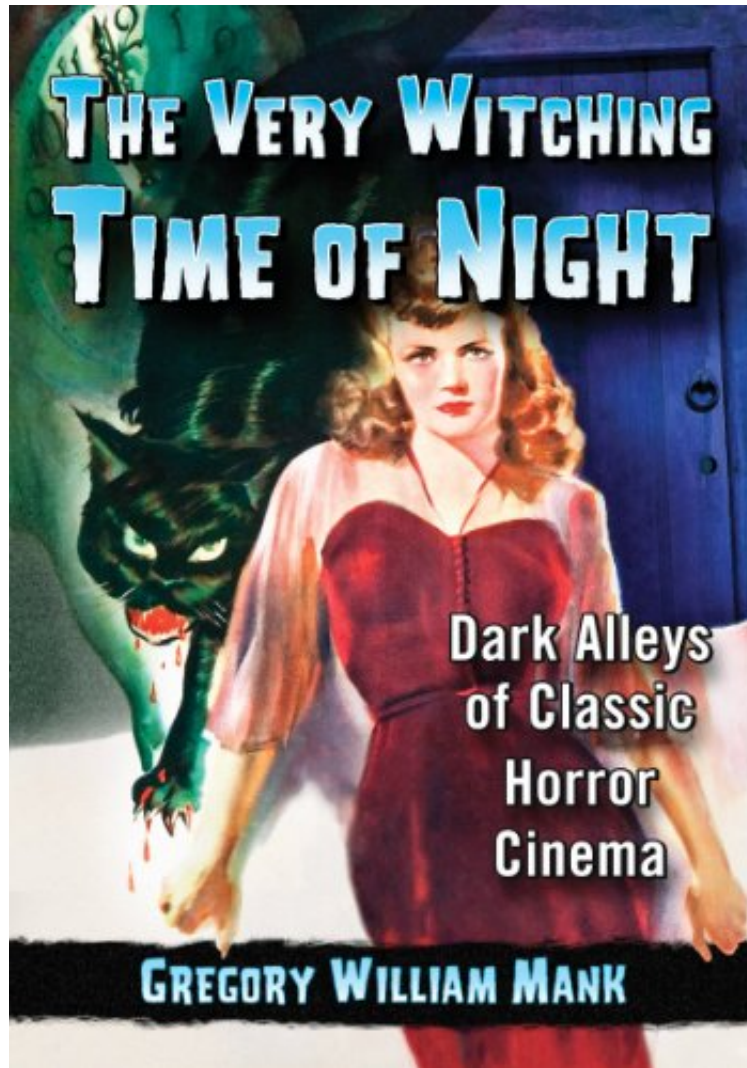


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## The Very Witching Time of Night: Dark Alleys of Classic Horror Cinema

Gregory William Mank

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**Gregory William Mank : The Very Witching Time of Night: Dark Alleys of Classic Horror Cinema** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Very Witching Time of Night: Dark Alleys of Classic Horror Cinema:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Classic Hollywood HistoryBy Brad BakerGregory Mank's "The Very Witching Time of Night" is not a film history, but a series of well-written essays on personalities and events from the early American, sound horror-movie cycle. It's good. Very good. The first chapter is a biography of 1931

