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Literature's creepiest characters

Comes now the spooky season. In tribute to Halloween, "Day of the Dead" and other creepy occasions, abebooks.com, the online new and used book provider, has asked visitors to its Web site to name the scariest character in literature.

The winner: **Big Brother** from George Orwell's "1984." "The others, you have a chance of avoiding, or getting away from. Big Brother, once in his purview, smothers all possibilities," said "Daniel from Manhattan, KS, USA," who no doubt changed his name and location so the NSA can't track him down.

Following up on BB, here are scariest creatures, Nos. 2-10:

Hannibal Lecter from the novels by Thomas Harris.

Penny-wise the clown from "It" by Stephen King.

Nurse Ratched from "One Flew Over a Cuckoo's Nest"

by Ken Kesey.

Count Dracula from Bram Stoker's novel of the same name.

Annie Wilkes from "Misery" by Stephen King.

The **demon** from "The Exorcist" by William Peter Blatty.

Patrick Bateman from "American Psycho" by Bret Easton

Ellis.

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Bill Sykes from "Oliver Twist" by Charles Dickens.

Voldemort — whoops, You-Know-Who — from the Harry Potter books.

Had I known about this poll, I would have nominated the **man-eating topiary** in Stephen King's "The Shining," which permanently put me off hedges pruned into animal shapes, now and forevermore.

Mary Ann Gwinn, Seattle Times book editor

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