

SUMMER SCARES!

2020 PROGRAMMING GUIDE



CREATED BY THE SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:





SUMMER SCARES

a reading program from The Horror Writers Association (HWA), in partnership with United for Libraries, Book Riot and Library Journal/School Library Journal, provides libraries and schools with an annual list of recommended horror titles for adult, young adult (teen) and middle

grade readers. It introduces readers and librarians to new authors and helps start conversations extending beyond the books from each list and promotes reading for years to come.

Award-winning author Stephen Graham Jones and a committee of five librarians have selected three recommended fiction titles in each reading level. The goal of the program is to encourage a national conversation about the horror genre, across all age levels, at libraries nationwide and ultimately attract more adults, teens and children interested in reading.

For more information about Summer Scares, contact JG Faherty (libraries@horror.org) or Becky Spratford (bspratford@hotmail.com). Library workers and authors who are interested in cultivating horror programming can contact Konrad Stump at konrads@thelibrary.org for assistance.

STEPHEN GRAHAM JONES

Stephen Graham Jones is a former library worker and the author of numerous novels — including *Mongrels*, a previous Summer Scares selection — six collections, some comic books and novellas, and more than 300 short stories. He’s a Professor of Distinction and the Ivena Baldwin Professor of English at the University of Colorado at Boulder. He has won the Texas Institute of Letters Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fellow in fiction, the Bram Stoker Award and four This is Horror awards.



PHOTO: GARY ISAACS

“The first stories told around campfires forever ago,” Jones says, “were about monsters the hunting party had seen one valley over, and when the hunter describing this creature raised their arms to re-enact this scary encounter, the shadow the flames threw back from those upraised arms went for millennia. We’re still cowering in that shadow. To be afraid is to be human. Horror gifts that back to us with each story, each book, each movie, each story told around all our many campfires.”

MEET THE COMMITTEE



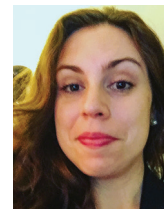
Becky Spratford is a library consultant and the author of *The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Horror*. She reviews horror for *Booklist Magazine*, is the horror

columnist for *Library Journal* and runs the blog *RA for All: Horror*. She is a Library Trustee member of United for Libraries and is currently serving as Secretary for the HWA.



Carolyn Ciesla is a library director and academic dean at Prairie State College in the Chicago suburbs. She has worked as a teen librarian and

reference librarian, and reviews horror titles for *Booklist Magazine*.



Kiera Parrott is the reviews director for *Library Journal* and *School Library Journal*, where she oversees the review of more than 14,000 titles annually.

Before joining the journals, Kiera was head of children’s services at Darien Library (Conn.).



Kelly Jensen is a former librarian who works as an Editor for *Book Riot*, where she runs the bi-weekly “What’s Up in YA?” newsletter and cohosts

the popular “Hey YA” podcast. Her books include the award-winning *(Don’t) Call Me Crazy: 33 Voices Start the Conversation About Mental Health* and *Here We Are: Feminism for the Real World*.



JG Faherty is the HWA’s program coordinator and the head of the HWA’s Library and Literacy program. He is the author of numerous

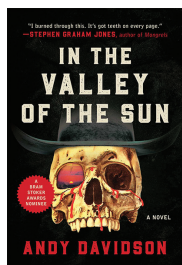
novels, novellas and short stories, and he has been a finalist for the Bram Stoker Award and ITW Thriller.



SUMMER SCARES

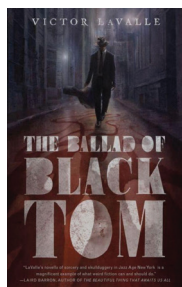
There's absolutely nothing to be afraid of ... it's just the Summer Scares reading initiative by the Horror Writers Association, Book Riot, Library Journal, School Library Journal and United for Libraries. Try the horror genre on for size with these curated titles.

