

# FAILING WRITER HITS BIG TIME THANKS TO WE

BY LORNE JACKSON

**D**AVID Moody has no need to be broody any more.

Thanks to the magic of the worldwide web, his career has gone from catastrophe to cock-a-hoop.

The Halesowen banker struggled for years to hit the big time as a horror novelist.

But his books – which imagine world-wide catastrophes and disasters – were met with shrugs of indifference from the reading public.

That forced him to set up a website, where browsers downloaded his work for free.

Which sounds like a no-no for any aspiring novelist.

Yet the crazy move led to major players from Hollywood getting in touch.

Now he's set to see his latest yarn, *Hater*, adapted into a major motion picture.

"I honestly can't tell you the exact route that got everything to this stage," grins a dazed David. "The first I knew, I was sitting round my house in the summer of 2006.

"My latest self-published book, *Hater*, was doing OK. The feedback was positive, and I was cool with that.

"Then this e-mail came through to me, claiming to be from a production company in Los Angeles, that wanted to talk about film rights for the book.

"I didn't believe a word of it. I phoned round everybody who I thought might be winding me up, but it turned out to be genuine.

"So I got back in touch, and everything has come from that.

"It's the defining moment of my life."

The movie version of *Hater*, which is now in pre-production, will be produced by Guillermo Del Toro, the director of such international hits as *Pan's Labyrinth* and the *Hellboy* franchise.

## Mount

Del Toro is a huge fan of Moody's work. He has been quoted as saying: "*Hater* will haunt you long after you read the last page."

The director of the film is Juan Antonio Bayona, whose first major hit was the Spanish horror movie, *The Orphanage*.

His reputation is on the rise in L.A., and this will be his first English language movie.

David's reputation is also scaling some dizzying heights.

But it's not an overnight success.

The 36-year-old slugged out novel after novel for 15 years before making an impact.

"Initially I was a frustrated filmmaker," he explains.

"That's what I dreamed of doing after leaving school. Instead, I went to work in a bank since I had no experience of film-making, and didn't know how to make it happen.

"That's when I came up with the idea of writing novels. I just thought I'd put down the stories that I wanted to tell."

In 1996, David managed to get



**HORROR HIT:** David Moody's book has been taken up by Guillermo Del Toro, top right, director of *Pan's Labyrinth* and *Hellboy*

# From horror story to

# Hollywood

"When my second book, *Autumn*, was ready, I decided to try something a bit different.

"At that time, loads of stuff was happening to me. I suddenly had a family out of nowhere. There was a wife and loads of step-daughters running around.

"Meanwhile, the Internet was really taking off. So I came up with the idea of giving my book

ing. 'You've done this all right, but why not try this?'

"I took all these points on board and really started to improve my website. It definitely wasn't local help. The most handy hints came from a guy in Crechsolonakia!"

Eventually, 500,000 people logged on to check out David's work.

**Terrifying**

each other, for apparently no reason.

"It also set to be released in paperback this month by Gollancz, one of the UK's major publishers.

Meanwhile, David has been given £60,000 from the movie makers, with more to follow when the film shifts gear into production.

Which will come in handy, since he now has three step-daughters

an author and a film-maker in the middle of nowhere, writer chucks his book over film-maker chucks back money. Then you don't see other ever again.

"It's kind of like that.

"It's weird to know it's happening, yet infuriating that I'm right in the middle of it. I do that it's going to have film