

"I have never played a role in which someone's dark side shouldn't be explored."

— Daniel Craig

# How DANIEL CRAIG changed BOND forever...



Haimanti Mukherjee@timesgroup.com

Some time during the promotion of 'Spectre', actor Daniel Craig's fourth Bond outing, he was asked by a journalist whether he'll do another Bond film. His answer was he'd rather die. A media frenzy ensued. Social media was on a roll. And the powers that be went on an overdrive to undo the damage done to the image of mega block-buster Bond fran-

chise, with a careless and thoughtless comment.

On hindsight though this was possibly the closest that Craig, the actor, had ever come to mimicking the character he'd been playing – off-camera. In one statement to the press, possibly because of a tired body and mind, Craig epitomised the devil-may-care attitude that is quintessentially Bond. A rebellious British government agent, often careless with feelings or the consequences of his actions, James Bond, has over the years become the spy we love to love; and also, love to hate.

## AN ICON RE-IMAGINED

For someone who came in with as much bad press as possible, Craig's Bond in the last 15 years has had the maximum impact on the character's growth – a hitherto unseen phe-

nomenon to audiences worldwide. He may have been as cold as Sean Connery's Bond, as playful and romantic as Roger Moore, or as fierce as Pierce Brosnan, with those deep blue piercing eyes, but Craig's Bond also went where no Bond had gone before. Even if it were a 5-second scene, we saw Craig's version of Bond accepting that he's broken, shedding tears, struggling to keep the mask of coldness for too long.

For a franchise that's rooted in tradition, and with a set way of doing things, it was difficult after the 1990s to depict a Bond without encompassing any of the socio-cultural changes that new millennium brought about. Post Noughties Bond could not be trapped in the Cold War era stereotypes, when things were definitive.

So, hardcore Bond fans may have complained over the last decade as to why the character Q, the gadget su-

perhero — who arms Bond with the snazziest of instant-kill technical equipment — didn't play a larger role. Craig's answer was that he was far more concerned with the evolution of the character, exploring his moral dilemmas, rather than "just the gadgets advancing with the times".

Blasphemous for hardcore fans? Possibly. But somewhere deep down the producers and Craig agreed that formulaic scripts were a thing of the past.

That is why you see stereotypes turned on its head as Daniel Craig emerges out of the sea instead of a Bond girl in a bikini in 'Casino Royale'. You also hear Bond saying the three words that you never thought you'll hear any Bond express: "I love you". Using just his eyes (read acting skills), Craig's Bond flinched, took severe

The 25th Bond movie, 'No Time To Die', is also Craig's swansong for the billion-dollar franchise. In the last 15 years (and 5 movies), the English actor has changed the way we perceive the suave MI-5 agent. Here's how...

body (got shot by his beloved British government), stood still — even if for a second — to express despair, feel every loss, and then move forward, carrying the exhaustion, and the burden of being a spy, with him.

This Bond raised has the bar significantly; almost to the point of no return. From here on, whichever direction the Bond franchise takes, some things have forever changed.

Much like the world around us right now where most things are uncertain, whether political or social, Craig's vision of Bond that he set out to change in the last decade, was truly ahead of its time. In hindsight, we will all see that.



Nitya.Shukla@timesgroup.com

Author RL Stine has been terrifying and enchanting young readers all across the world for more than 30 years — having penned over 330 novels. In that time, his 'Goosebumps' series has sold millions of books and inspired a television show, computer games, a zone in a theme park, and a film starring Jack Black as Stine (the sequel is expected to release soon). As if that wasn't enough, the genius

author has created yet another series promising to make Halloween deliciously frightful. Stine's 'Just Beyond' is a hair-raising eight-episode OTT series based on the author's series of graphic novels by the same name. It focuses on a reality 'just beyond' what we know in real life. The series tackles important topics, like bullying, peer pressure, and teen worry even as characters encounter mysterious witches, ghosts, aliens, and parallel universes. Here's a look at why Stine works, globally.