ADULT



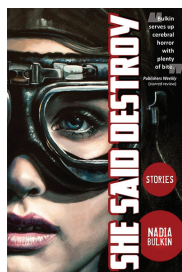
In the Valley of the Sun
by Andy Davidson
After crossing paths with a mysterious, pale-skinned woman, Travis Stillwell wakes weak and

bloodied, and soon finds himself fighting an unspeakable hunger.



The Ballad of Black Tom
by Victor LaValle
Charles Thomas Tester hustles to keep the roof over his father's head. But when he delivers an occult

tome to a reclusive sorceress, Tom opens a door to a deeper realm of magic, and earns the attention of things best left sleeping.



She Said Destroy: Stories
by Nadia Bulkin
A dictator craves love — and horrifying sacrifice — from his subjects; a ghost haunts a

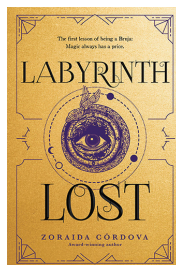
luxury hotel in a bloodstained land; a new babysitter uncovers a family curse; a final girl confronts a monster in Nadia Bulkin's dreamlike, poignant and unabashedly socio-political debut collection.

YOUNG ADULT



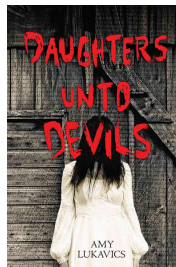
The Agony House
by Cherie Priest
After her family opens a bed-and-breakfast, Denise discovers a mysterious old comic book that may hold the

key to the strange occurrences happening in the house. But Denise will have to reach the end of the comic before it's too late.



Labyrinth Lost
by Zoraida Córdova
During her Death Day ceremony, Alex, a young bruja, casts a spell that backfires and sends her family

to Los Lagos, a land in-between as strange as Wonderland. Alex will have to travel to Los Lagos and unlock her magical ability to rescue those she loves.



Daughters Unto Devils
by Amy Lukavics
Amanda thinks she can leave her painful sins behind when her family moves from the mountains to

the prairie, but soon she senses that something isn't right on the prairie. Does the evil lie in the land, or deep within her soul?

MIDDLE GRADE



Spirit Hunters
by Ellen Oh
Harper doubts her new home is haunted, that is until her little brother starts acting strangely. The whole thing gives

Harper a sense of déjà vu, but she can't remember why. She'll have to put the pieces together in time if she wants to save her brother.



Case File 13: Zombie Kid
by J. Scott Savage
Nick, Carter, and Angelo are obsessed with Halloween, but after Nick discovers a cursed amulet

during his great-aunt's funeral and turns into a zombie, the group's hijinx take a turn for the truly terrifying, and they'll have to face the Zombie King if they want to reverse the curse.



Hoodoo
By Ronald L. Smith
Despite his name, Hoodoo Hatcher can't seem to cast spells. Then a mysterious man called the Stranger

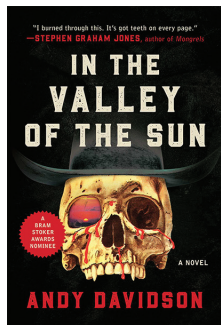
comes to town looking for Hoodoo. The entire town is at risk from the Stranger's black magic, and only Hoodoo can defeat him.



Springfield-Greene County Library District
thelibrary.org

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SUN

by ANDY DAVIDSON



Haunted by his past, Travis Stillwell spends his nights searching out women in West Texas honky-tonks. But after Travis crosses paths one night with a mysterious pale-skinned girl, he wakes weak and bloodied in his cabover camper—

with no sign of a girl, no memory of the night before. Annabelle Gaskin spies the camper parked behind her motel and offers the cowboy a few odd jobs to pay his board. Travis

takes her up on the offer, if only to buy time, to lay low and heal. By day, he mends the old motel. By night, in the cave of his camper, he fights an unspeakable hunger.

