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## *Trailer & Summary*

The Shining, released in 1980, is Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Stephen King's novel. In short, a struggling, alcoholic writer named Jack is hired as sole caretaker of a summer resort that shuts down for the winters. He brings along his wife and his secretly prescient son. Isolation and evil spirits lead to Jack's mental breakdown and his violent nature awakes. Who can escape?







# HORROR



Being a horror movie, it stands to reason that *The Shining* would employ horror. Never is this more apparent than the now classic scene of dark red blood bursting from the shafts through two closed elevator doors and flooding the hallway, carrying furniture in a torrent and covering the camera lens in a rage of red. The torrent of blood is a reference and wordplay to Jack Torrance and the murderous spirits that tenant the Overlook Hotel. The blood spilling elevators is not congealed the way blood normally is; it flows easily and is more like the viscosity of Jack's bourbon. The blood--now his redrum (more wordplay), his alcoholism--paints his world in red and upheaves the cushioned seats along the wall, a symbol of the destruction of Jack's family and their domesticity.





# TERROR

Despite the imagistic horror, the impetus of *The Shining*, a film where only one character is murdered on screen, is rooted more firmly in terror than horror. I let my kids watch the first forty-five minutes of the movie because there are no gruesome scenes, and yet it still scared them. The movie creates a sense of terror with its creepy score, and the slow, deliberate, winding shots through the mountains, hallways, ballrooms, and labyrinthine corridors. There is always a pervading air of something, unseen but sensed, leaving a trace of terror in the mind of the viewer. Two girls in blue dresses standing shoulder to shoulder is only frightening when it "calls up the terror of things unseen but suggested to the mind of characters and readers [or viewers]." As Danny's inner psyche, Tony, tells him, "It's just like pictures in a book, Danny. It isn't real."





# ENTRAPMENT

Being trapped, feelings and talk of claustrophobia, cabin fever, mazes, hallways, corridors, all of these deal with the theme of physical and psychological entrapment in *The Shining*. I went to the library and checked out the director's cut DVD. The first thing I noticed when I put it on was that it was not in wide screen format. I found this odd since it was dubbed the "Stanley Kubrick Collection." So I looked for the small print on the back of the case, and found this: "Feature is presented in the full aspect ratio of the original camera negative, as Stanley Kubrick intended." Maybe I'm reading too much into it, but a full screen ratio does give more of a cramped, confined feeling to a movie. Perhaps that was what Kubrick intended by making it full screen.







## *ENTRAPMENT (Continued)*

Much like the tradition of westerns, *The Shining* begins with panoramic views of open wilderness that progressively close in and tighten until eventually the viewer is inside the Overlook Hotel with Jack Torrance, and the world of confinement that the viewer will watch for the next 144 minutes is established.

Every member of the Torrance family feels trapped on multiple levels. Wendy is trapped in a marriage and trapped in a snowed-in hotel. Later in the story she is temporarily trapped in the hedge maze with Danny (as Jack almost omnisciently looks over them in the maze model in the hotel), and then she is trapped in the bathroom by her axe-wielding husband. Danny is trapped by his prescient and inescapable abilities manifested by the boy who lives in his mouth, Tony. If Danny could keep from seeing the horrors of the Overlook he would, but he cannot evade them. At the end, and one could take an Oedipal perspective here, Danny is pursued by his father through the hedge maze. Jack becomes the embodiment of the labyrinth's keeper, the minotaur, when he begins howling incomprehensibly for his son, his prey. Danny, after back tracking and tricking his father, escapes and runs into the arms of his mother. His father, previously trapped by his addictions and repressed violent desires, is now forever trapped in the labyrinth of the Overlook Hotel.





# DOPPELGÄNGER

There is a repeated doubling motif throughout the movie: the two colors red and blue are intentionally prevalent; the two sisters (possible twins); the present Jack and the Jack from 1921 in the photograph, the two people who shine (Danny and Dick); Jack and Grady (the two homicidal fathers); Danny and Tony; mother-son, father-son, and husband-wife relationships; even the word labyrinth plays into the doubling theme--originally it meant "house of the double axe."







## *DOPPELGÄNGER (Continued)*



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# *DOPPELGANGER (Continued)*