**Humour in horror**  
Stine's first horror novel for teenagers called 'Blind Date' topped the Publishers Weekly list. In an interview with 'Collidor', Stine had said, "The secret is that I never plan to be scared. That wasn't my goal. I always was funny. I did a humour magazine for teenagers for 10 years, called 'Bananas', and I wrote about a hundred joke books. I was always funny. So, when I got switched over, which is a long story, and started being a scary guy, I had to bring the humour with me because that's my main interest, really." That's why in 'Goosebumps' and 'Fear Street', every



## STINE'S SPOOKTOBER

Have you ever wondered why 'Goosebumps' series author RL Stine is such an integral part of Halloween celebration every year? Read on to find out...

chapter end is a punchline. This is how Stine spawned a generation of readers. His horror stories were not tragedies, they were episodic and ended (mostly) on a funny note.

### He doesn't really want to scare you

If you grew up reading Stine's stories, you know you can expect to be spooked in a good way, with a happy endings. Stine calls himself a careful, conservative writer

who doesn't really want to scare kids (even if his editors tell him to make it scarier). He once said, "My thinking is that these books are entertainment. I'm very careful to keep reality out of it. The real world is much scarier than these books. So, I don't do divorce, even. I don't do drugs. I don't do child abuse. I don't do all the really serious things that would interfere with the entertainment."

When writing for young readers, Stine's one rule is that it can't be too realistic. It's

### STINE'S WRITING RULES

- One of the biggest rules in writing horror is that the audience has to know what's happening can't happen in real life; it's fantasy, he makes it scary but he steers clear of real world stuff.
- In his Masterclass, Stine said that writing shouldn't be something you slave over. It should be fun. He 'hates' serious writers who think writing is hard, or can only write in a quiet room.
- He doesn't want kids to write from the heart! In an interview, the author poo-pooed authors who tell kids to write from the heart because they will never write again! He said, "I say to kids, 'I've written 330 books, not a single one from my heart. Not one! They're all written to entertain an audience. That's it!'"

important to him that his readers know his stories are fantasy and can't really happen. That said Stine did once write a book with an unhappy ending which didn't go down well with the audience. In 'Best Friend', one of his 'Fear Street' books, Stine ended the story with murderer going scot free. He got innumerable queries as his audience couldn't accept the end. He ended up writing a sequel to finish the story.

### Stine just wants you to read more

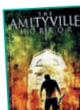
In an interview, Stine once offered an explanation to why his young audience gravitated to his scary stories. "I talked once to a child psychologist in LA, and he told me he had a patient, this girl, who came every week, and all she did was recite 'Fear Street' plots to him. And he thought this was her way of dealing with all her fears, going through these books. You're having all of these horrible things happen, but you're still safe in your room, reading."

## 10 MOVIES TO WATCH THIS HALLOWEEN

Kids are often protagonists in the best horror movies. You may have heard about 'The Omen' and 'The Exorcist' too many times. Here are some others...



**THE BABADOOK**  
Amelia, who lost her husband in a car crash on way to give birth to Samuel, struggles to cope with her fate as a single mom. Samuel's constant fear of monsters doesn't help her cause either, which makes her friends become distant. When things cannot get any worse, they read in a strange book in their house about the 'Babadook' monster that hides in the dark areas of their house!



their comatose son (Ty Simpkins) is possessed by a malevolent entity.  
**THE AMITYVILLE HORROR**  
When George Lutz (Ryan Reynolds) and his wife, Kathy (Melissa George), find a beautiful new house in the small town of Amityville, NY, they think the place is too good to be true. It turns out it's. Strange things start to happen soon after they move in.



**MAMA**  
On the day that their parents die, sisters Lilly and Victoria vanish in the woods, prompting a frantic search by their Uncle Lucas (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) and his girlfriend, Annabel (Jessica Chastain). Five years later, miraculously, the girls are found alive in a decaying cabin, and Lucas and Annabel welcome them into their home. But as Annabel tries to reintroduce the children to a normal life, she finds that someone — or something — still wants to tuck them in at night.



