

Slasher Movies: Female Victims or Survivors?

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Slasher Movies: Female Victims or Survivors?

“[Scary movies are] all the same. Some stupid killer stalking some big-breasted girl who can’t act who’s always running up the stairs when she should be running out the front door. It’s insulting,” claims the character Sidney, in the movie *Scream* (1996).

This stereotype is what many movie fans and [critics](#) believe when the topic of slasher films arise. Slasher films normally include a psychotic killer (either real or supernatural), a number of victims (often female), and usually the only person alive at the end of the movie is a female. Yet, one has to question these stereotypes. Are slasher films really that degrading towards women? Feminist critics tend to focus on females being mutilated in these films, despite the fact that just as many men die in most horror [movies](#) as women. Is it fair to claim horror movies are sexist when men and women both die in horror movies, and it is often a woman who is able to outsmart the killer and survive the entire movie? Are women in slasher films really victims or are they strong survivors?

The first misconception about slasher films is the idea that women are the main victims in these movies. According to Vera Dika:

Although it may at first seem that the violence in these films is directed overwhelmingly against women, a closer look reveals a curious fact.... There seems to be a pronounced tendency across these films to be evenhanded. In [Halloween](#), for example, the majority of victims are female. But in Friday the 13th and Graduation Day the victims are as often male as female; in Happy Birthday to Me all but one of the killer's victims are male. (90)

In movies like The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974) and Nightmare on Elm Stre...

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...a Hill. Dir. John Carpenter. Prod. Debra Hill. With Jamie Lee Curtis and Donald Pleasence. Compass, 1978.

Nightmare on Elm Street. Written and Dir. Wes Craven. Prod. Robert Shaye. With Robert Englund. New Line Cinema, 1984.

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Scream. By Kevin Williamson. Prod. Cary Woods and Cathy Konrad. Dir. Wes Craven. With David Arquette, Neve Campbell, and Courteney Cox. Dimension Films, 1996.

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