"Dracula"s Helen Chandler, a delicate, disturbed actress who abused alcohol, married three times, and lost her career. Eventually, her brother had her committed to a sanatorium. Tom Conway, Bela Lugosi, Mae Murray, and King Baggot are part of a list of celebrities who also tasted Hollywood success but ended their days in poverty and obscurity. In another chapter, Mank looks at the troubled 1943 production of "Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman". During shooting, Bela Lugosi as Frankenstein passed-out on a studio-set bed, and had to be revived. Later, Maria Ouspenskaya and Lon Chaney Jr. were riding in a cart-wagon through the countryside when Ouspenskaya fell out of the wagon. She had to be rushed to the hospital. Another chapter is an interview with the son of Lionel "Pinky" Atwill. Once a major star (and director), Atwill fell from grace after a 1940 Pacific Palisades sex-party. Charges were filed, and the scandal would tarnish and ruin Pinky's career. Another chapter looks at John Carradine's Shakespeare career. Funded by himself, Carradine pledged "I'm through with Hollywood forever!". When his stage ambitions tanked, Carradine went back to making movies. He would act in films almost to the day he died, in 1988, at age 82. Carradine died in Milan Italy, while attending a film festival for his finest director, John Ford. "The Very Witching Time of Night" fashions many intriguing episodes of Hollywood horror, and Mank has assembled a classy cluster of photographs (many of which I've never seen). Still another chapter revolves around Warner Bros. "Svengali (1931)" and "The Mad Genius (1931)", both starring John Barrymore. In the beginning of this chapter, Mank envisions Barrymore waking at dawn (hardly) in his legendary "Bella Vista" mansion, which he bought from director King Vidor. Bella Vista sat on a high hill-top at 6 Tower Road. A few years ago, I was staying in Beverly Hills, and I decided I must see John's Bella Vista. Armed with maps and an old history, I drove up Benedict Canyon, behind the Beverly Hills Hotel. The road winds higher and narrows, and almost seems to want to lose you. Finally, I found Tower Road, a steep little impasse that finally winds and turns into a dirt road. At the very top of this hill, Tower Road is erased, and becomes Seabright Place. 6 Tower Road, or properly 9941 Tower Lane, is now 1400 Seabright Place. Bella Vista, that sturdy classic, was torn down years ago. And on that very spot, at the top of the hill, is a shining, fence-enshrouded new mansion, glaring in the hot California sun. To the left and to the right are imposing signs: "Stay Away. Visitors Not Wanted. No Stopping. Prosecution." Of course, I sadly did not stay...I was sad that day...What would John have thought? 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant research, entertainingly written. By Vincent Simonelli I have read a number of Greg Mank books and all are thoroughly enjoyable and well written in a friendly manner that belies his meticulous and exhaustive research. This book is no exception. Each chapter is devoted to a different topic that fans of classic horror cinema will find interesting. Topics include Boris Karloff's work at Warner Bros., the making of Murders in the Zoo and Frankenstein meets the Wolfman, and an interview with the son of Lionel Atwill. All chapters are well written and interesting, and travel ground not tread upon in other classic horror books. The book has a high number of quality stills, including many I had never seen before. I highly recommend this book, and all of Greg's books, to fans of fantastic cinema. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. There are chapters devoted to subjects you might expect like actor John Carradine or the film Frankenstein Meet the ... By William If you're a fan of classic horror films and Hollywood history, this book is well worth your time. The 13 chapters deal with subjects Gregory W. Mank believed weren't large enough for a book on their own. There are chapters devoted to subjects you might expect like actor John Carradine or the film Frankenstein Meet the Wolfman. Mank also has several surprising chapters like the one about Mae Clarke suing a Los Angeles tv horror film show and John Barrymore's portrayal of Svengali. Mank gives an amazing amount of detail. It may be more the casual reader might want. My only criticism is occasional speculations into what a person might have been thinking at a particular time. It's a minor gripe. My review is based on the Kindle edition.

The book covers unusual and often surprising areas of horror film history: (1) The harrowingly tragic life of Dracula's leading lady, Helen Chandler, as intimately remembered by her sister-in-law. (2) John Barrymore's 1931 horror vehicles Svengali and The Mad Genius, and their rejection by the public. (3) The disastrous shooting of 1933's Murders in the Zoo, perhaps the most racy of all Pre-Code horror films. (4) A candid interview with the son of legendary horror star Lionel Atwill. (5) The censorship battles of One More River, as waged by Frankenstein director James Whale. (6) The adventures (and misadventures) of Boris Karloff as a star at Warner Bros. (7) The stage and screen versions of the horror/comedy Arsenic and Old Lace. (8) Production diaries of the horror noirs Cat People and The Curse of the Cat People. (9) Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man revisited. (10) Horror propaganda: The production of Hitler's Madman. (11) Horror star John Carradine and the rise and fall of his Shakespearean Repertory Company. (12) The Shock! Theatre television phenomenon. And (13) A Tribute to Carl Laemmle, Jr., producer of the original Universal horror classics, including an interview with his lady friend of almost 40 years.

"Mank yokes a fan boy's obsessive enthusiasm with meticulous research. And after 35 years of research and ten books, he has navigated many quirky side streets off the horror film main drag...beautiful black-and-white production stills throughout, Mank and McFarland's tag-teamed volume will be a winner in genre film collections" --Library Journal About the Author Gregory William Mank, a Delta, Pennsylvania, freelance writer, has acted in more than 100

stage productions. He has written numerous books on classic horror films.