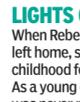
**UNDER THE SHADOW**  
After Shideh's building is hit by a missile during the Iran-Iraq War, a neighbour suggests that the missile was cursed and might be carrying malevolent spirits. She becomes convinced a supernatural force within the building is attempting to possess her daughter Dorsa, and she has no choice but to confront these forces to save her daughter and herself.



**THE SIXTH SENSE**  
Young Cole Sear (Haley Joel Osment) is haunted by a dark secret: he sees ghosts. He is too afraid to tell anyone about his anguish, except child psychologist Dr Malcolm Crowe (Bruce Willis). As Dr Crowe tries to uncover the truth about Cole's supernatural abilities, the consequences for client and therapist are a jolt that awakens them both to something unexplainable.



**THE OTHERS**  
Grace (Nicole Kidman), the devoutly religious mother of Anne (Alakina Mann) and Nicholas (James Bentley), moves her family to the English coast during World War II. She swears word on her missing husband while protecting her children from a rare photosensitivity disease that causes the sun to harm them. Anne claims she sees ghosts, Grace initially thinks the new servants are playing tricks but chilling events and visions make her believe something supernatural has occurred.



**LIGHTS OUT**  
When Rebecca (Teresa Palmer) left home, she thought that her childhood fears were behind her. As a young girl growing up, she was never really sure of what was real when the lights went out at night. Now, her little brother Martin (Gabriel Bateman) is experiencing the same unexplained and terrifying events that jeopardised her safety and sanity.



**THE RING**  
It sounds like just another urban legend — a videotape filled with nightmarish images leads to a phone call foretelling the viewer's death in exactly seven days. Newspaper reporter Rachel Keller (Naomi Watts) is sceptical of the story until four teenagers all die mysteriously exactly one week after watching just such a tape. Allowing her investigative curiosity to get the better of her, Rachel tracks down the video and



**LET ME IN**  
Owen leads a lonely life and is bullied by his peers at school. He happily befriends Abby, his new helpful neighbour, without being aware that she is hiding a secret from him.



watches it. Now she has just seven days to unravel the mystery.

## 10 BOOKS TO INTRODUCE KIDS TO HUMOUR & HORROR



**FUNNYBONES**  
by Janet & Allan Ahlberg  
A big skeleton, a little skeleton and a dog skeleton venture out one night to find someone to scare, but everyone is in bed so they amuse themselves by scaring each other.

**THE VERY HUNGRY CATERPILLAR'S HALLOWEEN TRICK OR TREAT**  
by Eric Carle  
Our favourite hungry caterpillar is getting into the Halloween spirit. He's on the hunt (again) for some tasty treats. Can you help him count all the different creatures

and find the treats?

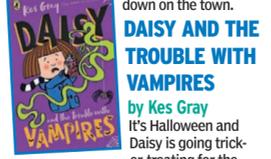
**HOW TO AVOID WITCHES**  
by Roald Dahl & Quentin Blake  
They have ordinary jobs, live in ordinary houses and wear ordinary clothes. That's what makes them witches so hard to catch!



**THERE'S A WITCH IN YOUR BOOK**  
by Tom Fletcher & Greg Abbott  
A grumpy little witch has thrown a magic spell at you. If you can capture it, you can use your finger wand to make magic yourself.

### THE DANGER GANG

by Tom Fletcher & Shane Devries  
Franky can't wait to move to his new town. But everything changes after the storm, when strange green lightning and powerful thunder crash down on the town.



**DAISY AND THE TROUBLE WITH VAMPIRES**  
by Kes Gray  
It's Halloween and Daisy is going trick-or-treating for the very first time. In the dark, in the fog, and with a vampire!

**THE WITCH'S VACUUM CLEANER**  
by Terry Pratchett  
Imagine a war between wizards, a rebellious ant called 4179003, and a time-travelling television!

**SPOT'S SPOOKY FUN**  
by Eric Hill  
It's Halloween and all of Spot's friends are dressed up. Helen's a fairy, Steve's a clown and Tom's a pirate. But what does Spot want to be?



