



## Bad Ronald

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Up to his seventeenth year no one regarded Ronald as anything but a rather large, overfed youth, probably best ignored. Perhaps that was the trouble--no one really took a good look at Ronald. Except for his devoted mother, who saw only the son she wanted to see. Who, then, is Ronald? Ronald is that faceless unknown who waits - to take, to grab what he needs, to become the ultimate invader.

## Bad Ronald Details

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Author : John Holbrook Vance , Jack Vance

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## **From Reader Review Bad Ronald for online ebook**

### **Robert says**

This 1973 suspense thriller is centered on a rather sheltered, socially awkward 17 year-old young man named Ronald, who accidentally kills a young girl. His stern but loving mother seals him off in a hidden room in their old house to shelter him from the law. Trouble is, mom eventually dies, leaving Ronald to fend for himself in his little hiding place. When a family with three nubile daughters moves in soon afterward things get even more complicated.

Like many others, I first encountered Bad Ronald with the cult 1974 made-for-television adaptation starring Scott Jacoby as Ronald and Kim Hunter as his mother. Jacoby's Ronald was presented far more sympathetically than the dangerous sociopath depicted in the book; his Ronald went bad due more to unfortunate circumstances, whereas the book's Ronald is a weird sicko right from the get-go. At any rate, the idea of someone living in your house in a secret room, watching your every move is a really frightening one, and author Vance makes the most of it. Though the dialogue is often pretty awkward (his teenagers do not sound anything remotely like teenagers in real life), this is an unpretentious, creepy-crawly tale that maintains an undeniable grip, right up until the end.

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### **Maartje says**

Oh.. My... God! This book took me by surprise completely! I love creepy books and read a lot of them. But this might well be the scariest one I've ever encountered. Never have I hated a fictional character as much as I hate Ronald. This horrible little shit made me even angrier than Guy Woodhouse (Rosemary's Baby), Bud Corliss (A Kiss Before Dying) and Frederick Clegg (The Collector), just to name a few utterly despicable characters.

As a rule, I stay away from books that depict sexual violence, but I was drawn well into the story and characters before I realized that Ronald is -more than anything else- a sexual deviant and pervert. Unfortunately, his character is all too recognizable in real life. Ronald is devoid of any human traits; he resembles what I'd like to call "an entity", obsessed with himself and his own pathetic needs only, f.e. his fixation on food.

This book made me sick to my stomach but still, I couldn't put it down. The idea of an "inside-the-house" stalker is very, very original and executed so well, it's completely believable.

I can't help but give this book 5 stars.

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### **Harlan Vaughn says**

Just want to put it out there that this book is now available as an inexpensive download for Kindle on Amazon... as are all of Vance's other works. It was the allure of the \$75 print copy that made me download it.

As others have said, the writing is very, very dry. Vance does a great job of handling the insider/outsider perspective right up to the very end - there was no mention of Ronald's point of view in the last ten or so

pages, making what could have been excellent rising tension rather anticlimactic.

In any regard, it was well worth a read, if only for the antiquated phrases and the empathy placed upon this creepy teenager. I almost felt bad for poor Ronald, er, I mean... Bad Ronald.

The story has great continuity, and Vance handles the close details of Ronald's existence well. I would have liked more showing in the final scenes, though - especially the one leading right up to the ending (!).

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### **Ashley says**

Thank you Mark Monday for the great review that got me interested in this book. It was a great read and I would not have found it if not for your awesome review!!!

WOW!!! This has to be one of the most creepiest books I have ever came across. It's from the early 70's(1973) and its just a very scary read. I was iffy at first the book was kinda slow, but its about a young man who is weirdly attached to his mother. He is a Narcissist, misogynist. The whole time he plans and acts out the most terrifying and cruel things to do to girls, I seen him a a person who blamed others for HIS problems, especially women! it was a sad tragic and scary book but i am glad to have got the chance to read it. I looked for a print copy of this book and because it has been out of print for so long i could only find ones that were \$200-400!!! So i just got the book from iTunes and a wow am i glad i did, it was a experience to read. I think it scared me the most because it could happen ya know not like Freddy Kruger getting you in your dreams, or a good guy doll coming to life. Some one could be in your house and wait for you and do ANYTHING!!! That essentially was what got me creeped out the most. But I recommend this book to everyone! It's an old book but its well written and has great thriller/suspense quality to it.

Thanks again Mark Monday for the review that got me started on this great book!!!

(view spoiler)

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### **Kat says**

The author was a thinker far outside the box, very creative, creepy, freaky, and don't read it alone at night. I read this in the 7th grade along with most of the 7th grade class in my school and I seriously suspect that many of us slept with the lights on for a long time. We had one copy of the book and it was passed around. By the time I got it the book was so dog eared it should have been retired but it kept on going, sort of like the energizer bunny. A rape & murder, a secret room, creeping around at night, smart girls with a sack of flour...

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### **Iris Rassios says**

3,5/5 - Bonne lecture, mais l'écriture parfois ironique de l'auteur est un peu dérangeante. Les faits souvent barbares sont décrits de manière « romancée » et il y a un manque d'aspect psychologique des personnages.