APPEAL FACTORS

Tone: Atmospheric; Haunting

Character: Complex; Flawed

Writing Style: Compelling; Lyrical

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

Set in Texas during the 1980s, this novel follows Travis, a haunted man with violent tendencies who, after a run-in with a mysterious and beautiful stranger, begins to go through some terrifying changes. Along the way, you'll encounter a number of complex, flawed characters, and each new perspective will alter what you think you know. Part western noir, part psychological suspense, part supernatural tale, this novel is atmospheric, lyrical and compellingly written.

READ-ALIKES



Mongrels by Stephen Graham Jones

The Hunger by Alma Katsu

Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi

Horns by Joe Hill

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Dark Hearts and Lonely Landscapes: A Conversation with Andy Davidson

Interview Davidson about the novel's Western setting, its shifting POVs and shifting sympathies, the way it flips the victim's story, and how it was shaped by and fits into the larger vampire canon.

Murder and Mystery in [insert County/City]

Partner with area historians/local history library staff to host a presentation on local true crime stories and unsolved mysteries.

Femme Fatales, Bad Girls and Fighting Back

Partner with area academics or experts for a discussion on female vampires in literature and pop culture, bad girls through history and the American imagination, and current trends toward revisiting women's stories during the #MeToo era.

Flights and Frights Trivia Night

Partner with a local pub/bar to host a horror trivia night offsite — don't forget a round on vampires. Ask the hosting business to donate the prize, or give away ARCs and library swag.

READING GROUP GUIDE

How does this novel compare to other vampire novels you've read or movies you've seen? What has Davidson done differently with the vampire trope?

Davidson shifts POV throughout the novel. How did your feelings toward characters change? Who did you most sympathize with?

The reader learns that Travis is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and the effects of the war hang heavy over the novel. Does this make you view Travis differently? How has the war affected the other characters?

When we first meet Rue, we only see her as a vampire. How does Davidson give her voice to be more than a monster?

At times, we get to see the world through the eyes of Sandy, Annabelle's son. What does his perspective help us see about the adults?

The ranger John Reader is a man guided by a moral compass and sense of duty. How were these tested?

Even though the novel is often dark and intense, it is ultimately a love story. How does love shine through in the relationships between the characters?

At one point Davidson writes, "The world's just full of monsters." How does the horror genre help us cope with the real world?

THE BALLAD OF BLACK TOM

by VICTOR LAVALLE

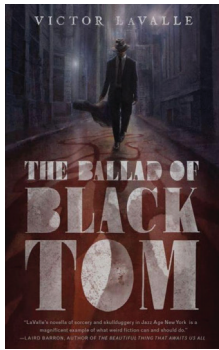


PHOTO: TEDDY WOLFF

Charles Thomas Tester hustles to put food on the table and keep the roof over his father's head, from Harlem to Flushing Meadows to Red Hook. He knows what magic a suit can cast, the invisibility a guitar case can provide, and the curse written on his skin that attracts the eye of wealthy white folks and their cops.

But when he delivers an occult tome

to a reclusive sorceress in the heart of Queens, Tom opens a door to a deeper realm of magic, and

earns the attention of things best left sleeping.

APPEAL FACTORS

Tone: Authentic; Culturally diverse

Character: Character-driven; Own voices

Writing Style: Compelling; Lyrical

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows Tommy Tester, a young African American man in jazz-age New York City, who's trying to care for his father and make ends meet by dealing in occult artifacts. After getting entangled in a wealthy white man's plans to summon ancient gods, Tommy attracts unwanted attention. A culturally diverse, character-driven story, the novel combines the horrific, the fantastical and the historical to create an atmospheric indictment of racism and its influence on American culture.

READ-ALIKES



Lovecraft Country by Matt Ruff

Fledgling by Octavia E. Butler

Agents of Dreamland by Caitlin R. Kiernan

Hammers on Bone by Cassandra Khaw

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Making Monsters of Men: A Discussion With Victor LaValle

Interview LaValle about his relationship with Lovecraft's work, how the novel reworks its source material, what it conveys about the U.S., and how it fits in with other books reimagining Lovecraft's mythos.