**DANGER REALLY IS EVERYWHERE**  
by David O'Doherty  
Any POD (Pupil of Dangerology) knows that schools are full of danger — from vampire teachers to haunted books.

**WHERE MONSTERS LIE**  
by Polly Ho-Yen  
The children of Mivtown have grown up hearing the legend of the monsters of the loch. But it's only a story — a warning to stay away from the water. Then strange things start happening in the village.



# MAKE OR BREAK

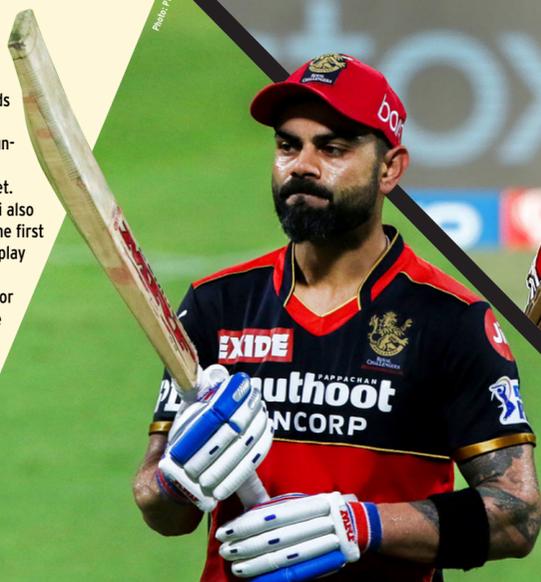
## RECORDS GALORE

The 2021 edition of the Indian Premier League was sheer entertainment. Chennai Super Kings won their fourth title comfortably beating KKR. Some of the games went right down to the wire, while the claim to the fourth spot remained a mystery till the last minute. Let us look at some of the major records made and broken during the course of this season of IPL...

### VIRAT KOHLI - 10K RUNS AND COUNTING

Royal Challengers Bangalore captain, Virat Kohli, became the first Indian player and fifth overall to complete 10,000 T20 runs. He achieved this landmark while opening the batting for RCB against Mumbai Indians, a match that RCB went on to win. The 32-year-old, who is all set to step down as RCB captain, has scored runs at an average of 41.61 with the help of five hundreds and 73 fifties. His highest individual score is 113.

Kohli's former RCB team-mate Chris Gayle leads the list of highest run-getters in T20 cricket. Virat Kohli also became the first player to play 200 IPL matches for one single team.



### KL RAHUL - FAST RUN ACCUMULATOR

KL Rahul is one of the many players who were bought at the mega auction in 2018. He has delivered consistently. The Punjab Kings' captain became the first Indian to score 500 runs in four consecutive seasons, with a stunning average of 62.60. He is the second IPL player, after David Warner, to achieve this feat. He also became the fastest Indian to score 3000 runs in IPL, a milestone he achieved in his 80th IPL innings. Had he reached play-offs, he may have been the leading run-getter.



### MS DHONI - 300 CAPS

MS Dhoni became the first to captain 300 T20 matches. 'Thala', as he is fondly called, achieved this feat as Chennai Super Kings captain in the final of the IPL 2021 against Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR). He further led his team to a fourth IPL title victory. Having captained teams for CSK and Rising Pune Supergiants earlier, he has won every major T20 trophy, including IPL, CL T20, Asia Cup and T20 World Cup.

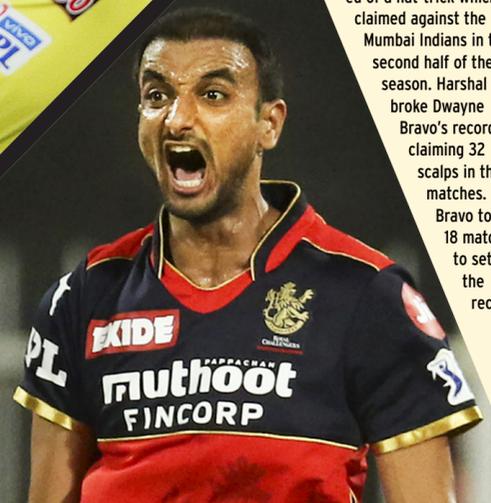
Daren Sammy is a close second with 208 matches.