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## mark monday says

poor Ronald! an introvert, a dreamer, a lonely soul who creates his own intricately detailed fantasy world of wizards and adventure. what's a boy to do when he is left to his own devices, with no mother to take care of him, just a big old house that no longer even belongs to him. well, maybe just keep within the walls of the house, in that secret room, right? surely no one will notice! certainly not the family of four who innocently move into the house, naively thinking themselves its sole residents. little do they know... poor, creepy Ronald *is watching their every move through the walls*. shudder! maybe Ronald is in your house right now, watching YOU. say his name out loud three times in a mirror and see what happens!

Jack Vance is best known as one of the most elegant and individualistic writers of classic science fiction and fantasy. he is a true original and one of my favorite authors. and apparently, he had a profitable little sideline in MURDER! i'm not too familiar with his tales of murderous mysteries, mainly because they are fucking expensive beyond belief. i don't know how i even got a hold of this one. i should probably sell it, and make millions.

the writing is bone dry, which is typical for Vance. he does not sympathize with Ronald. he does not demonize Ronald either. Vance's portrait of a deranged, murderous teen outsider is dry, sly, a little evil, a lot cold-blooded. this is Vance in his stripped-down, streamlined mode, so no lush description. but lots and lots of skin-crawling, psychological *ick*. if you are able to find this one, prepare to read a story of murder and rape (molestation actually, ugh) that is creepy beyond belief but written in the style of an ironic and deadly little fairy tale for adults. at times i was reminded of the equally perverted tale of deranged kids, Banks' The Wasp Factory. both books have a lot of palpable tension and eerie weirdness mixed in with all of the darkly comic bits. but Bad Ronald also has two smart young ladies who know how to figure things out and then take care of business, hooray!

the character of Bad Ronald is at times grossly whiny and self-pitying, and therefore incredibly aggravating. sometimes when i add a book to GoodReads, i write a little placeholder, some sentences to remind me of my initial reaction. here's what i first wrote, who knows when:

*i bet his face is just really... punchable. especially when he twists it up into that cringing, "boo hoo hoo poor me" expression that he loves so much. it is like he is secretly begging you to plant one on him, if only to get him to stop whinging & cringing.*

my gosh, how unsympathetic. perhaps i am just as lacking in empathy and affect as Bad Ronald! apropos of nothing, i have to mention that that italicized bit was also my description of Justin Long, written somewhere else. i cannibalized myself in my own placeholder, huh. and on that note:

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## BRN Terri says

I'm going to review the novel then give my opinion on the two films that were based on it.

**THE NOVEL:** I really like the idea of a hidden room in someone's house. He could only hear through the

walls then had the idea to drill peepholes so he could actually see the occupants. He knew everything that was going on, pretty much.

People in their reviews describe Ronald as lonely and strange but we only met him a week before the first murder and I didn't see any of that. Nothing about him leading up to the first murder made me think he was odd or different. He seems pretty passive and easygoing and a definite mamma's boy. She dictates his future and tells him he's going to be a doctor and he goes along with it without expressing an opinion.

I don't like that Ellen and Duane figured out that Ronald kidnapped both sisters or understand how they come to that conclusion. No one had seen or heard from Ronald since Carol was murdered many months before yet they knew he was behind the disappearances? And Duane figuring out there was a hidden room is one thing but to know it was built around bathroom? Nope.

The ending was silly and could have been so much better. I really wish Ronald had gotten away with his dirty deeds but it wasn't to be. He could have gone on to anonymously terrorize the neighborhood and there could have been a sequel or three. The ending of both films were better than that of the novel.

None of the rapes are detailed at all.

**THE FILM:** The only way the film was better than the novel was the ending, with Ronald crashing through the wall and running outside. It's more believable than that of the novel. I don't understand why he didn't just escape through the trapdoor in the lair, down into the crawlspace, then outside to freedom when he saw Althea staring back at him through the peephole.

Also in the film the girl he likes, Laurie Matthews (Laurel Hansen in the book), is the older sister of Carol, the little girl he kills. In the novel they aren't related.

Actress Lisa Eilbacher played oldest daughter Ellen. I know and like her in the so-bad-it's-good Charles Bronson film *Ten to Midnight*.

You can watch *Bad Ronald* here, part 2.

### **Méchant garçon-**

There's a French version from 1992 called *Méchant garçon* and you can watch it here. I don't speak French and have no idea what's being said but I watched it anyway. It wasn't good. It's boring for the most part and not suspenseful. Ronald was played by an actor named Joachim Lombard.

The film's in French until the new British family move into the house, then the rest of the film has French subtitles. It opens with a black screen with white credits rolling. During that we hear a female screaming and struggling with someone. Next, Ronald's at home talking to his mother, likely confessing something. Soon after that Ronald's in bed crying, remembering what he'd done. He was at the beach one night or early morning and it looks like he attempted to rape a girl. She has long curly brownish-red hair. She got away, fell and hit her head on a rock and died.

There are only two daughters, Mary and Stephanie, husband and wife, and the husband's French assistant, Christine. Christine is kidnapped and raped at least once and there's nudity. Stephanie is kidnapped and taken into the lair too while Christine's there but I don't think she's raped. They chose to have Ronald rape the adult instead.

