

# DARK ENTRIES

Suzuki Method

To really scare someone, you have to inspire fear, not force it. You have to allude to the horror, not show it.

Five years ago, four teenagers watched a haunted videotape in a rented cabin and made permanent horror-film history. Since the little wet Japanese girl with long black hair in a white nightgown first stepped out of the hidden well to avenge her death, there have been no less than six films made, and at least two more film projects in the pipeline based on the works of *Sadako/Samarra* creator, Koji Suzuki. But don't ask him what he thinks about those movies. Don't ask him about Hideo Nakata's vision or Naomi Watts' acting ability. Definitely don't ask him about *Ju-On*, *The Eye*, or *The Ring 2* ("My *Ring* has created a lot of bastard children."). And don't ask him about Japanese horror or tell him he's just like Stephen King ("I'm not a horror writer!"). Koji Suzuki is in fact more like Mickey Rourke or Hemingway.

If you arrange for an interview with Suzuki, his manager will stipulate that you understand the following three points: 1. Koji Suzuki is NOT a horror writer, 2. Koji Suzuki did NOT write *Ju-On*, 3. Koji Suzuki needs an interpreter. As his interpreter and publicist, I have watched practically every man, woman, and child on Earth try to get him excited about the movies, and Suzuki is just tired of it. It will only be a matter of time before he becomes a videotape himself, which would prevent the frustration of his having to repeat these answers ad nauseam. So when the golden opportunity for both of us came up through Giant Robot, who wanted an interview with the one-man scary movie machine that "isn't boring," but would bring up the movies *Ringu*, *Ring*, and *Dark Water*, I decided to ask questions I doubted anyone had asked yet.

**GR: Hi Suzuki-san. I'm going to try to avoid asking you too many questions you've already been asked, but I hope these ones don't sound weird. I want to start with some of the men in your stories: *Ring*, *Spiral*, and *Dark Water*. There are a lot of, how do I put this... hentai perverts.**  
KS: [Laughs] What perverts?

**GR: Well, like the ex-husband of the main character in your short-story *Floating Water* (which is the basis of the film *Dark Water*), and the paranormal psychology professor in *Ring*. The ex-husband is a total pervert, which is why the couple divorces, and in *Ring*, the professor is accused of rape. There are others, but why do you like having hentai perverts in your books?**  
KS: Hmm, I guess they are kind of creepy, but I don't really think of them as perverts. They are real people that you deal with in real life. Society is a mixture of proper citizens and filthy rejects, right? Well, these filthy perverts are just little villains. In other words, it's not like they're killing people or stealing from the poor. They're just kinda creepy nasty. Describing them in detail makes a novel more realistic. In fact without them, the novel cannot be taken seriously.

**GR: You know, in *Ring*-otaku. They *Ring*, and the movie think about that, in some way, an o**  
KS: [Interrupts m  
lutely not, Anne.  
that. I ride motor  
at a gym, for cryin  
any otaku who wou  
of a fun time is ha  
the open sky wear  
not staying coupe  
over a videotape.

**GR: Yeah, but mos**  
**At least in the U.S**  
**in Japan?**

KS: Lots of otaku  
it's kind of neat th  
the true test of a fa  
read *Spiral* and *Lo*  
the otaku all going  
with *Ring*?

**GR: I don't know**  
**works in Japan? Ha**  
**ing with you?**

KS: Not really. The  
trilogy with the fir  
ing *Spiral* and *Loop*  
do say so myself.  
You gotta understa  
people to read up  
whole thing.

**GR: I'm sorry to ask**  
**ask: American horro**  
**thoughts?**

KS: God, you've he  
over, but it's the d  
violence and physic  
and imagined viol  
know anything abo  
It doesn't interest  
don't write monster  
even some little doll  
about, right? To rea  
to inspire fear, not fo  
the horror, not show  
Koji Suzuki Method.

**GR: Another movi**  
**more interesting: *T***

KS: I don't know w  
because both were  
came to L.A. on the  
away by the amount



**GR:** You know, in the U.S., there are a lot of *Ring*-otaku. They are kind of obsessed with *Ring*, and the movies, and all that. What do you think about that, and do you consider yourself in some way, an otaku?