### HARSHAL PATEL - MOST IMPRESSIVE DEBUTANT

Royal Challengers Bangalore pacer Harshal Patel claimed his maiden Purple Cap with a total of 32 wickets in the 2021 edition of the Indian Premier League. With that, the death bowling specialist broke Jasprit Bumrah's record by becoming the Indian bowler with the most wickets in a single IPL season. Harshal played an integral part in RCB's qualification for the playoffs in his debut season with the franchise. Harshal proved his worth in their first match of the season by taking a fiver against the five-time champions Mumbai Indians. His extraordinary performance also consisted of a hat-trick which he claimed against the Mumbai Indians in the second half of the season. Harshal broke Dwayne Bravo's record by claiming 32 scalps in three matches.

Bravo took 18 matches to set the record.



### RISHABH PANT - YOUNGEST CAPTAIN

At 24 years and six days, Delhi Capitals' Rishabh Pant added another feather to his cap as he became the youngest captain to lead a team in the IPL playoffs. He is also the fifth youngest to lead an IPL team, after Steve Smith, Virat Kohli, Suresh Raina, and Shreyas Iyer. He made his captaincy debut against Chennai Super Kings, as a wicketkeeper-batsman for DC, and attained the top job when former captain Shreyas Iyer suffered a shoulder injury. He was picked over players like Shikhar Dhawan, Steve Smith, and Ishant Sharma to lead the team. In the qualifier 1 against CSK, Rishabh's counterpart M S Dhoni, at 39, was the second oldest captain in IPL play-offs. The oldest captain in play-offs was Rahul Dravid, back in 2013.



### SANJU SAMSON - FIRST TON AS CAPTAIN

Rajasthan Royal's newly-appointed skipper Sanju Samson started his captaincy journey in the IPL 2021 with a blazing century. His 54-ball century, makes him the first player in the history of the Indian Premier League to score a hundred on debut as a side. This is Sanju Samson's third overall century in IPL. In his first match as captain, he scored 119 runs off 63 balls with 12 fours and seven sixes. It is the highest individual score by a captain in an IPL innings, and breaks the record of Shreyas Iyer's unbeaten 93 for Delhi Daredevils against Kolkata Knight Riders in 2018.



### UMRAN MALIK - THE INDIAN FLASH

In the match between Sunrisers Hyderabad and Royal Challengers Bangalore, Hyderabad team pacer Umrans Malik clocked 153kmph on the speed gun. It is the fastest delivery in the IPL 2021 season, and had both his skipper Kane Williamson and RCB captain Virat Kohli gushing over his pace. On his IPL debut a couple of days before, Malik had clocked 151.03 kph. Since then, the 21-year-old lad from Kashmir has been making headlines with his pace-leaving batsmen facing his deliveries uncomfortable on the pitch. He was roped in as a replacement for T Natarajan, who had tested positive ahead of Hyderabad's encounter against Delhi Capitals on September 22. Previously, KKR player and New Zealand pacer Lockie Ferguson held the record for the fastest delivery, clocking 152.75 kph.



### DWAYNE BRAVO - 550 WICKETS

Dwayne Bravo and T20 records go hand in hand. The CSK all-rounder 'Champion' became the first bowler to take 550 wickets in T20 cricket.

He is also the first bowler to take 300, 400, and 500 wickets in T20 Cricket. Coming into the match, he was chasing the record of Lasith Malinga, who is the highest wicket-taker in the history of IPL. Bravo achieved this feat in the Qualifier 1 match of IPL 2021, which was played between Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals. The second-highest wicket-taker in T20s is veteran South African spinner and his fellow CSK teammate Imran Tahir with 420 wickets from 334 games.