Unlike in the book and US television version, Ronald escapes the house after his mother dies. He flees to a dock and tries to steal a boat but it wouldn't start, so he goes back home.

The only other interesting part was at the very end after Ronald fled the house after the mother sees him in the kitchen and slings a pot of hot water in his face. The next scene was of the camera moving slowly down the hallway of a hospital. Ronald narrated the scene. They show him in a hospital bed with much shorter hair and ointment on his burned face as he looks into the camera. I guess he was telling us what happened after he fled, or what he was thinking by committing those crimes. That epilogue of sorts wasn't in the book or US film version and I liked that we (meaning those who speak French) got some knowledge of what happened to him afterward.

**You can read my full spoiler summary on the novel [here](#).**

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### **Timothy says**

The idea of a TV movie on this crime novel amazes me. It's not typical TV movie fare. And yes, it was made into a TV movie in the 1970s. (Greg Gutfeld often mentions it on his Fox News TV show.)

Indeed, it's a criminal procedural, with the author showing the "progress" of a serial rapist-murderer from boyhood to young adulthood.

What makes the book interesting, and the tale tolerable, is the voyeurism of what amounts to a fantasy plot: The likely lad dreams of a fantasy land, as in Narnia or Middle Earth, and romantic adventures therein. As if to mirror this obsession, his mother secrets her son in a hidden room, which goes undetected by the police and the unhappy family that moves in after the criminal's mother dies. This "hidden room" idea is a romantic notion of teenage boys. It signals psychological disturbance (literal withdrawal on top of emotional withdrawal, tantamount to withdrawal from all responsibility), and provides a whopper of a story.

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### **Dave Morris says**

Not at all what you'd expect of Vance if you know him from *Dying Earth* and *Lyonesse*. And it's gruesome, not at all for the faint of heart or weak of stomach. One thing I liked was the confounding of expectations. Nowadays a story like this would have a moral rightness built into its structure, but Vance didn't have any truck with sentimental universes. In his world there is no guardian angel for nice characters (certainly not the author's job, that) and what happens, happens. And that's quite refreshing to see, but I wouldn't bother to re-read it.

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### **Stephanie says**

OK, if you weren't alive in the 1970s to read this book or see this TV movie (yep, this movie was MADE FOR TELEVISION), I just feel sorry for you. It's the story of a 17 year old boy who rapes and kills a little girl. Oops. Fearful of her sweet boy getting thrown in the slammer as he so rightfully deserves, Ronald's mother gets the bright idea of hiding him in a secret room of their home. This works out fine until she has to undergo surgery and dies in the process. Too bad nobody tells the family who subsequently move into the

house, because Ronald becomes obsessed with the two young daughters, watching them get naked from the various spy holes he has drilled into the walls.

Oh, well, it all works out in the end.

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### **Corinne says**

[ I hated when the author said one of the characters didn't mind being raped because at least it broke up the boredom. This wasn't the sick MC saying it, it was meant to be the thought of one of the victims. Also it was called lovemaking i

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### **Jeff Flotta says**

I searched high and low for this book. Apparently it has been out of print for a while. I used my university connections (I work for Pitt) and discovered that the University of Indiana's library had one copy. I placed my request and within a week or so the copy was sent to Pitt's library and I picked it up.

It was so worth the hassle! Entertaining the whole way through. I've always wanted to have a secret room like Ronald, though never imagined it to be under the same circumstances. This is a very creepy story if you think about it happening in your own home.

I also scoured the internet for a copy of the made-for-tv movie. Got my hands on that too only to find out that it pales in comparison to the book.

The eerie, straggly, dirty Ronald Quimby makes one big mistake and has no other option than to stealthily live captive in his own home. You'll see why he's become... Bad Ronald.

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### **Souad says**

Une belle histoire , le genre d 'histoire dont je me régale le plus , un style simple et non pas ennuyeux , les actions se passent vite ,un petit résumé , une maman cache son fils qui a commis un meurtre (tuée et violée une jeune fille ) alors pour qu il ne va pas au prison , elle choisit de le cache chez elle dans sa maison , comme ça les polices ne le trouvent pas.

Par malchance cette maman tombe malade et meurt , et son fils reste seule dans sa cachette , qu il modifiée pour qu il puisse regarder ce qui se passe a l intérieur de la maison par un trou , la maison est vendu a une famille qui ont trois filles , Donald le fils la femme meurte recommence et tue Barbara , puis altea ....

Mais l'ami de la dernière fille arrive a dévoile le secret de Donald le criminel qui vole la nourriture et qui a fait disparaître les 2jeunes filles .

La fin ne m 'a pas plus comme je suis de ces gens la qui aiment toujours que le mal se triomphe , j aurais aime si RONald tue le reste de la famille ou au moins la 3eme fille , puis les polices ne trouvent pas ROLand , puis ils décident de quitter la maison pour la céder a une autre famille .

Bon je ne me suis pas lassée de la lire , je vous le revommande.



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**Quirkyreader says**

It was a good story but also very disturbing.

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