainsaw Massacre 2*, and Otis Driftwood in *The Firefly Trilogy* of “*House of a 1000 Corpses*” “*Devil’s Rejects*,” and “*3 From Hell*.”

Page 86: Stephen Hanson is another two’fer. Named after my idol Stephen King and Gunnar Hanson who played *Leatherface* in “*The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*.”

Page 88: Tyler Haig is named after the legendary Sid Haig. Haig and Mosley co-starred in the *Firefly* series.

Page 106: Perhaps this is the theme of the book in a sentence: “We are all Carrie White.” Of course, we’re talking about Carrie White, the protagonist (antagonist?) in “*Carrie*.”

Page 108: A slew of named 70s exploitation movies: *Last House on the Left*, *The Hills Have Eyes*, and *Sleepover Massacre*.

Page 116: “The TV flickered static, then a shot from *Friday the 13th*, then *Hellraiser*, *Creepshow*, *Children of the Corn*, *The Thing*, *They Live*, *Critters*, *Alien*, *The Exorcist*, *Poltergeist*... endlessly.” By now, you have to be wondering why horror movies keep appearing on Taylor’s TV.

Page 129: ““Yeah, well, it’s like the line from that one movie, ‘Sometimes, dead is better,’” I quoted.” The movie Taylor doesn’t know she’s quoting is “Pet Semetary.”

Page 134: “Anarchy in the streets! Human sacrifice! Dogs and cats living together! Mass hysteria!” Even Stephen catches this one, probably because “Ghostbusters” is more of a mainstream comedy than a horror flick.

Page 139: Barb’s last name is Carpenter, a nod to filmmaker John Carpenter, who’s responsible for such classics as “Halloween,” “The Thing,” “They Live,” and more.

Page 147: The classic scene from the Exorcist: “A little girl in a nightgown knelt in front of it. She reached her hands out and set them against the screen within a screen, then turned her eyes over her shoulder, met my gaze, and sang, “They’re heeere.””

Page 151: In the movie “The Shining,” the room that Doc has no business being in, is Room 237. In the book, the room is 217.

Page 171: Here comes the motherload. How little or how great the list of the following movies directly contributed to me writing this book is hard to say. But they all deserved their limelight. “*The Exorcist* with the scariest little girl to ever appear in a horror flick, despite all the black-haired, soaking-wet mimics that came around in the late nineties and early two thousands that followed the path that Regan blazed. *Texas Chainsaw Massacre* and its “true story” that brought 70s exploitation films into the mainstream. *Halloween* that solidified “Slasher Flick” as an enduring genre. *Friday the 13th*, with Jason in his famous hockey mask not appearing until Part III that perfected the art. *A Nightmare on Elm Street* and its inferior, more surreal, but campier sequels. There were more. Plenty more.” “*A Clockwork Orange*. *Re-Animator*. *Scream*. *Child’s Play*. *Rosemary’s Baby*. *It Follows*. *Hellraiser*. *Jennifer’s Body*. *Alien*. *House of a Thousand Corpses*. *I Spit on Your Grave*. *Paranormal Activity*. *Get Out*. *Silence of the Lambs*. *Hereditary*. *Nosferatu*. *From Dusk Till Dawn*. *The Blair Witch Project*. *The Cabin in the Woods*. *The Hills Have Eyes*. *The Conjuring*. *The Shining*. *The Thing*. *The Omen*. *The Fly*. *Saw*. *Us*. *X*. *It*. Old. New. Big budget. Grindhouse. Oscar winners. Cult classics. All of them.”

Page 172: And now we learn the source of the names of Taylor’s imaginary friends (excluding Cheryl.) “*The Evil Dead*. A woman was climbing out of a grave, only for a bloody arm to grab her by the throat and pull her back down. I remembered this one as well as the rest. Ash, the hero, was forced to kill off all of his friends as they each turned into zombies, one by one. There was his best friend Scotty, his girlfriend Linda, Cheryl, and...Oh my god. The characters. Ash and Linda. Scotty and Cheryl. Shelly instead of Shelton. And no Taylor. But those people. They weren’t my friends. They were Ash’s.”