Friday Night Frights: "Get Out"

Partner with a local theater to screen Jordan Peele's "Get Out." Follow up with a half-hour panel on horror films as social commentary with area academics and experts.

Revisiting Black History in [insert County/City]

Partner with area historians/local history library staff to highlight area historical events involving African Americans, with a focus on stories that can be viewed through a modern lens.

Escape Lovecraft's Library

Register teams to puzzle their way out of Lovecraft's Library, using library materials to unlock the secrets of the necronomicon and escape the clutches of Cthulhu before cosmic horror consumes everyone.

READING GROUP GUIDE

LaValle's novella reimagines H.P. Lovecraft's story, "The Horror at Red Hook," where the people, happenings and sounds of Harlem are depicted as terrifying. How does LaValle flip that depiction by showing Harlem through the eyes of Tommy Tester, a black man?

When Tommy goes to deliver The Supreme Alphabet to Ma Att, he tears out a page. Why do you think he does this, and how does this action affect his story?

Lovecraft's mythos is based on the fear of cosmic monsters indifferent to mankind. How does LaValle show the malice of mankind as more horrifying?

In the second half of the novella, told from Malone's point of view, Tommy shows back up as Black Tom. How much is Tommy responsible for what he has become, and how much is the world he lives in to blame?

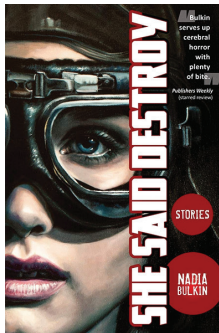
While not outright racist, Malone stands by while racism is perpetrated, and people suffer at the hands of Black Tom as a result. What is LaValle saying about how racism hurts us all?

LaValle's novella is set almost a century ago, but what similarities do you see in today's culture?

What is LaValle saying about the longevity of those issues?

SHE SAID DESTROY: STORIES

by **NADIA BULKIN**



A dictator craves love — and horrifying sacrifice — from his subjects; a ghost haunts a luxury hotel in a bloodstained land; a new babysitter uncovers a family curse; a final girl confronts a monster. Word Horde presents the debut collection from Nadia Bulkin. Dreamlike, poignant and unabashedly socio-political, *She Said Destroy* includes three stories nominated for the Shirley Jackson Award, four included in Year's Best anthologies, and one original tale, with an Introduction by Paul Tremblay.

APPEAL FACTORS

Tone: Disturbing; Menacing; Suspenseful

Character: Brooding; Sympathetic

Writing Style: Lyrical

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

She Said Destroy is chock full of terrifically disturbing and lyrical stories that consistently twist tropes and question the order of the universe we think we know. There are witch doctors, demons and ghosts, but these stories also follow brooding but sympathetic characters exploring love, family, friendship and what it means to be human. Whether they're examining socio-political issues or familiar relationships, these suspenseful stories expose the horror that can hide beneath society.

READ-ALIKES



Her Body and Other Parties by Carmen Maria Machado

The Beauty by Aliya Whiteley

All the Fabulous Beasts by Priya Sharma

Mouthful of Birds by Samanta Schweblin

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

The Horror of Oppression: A Conversation with Nadia Bulkin

Interview Bulkin about her childhood in Indonesia during the fall of Suharto, how her work in political science informs her writing, women in horror, and how Indonesian horror compares to American horror.

Friday Night Frights: "The Ring"

Partner with a local theater to screen Gore Verbinski's "The Ring." Follow up with a half-hour panel on horror films in other cultures, the Americanization of foreign horror films and how tech can become terrifying.

Political Upheaval and Periods of Unrest in [insert County/City]

Partner with area historians/local history library staff to highlight unsettled and unsettling periods in regional politics and social movements, focusing on public response and people speaking truth to power.

Slasher Films and Final Girls

Partner with area academics or experts for a discussion on women in horror films — the history, how women are depicted, tropes as social commentary, and how tropes are currently being reimagined.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Some of Bulkin's stories deal with a military figure having supernatural power over others. How does Bulkin explore the relationship between political powerlessness and cosmic horror?

