Cujo The Dog Essay, Research Paper

Cujo

With Cujo, King hasn’t wasted any time in introducing the characters. Within the first few pages, we meet a man named Vic Trenton whose ad agency is in danger of failing. His wife, Donna, who is in the middle of an extra-marital affair and wants to end it. Their son, Tad, is afraid of a monster in his closet. The Cambers are introduced – their marriage is filled with fear, violence and plain simple trouble. Joe Camber is a violent man, and you just can’t help but to feel sorry for his wife and son. The son – Brett, sleepwalks and owns a huge St. Bernard, Cujo. One starts to get the idea that the story’s heading for a major depressing plot, but things seem to get better. Donna ends the relationship with her lover, Steve Kemp, and Charity Camber wins the lottery. Then, almost all at once, everything starts going horribly wrong in true King style. Kemp informs Vic of the affair. Ouch. Donna’s life is quite obviously ruined. Brett and Charity discover the “decent people” aren’t quite as decent as they thought, and then there’s Cujo – who contracts rabies. Cujo does a lot of slaughtering while Brett and Charity are away visiting the “decent people”. These slaughterings definitely pose to be of King’s best, most-intense and goriest scenes ever. Cujo is (was) a good dog ’til he contracted rabies. The story really reaches the heights when Donna and Tad are stuck in their car, trying to keep safe from the dog. The final part of the book focuses on Donna’s struggle to keep herself and Tad alive in her failing car. Cujo’s attacks simply don’t come to an end, and we start believing that if the dog doesn’t kill them, the heat will. This is where I’ll have to stop. If I don’t, I’ll spoil the ending – which will, of course, spoil reading the book. Let me say this much though – I found the end really disappointing. Really disappointing, but then, there are no happily ever after in King’s work. I’m not saying Cujo isn’t a good novel, because it is brilliant! As I’ve said, the dog attacks form part of King’s best work. The novel grips you and just doesn’t let go. This is one of the “I can’t put it down” books. I have a problem with the whole monster in the closet idea – so do many others I’ve spoken to about it – but that’s still my problem. For the most part though, Cujo is a realistic, American novel. It’s got all the emotion you’ll ever want from a King novel. I’d say you need to get your hands on this one either way! Cujo is so well-paced and scary that people tend to read it quickly, so they mostly remember the scene of the mother and son trapped in the hot Pinto and threatened by the rabid Cujo, forgetting the multifaceted story in which that scene is embedded. This is definitely a novel that rewards re-reading. When you read it again, you can pay more attention to the theme of ountry folk vs. city folk; the parallel marriage conflicts of the Cambers vs. the Trenton s; the poignancy of the miable St. Bernard (yes, the breed choice is just right) infected by a brain-destroying virus that makes it into a onster; and the way the “daylight burial” of the failed ad campaign is reflected in the sunlit Pinto that becomes a offin. And how significant it is that this horror tale is not supernatural: it’s as real as junk food, a failing marriage, a roken-down car, or a fatal virus.