Page 173: “Take your medicine!” is a line repeated over and over again by Jack Torrance in Stephen King’s book “The Shining.”

Page 173: Dr. Cal sounds a lot like Pinhead from Hellraiser, saying “I have such sights to show her!”

Page 173: “Those killers had been Jason Vorhees, Michael Meyers, Freddy Krueger, and Jack Torrence. My only real villain, I understood now, was Doctor Cal Hagari.” Meanwhile, the original Doctor Caligari is perhaps the very first horror movie villain.

Page 189: My favorite reference, and I hope yours as well. Lifted from Night of the Living Dead, “I’m coming to get you, Baaaaarrbar!”

Page 189: A quote from Otis Driftwood in House of a 1000 Corpses, “That’s right,” I told him. “I’m the devil, and I’m here to do the devil’s work.” And then, calling out Taylor for her plagiarism (not my plagiarism; my *character’s* plagiarism) Ash tells Taylor, “That’s not your line!”

Page 190: “As I took up the pitchfork, I snarled at him, “I am God.”” Freddy Krueger once felt the same way.

Page 192: The words of Misses Vorhee’s ring in Taylor’s ears “Kill them, Taylor. Kill them! Don’t let them get away! Don’t let them live!”

Page 193: “But I had gone mad. Don’t we all? Sometimes?” A paraphrase of Normal Bates’ famous line in Psycho. An understatement, if there ever was one.

Did you catch all of them? Most of them? Did I catch all of them? I’m not sure I did. Sometimes when people ask where I get my ideas, I tell them that my brain is a blender into which I dump books, movies, poems, art, music, and my own life experiences. I’m often unaware of what makes it into this mental blender, but I am adamant that what comes out is my smoothie. Of course, I’m more than happy to share my smoothie with all of you. I hope you enjoyed this sweet mix of books, movies, songs, and insanity! Cheers!

Citations/Watch-list:

A Clockwork Orange. (1971). Warner Bros.

A Nightmare on Elm Street. (1984). New Line Cinema.

Alien. (1979). 20th Century Fox.

The Blair Witch Project. (1999). Haxan Films.

The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari. (1920). Decla-Bioscop.

Carrie. (1976). United Artists.

Children of the Corn. (1984). New World Pictures.

Child's Play. (1988). MGM/UA Entertainment Co.

Creepshow. (1982). Warner Bros.

Critters. (1990). New Line Cinema.

Evil Dead. (1981). New Line Cinema.

From Dusk Till Dawn. (1996). Dimension Films.

Ghostbusters. (1984). Columbia Pictures.

Get Out. (2017). Universal Pictures.

Hellraiser. (1987). New World Pictures.

Hereditary. (2018). A24.

Halloween. (1978). Compass International Pictures.

I Spit on Your Grave. (1978). Cinemation Industries.

It. (2017). Warner Bros.

It Follows. (2014). Radius-TWC.

Jennifer's Body. (2009). Fox Atomic.

John Dies at the End. (2012). Magnet Releasing.

The Exorcist. (1973). Warner Bros.

The Fly. (1986). 20th Century Fox.

The Hills Have Eyes. (1977). Fox.

The Last House on the Left. (1972). Victor Films.

The Omen. (1976). 20th Century Fox.

Night of the Living Dead. (1968). Image Ten.

Nosferatu. (1922). Prana Film.

Paranormal Activity. (2007). Paramount Pictures.

Pet Sematary. (1989). Paramount Pictures.

Poltergeist. (1982). Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

Psycho. (1960). Paramount Pictures.

Re-animator. (1985). Empire Pictures.

Rosemary's Baby. (1968). Paramount Pictures.

Saw. (2004). Lionsgate.

Scream. (1996). Dimension Films.

Sleepover Massacre. (1987). Concorde Pictures.

Silence of the Lambs. (1991). Orion Pictures.

The Shining. (1980). Warner Bros.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. (1974). Bryanston Pictures.

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre Part 2. (1986). Cannon Group.

They Live. (1988). Universal Pictures.

The Thing. (1982). Universal Pictures.

The People Under the Stairs. (1991). Universal Pictures.

Us. (2019). Universal Pictures.

X. (2022). A24.