"Intertropical Convergence Zone" follows a narrator willing to do anything for the power hungry general he follows. Why does the narrator make the sacrifices he makes? And, how does his devotion speak to deeper societal issues?

Bulkin spent part of her childhood in Indonesia, where spirits and hauntings are part of the cultural fabric. What are some examples in Bulkin's stories that made you examine the way Americans approach hauntings?

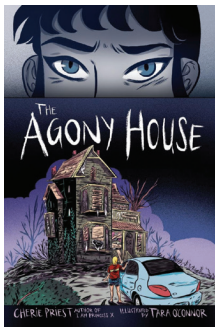
Bulkin explores the trope of the "final girl" in her story "And When She Was Bad." How does Bulkin turn this trope on its head? What do you make of the last scene between the final girl and the monster?

"Girl, I Love You" is at its heart a story about the friendship between Michi and Yurie. How are the two friends connected, and does Michi's love for Yurie justify her actions toward Asami?

Bulkin's stories force us to confront uncomfortable truths about ourselves and society. What were other stories that really stood out to you?

THE AGONY HOUSE

by **CHERIE PRIEST**



Seventeen-year-old Denise Farber, her mom and her stepfather are moving back to New Orleans, into the Argonne house, which is over 150 years old, and really showing its age, but which her mother plans to turn into a bed-and-breakfast. But old houses have histories, and sometimes ghosts. Denise begins to hear unexplained noises, but the odd occurrences soon grow more ominous. A mysterious old comic book that Denise finds in the attic may hold the answer to a crime and the terrifying things that keep happening in what she thinks of as the “Agony House.”

APPEAL FACTORS

Pace: Intensifying

Tone: Menacing; Strong sense of place

Writing Style: Richly detailed

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows Denise Farber, whose family returns to New Orleans to open a bed-and-breakfast. Soon weird things start happening in what she’s dubbed the “Agony House.” Denise finds an old comic that features a kick-butt female detective and may unlock the house’s secrets, but the menacing presence there intensifies as she reads. Readers will enjoy solving the mystery with Denise in this richly detailed mixed-media take on haunted houses.

READ-ALIKES



Bad Girls Don’t Die by Katie Alender

Paper Valentine by Brenna Yovanoff

Through the Woods by Emily Carroll

The Fade by Lunetta Demitria

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Historical Horrors: A Conversation with Cherie Priest

Interview Priest about how both Hurricane Katrina and the Comics Code Authority influenced her work, growing up in an Army household, working with mixed media, and her love of steampunk.

Who Haunts the Stacks? A Mystery Game

A spectre has been seen wandering the stacks. Your paranormal research team has been hired to investigate. Interact with various characters and use library materials to solve the mystery of who haunts the library.

Making Monsters with [insert Artist here]

Partner with local artists for an interactive live art demonstration using audience suggestions to depict our deepest fears, flesh out local urban legends or construct a new creature collaboratively.

Teen Writing Workshop: Haunted Objects

Take an antique-looking household item — a doorknob, a music box — and write a short story about the ghost who haunts it, or work together to tell the story of a bed-and-breakfast haunted by guests who never left.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Denise and her family move back to New Orleans years after Hurricane Katrina devastated the area. How can the effects of the hurricane be seen around the city?

Dom and Norman and other neighbors are initially concerned the Farbers only want to gentrify the neighborhood. How does this affect Denise? How does this change throughout the book?

Terry is fascinated by the stories he’s heard about the Farbers’ house being haunted. How does Terry’s interest in the supernatural help Denise along her journey?

The Farbers put all of their money into their house. How do the family’s economic pressures fuel Denise’s determination to figure out what’s going on there?

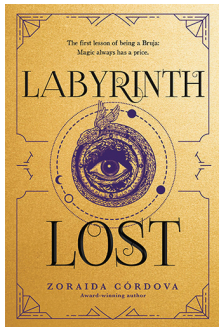
How did talk of the Farbers’ financial strains help ground the story? How would you respond in a similar situation?