**KS:** [Interrupts me guffawing.] Hell no! Absolutely not, Anne. You know better than to ask that. I ride motorcycles and go yachting! I box at a gym, for crying out loud. I doubt if there are any otaku who would know how to fight! My idea of a fun time is hanging out on my boat under the open sky wearing shorts and a wife-beater, not staying couped up in my room obsessing over a videotape.

**GR:** Yeah, but most of your *Ring* fans are otaku. At least in the U.S. What's your readership like in Japan?

**KS:** Lots of otaku like *Ring*, definitely. I guess it's kind of neat that they like *Ring*, but I think the true test of a fan is whether he will go on to read *Spiral* and *Loop* (the sequels to *Ring*). Are the otaku all going to follow me, or just hang out with *Ring*?

**GR:** I don't know. Who's reading your other works in Japan? Have you seen the otaku sticking with you?

**KS:** Not really. The Japanese otaku leave the trilogy with the first book. The people reading *Spiral* and *Loop* are older, and smarter, if I do say so myself. They're more philosophical. You gotta understand, it's really important for people to read up to *Loop* in order to get the whole thing.

**GR:** I'm sorry to ask about movies, but I have to ask: American horror vs. Japanese horror. Any thoughts?

**KS:** God, you've heard me say this over and over, but it's the difference between physical violence and physical gore, and imagined fear and imagined violence. But you know, I don't know anything about Japanese horror, really. It doesn't interest me. I'll tell you one thing. I don't write monsters like Freddie or Jason or even some little doll like Chucky. What's that all about, right? To really scare someone, you have to inspire fear, not force it. You have to allude to the horror, not show it. You could call that the Koji Suzuki Method.

**GR:** Another movie question. What set was more interesting: *The Ring* or *Dark Water*?

**KS:** I don't know what was more interesting, because both were really different. When I first came to L.A. on the set of *The Ring*, I was blown away by the amount of money that was being

spent. I'm talking millions of dollars being used right in front of my eyes! Between staff, props, technology, the actors... it's really unbelievable. In Japan, I was on the set of *Spiral*, and it was whatever. Really casual. But *The Ring* was such a huge production. Last year I got to spend time on the set of *Dark Water* with Walter Salles, the director, and that was just wonderful. He has such a great eye, and his work is absolutely beautiful. I was really impressed with how beautiful he made *Dark Water*.

**GR:** In the U.S., I think it's fair to say people see you as some kind of representative of an Asian aesthetic and the creator of Japanese horror. In the film and book industry, I think you're thought of as particularly Asian. What do you think of that responsibility?

**KS:** Is that really the case? Well that's too bad, but I guess I can't do anything about it. I'm Japanese, so it's kind of unavoidable. I think if Americans read my other work—I know you guys (*Vertical*) are going to translate my first novel, *Paradise*—Americans will realize who Koji Suzuki really is. He's global.

**GR:** Okay, last question. I know you consider yourself to be pretty logical and anti-occult, but there are ghosts in most of your novels. So I have to ask, do you believe in life after death?

**KS:** No. You die, and as soon as the brain becomes ash, your consciousness is totally gone. That's it. Nothing more... but! And I'm about to say what I'm about to say based on scientific reasoning, are you listening?

**GR:** Yeah.

**KS:** Scientific reasoning, got it?

**GR:** Yeah.

**KS:** Scientific reasoning is about being able to prove or disprove something absolutely. One hundred percent. I only believe that the human consciousness dies with the physical body, 99 percent. There is a 1 percent chance of post-death life, because we don't scientifically know what actually happens after death. For example, people used to believe the Earth was the center of the universe. You were stupid if you believed otherwise. That belief was forced by religion. Life after death is the same thing, but we just don't scientifically know.

**GR:** Well, thanks for doing this interview with me. I could ask a lot more questions, but they'd all be things you've been asked before.

**KS:** Yeah, we can just leave the boring interview about movies to NPR. 🐻

The Xeric Award-winning  
graphic novel:

# BUMPERBOY

loses his marbles!

BY DEBBIE HUEY

**Bumperboy Loses His Marbles** is an all-ages story following Bumperboy on his frantic trek to find his missing marbles before the big Marble Tournament.

Does Bumperboy have what it takes to win all the marbles?

distributed by



WWW.BUMPERBOY.NET

