

Good Gore!

By Alex Taft

So the other day, I was writing a session for a Dungeons and Dragons campaign I'm running, and I wanted to have this really gory scene to add a bit of spice and shock factor to the story, but here's the problem: all of the gore descriptions that came to mind either just seemed like they weren't good enough and/or just came off as edgy for the sake of being edgy. Yeah, I could just make some blatant gory descriptions of surroundings like "blood and guts were splattered everywhere!", but that's nowhere near descriptive enough, and that lack of oomph from the basicness of it just makes the description sound like a cringey post by a 12-year-old on some creepypasta site.

After doing some research on how to write good gore and fiddling with some of my own ideas, I eventually wrote a satisfactory gore description. With this new knowledge of how to write exemplary gore, and with it being the spooky season, I figured I'd share some gore writing advice so all of you wonderful people can go out and write your own gory horror short stories for Halloween.

First off, you absolutely HAVE to be very, very descriptive (Writing Gore). Do not hold back a single gruesome detail of what you're writing. Don't just write "blood splattered everywhere". That's not descriptive enough to invoke a good image into the reader's mind. Where did the blood splatter? How did it react with the environment? Did it make any sounds? Did it produce a smell? Did it feel or look a certain way? Ask yourself all of these questions and more, according to whatever gory scene you're describing. Looking up facts about whatever bodily horror you're describing and how it may react to the environment in different situations is also extremely helpful for making these descriptions truly haunt the reader's dreams.

Metaphors and similes are your friends. Gore is meant to be disgusting, and the best way to invoke that feeling of disgust is by comparing the gore to things that people are more familiar with via metaphors and similes. Gore is something that's hard to relate to; it's almost mythical in the sense that even though we can picture what it looks like, it's hard to really comprehend it since a vast majority of us (I hope) haven't seen extreme gore in real life. For example, you could describe the sound of someone walking through blood as the sound of an oversaturated sponge being squeezed. A sponge is something that people use in their everyday lives and everyone knows what a sponge sounds like, so by relating



the sound of the blood to the sound of a sponge, you're creating a vivid and familiar sound in your reader's head that's sure to make them cringe (in a good way) at least a little bit. The absolute best comparisons you can make are food comparisons, because it makes the reader associate whatever disgusting and horrendous thing you're describing with something they put in their mouths and eat (Writing in Dark).

Make sure you describe the reactions of anyone who sees the gore. It can be easy to just get lost in describing a horrendous scene, and as a result, completely forget that your characters involved in or witnessing the gore are going to have human reactions to it. When your character reacts to it in a certain way, it helps the reader experience a similar reaction due to them being able to relate to the character, especially if you make the character very likable and/or relatable to the reader.

Try to use more professional terms to describe the gore. This tip goes hand and hand with being more descriptive; more professional terms allow the image of the gore to be more vivid. Saying that insides were everywhere creates a basic feeling, but getting more specific and professional with the wording by instead saying something like "entrails" creates more vivid gore. If you write gore, I highly suggest pulling up a list of medical terms for a bunch of different parts of the human anatomy so you can get really professional and descriptive in your writing.

Your gore should have a purpose (The Expectations of). If your gorey scene has no significance and/or doesn't progress the plot at all, then it's more so just gore for the pure sake of gore, which could cause it to be taken less seriously by the reader. The exception to this rule is if you're writing what's known as a "blood bath" story, which really is just meant to be a story that's as gory as humanly possible, even when the gore adds absolutely nothing to the plot or is insignificant.

Finally, make sure you maintain at least some realism. If your gore descriptions are absolutely over the top and unrealistic for the scenario, your gore can become laughable and completely fail to serve its purpose, no matter how descriptive you get with it. Basically, just don't do something like have someone's entire head explode because they got hit in the face with a baseball bat.

That's it, now go off and write the most horrible thing you can imagine!