After Denise finds the Lucinda Might comic, strange occurrences intensify. How does Denise react to the supernatural events? How does she unravel the mystery?

We learn about the Comics Code Authority and its role in the Lucinda Might comic being unpublished. What was the most interesting thing you learned about the history of comics or comic book culture?

LABYRINTH LOST

by **ZORAIDA CÓRDOVA**



Alex is a bruja and the most powerful witch in her family. But she's hated magic ever since it made her father disappear. During her Death Day ceremony, she performs a curse to rid herself of magic. But the curse backfires, her family vanishes, and she absorbs all of the magic from her family line. Alex must travel to Los Lagos, a land in-between as strange as Wonderland, to get her family back, all the while discovering new things about herself, her magical abilities and those she loves.

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Culturally diverse; Spirited; Strong Female

Storyline: Own voices; World-building

Writing Style: Compelling; Well-crafted dialogue

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows Alex, a strong and spirited young bruja, or witch, who accidentally performs a curse that sends her family to a Wonderland-like underworld called Los Lagos. Alex and her friends must travel to Los Lagos to defeat an evil bruja known as “The Devourer” and save her family. A coming-of-age story full of fantastic world-building and Latinx culture, this book is a compelling tale of magic, the importance of family, and the power that lies within all of us.

READ-ALIKES



The Babysitters Coven by Kate M. Williams

Caraval by Stephanie Garber

Wilder Girls by Rory Power

Girls of Paper and Fire by Natasha Ngan

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Magic, Mothers, and Día de los Muertos: A Discussion with Zoraida Córdova

Interview Córdova about her worldbuilding for the Brooklyn Brujas series, how Latin culture influences her writing, representation and her Latinx in Kidlit blog, and the importance of heritage and family stories.

Día de los Muertos Celebration

Partner with local Latin American groups to share the history of Día de los Muertos through dance, crafts and face painting, while discussing the importance of ancestors and remembering lost loved ones.

Escape from Los Lagos

Register teams to puzzle their way out of Los Lagos, facing magical creatures and crossing a river of trapped souls to reach the Tree of Souls and face The Devourer to free your family (team) from the underworld.

Odysseys and Underworlds Across Cultures

Partner with area academics or experts for a discussion on journeys to and depictions of the underworld in mythologies across the globe, what sets the stories apart, and the psychology behind why similar stories are created.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Córdova has created a pantheon of gods for the brujas. What sets them apart from other deities you've encountered in school? How are they similar?

Alex feels immense guilt at her family being trapped in Los Lagos. How does Alex's guilt power her journey?

Nova can be mysterious and morally ambiguous. What are his intentions, and how do they change over the course of the book?

While the novel doesn't focus on Alex's romantic relationships, she has romantic chemistry with both Nova and Rishi. How does Alex feel toward each, and how do the three of them interact together?

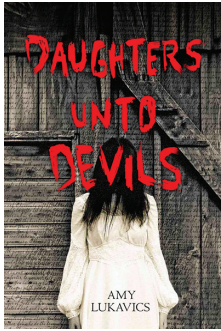
Labyrinth Lost is, at its essence, a story about family and the power of love. How is the bond between the family shown throughout the novel? What does Alex learn about the importance of family?

Alex's family all have different powers, including her sisters Rose and Lula. How are the sisters different? What makes you unique in your family or friend group?

Córdova's second book in the Brooklyn Brujas series, Bruja Born, focuses on Lula's story. What do we know about Lula by the end of Labyrinth Lost, and where do you hope her story goes?

DAUGHTERS UNTO DEVILS

by **AMY LUKAVICS**



When 16-year-old Amanda Verner's family moves from the mountains to the vast prairie, she thinks she can leave behind the memory of the past winter; the birth of a sibling who cries endlessly; her terrifying visions; and most of all, the memories of the boy whose

baby she now carries. When the Verners arrive at their new cabin, they discover the inside covered in blood. As the days pass, Amanda senses that

something isn't right on the prairie. But with the guilt of her sins weighing on her, Amanda can't be sure if the true evil lies in the land, or deep within her soul.

APPEAL FACTORS

Pace: Fast-paced

Tone: Creepy; Menacing

Character: Authentic; Spunky

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows Amanda Verner, an authentic, spunky 16-year-old who hopes her religious family's move from the mountains to the prairie will provide a fresh start for her and her unborn child after they survive a harsh winter and cabin fever. But their new neighbors tell strange stories about the land, and Amanda begins to sense a deeper evil. A fast-paced tale of demonic possession with all the makings of a gothic mystery, this creepy story will make your skin crawl.

READ-ALIKES



Sawkill Girls by Claire Legrand

Violet by Scott Thomas

Devils Unto Dust by Emma Burquist

The Winter People by Jennifer McMahon

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Paranoia and Possession on the Prairie: A Conversation with Amy Lukavics

Interview Lukavics about Stephen King's influence on her and *Daughters Unto Devils*, how primal fear empowers people, women and religion, the horror of isolation, and how the past follows and haunts us all.

Ghost Towns of [insert State/Region]

Partner with area historians/local history library staff for a talk on abandoned area towns, as well as small towns notorious for hauntings. Discuss how tales spring up in small communities, and why we fear such isolated areas.

Creepy Crafts & Cocoa

Stave off cabin fever by crafting a creepy wood slice ornament while enjoying a crackling [YouTube] campfire and hot cocoa. Chat about what you would bring if moving to a cabin in the woods, and how you'd survive being cooped up all winter.

Teen Writing Workshop: Urban Legends

Chat about urban legends — including spookiest stories heard and thoughts on why they exist. Ask group members to write their own urban legends, or work together to create something new.

READING GROUP GUIDE

The Verner family spent the last winter trapped in their mountain cabin. How does Amanda react to this, and how does it set up how her story transpires?

The time and place are unspecified in the novel. How does the lack of grounding details add to the book's feeling of unease?

Amanda's parents won't discuss Amanda's cabin fever episode. How does a willful ignoring of what is going on negatively affect the family?

The Verner family is deeply religious. How does religion influence Amanda's feelings of guilt? How does guilt influence her response to the strange things she experiences?

When the Verner children first meet Zeke, he tells them strange stories about the land. What were your initial impressions of the superstitions? How did they change over the course of the book?

Regardless of the supernatural forces at work in the book, Amanda has to face fears of change, the unknown, losing the love of her parents. What are some examples of real-world fears Amanda faces?

How does Amanda react when the truth about the land is revealed? What do you think happens to the Verner children after the book ends?

SPIRIT HUNTERS

by ELLEN OH



Harper Raine doesn't trust her new home, and she's dismayed by local rumors that it's haunted and that every family that lived there suffered terrible tragedies. Harper doubts the rumors until her younger brother, Michael, starts acting strangely. The whole thing gives Harper a sense of déjà vu, but she can't remember why. She knows that her blocked memories will help make sense of her brother's behavior and the strange happenings in the house, but can she put the pieces together in time?

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Courageous; Culturally diverse

Storyline: Action-packed; Character-driven; Own voices

TONE: Scary

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows 12-year-old Harper Raine, who's just moved to a new town after an accident she can't remember. Soon after the move, Harper's brother starts acting strangely, and she begins to think their house might be haunted. Featuring a cast of culturally diverse characters, readers will enjoy following Harper as she reconnects with her Korean grandmother to find the courage and power within herself to figure out what's haunting her house and save her brother in this scary, action-packed tale.

READ-ALIKES



City of Ghosts by Victoria Schwab

Small Spaces by Katherine Arden

Elizabeth and Zenobia by Jessica Miller

Thornhill by Pam Smy

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Haunted Houses and Hero Grandmas: Chatting with Ellen Oh

Lead an interactive discussion with Oh about how libraries nurtured her love of scary stories, her experiences moving as a child, grandparents as hero characters on and off the page, her research into Korean traditions and folklore, and the importance of We Need Diverse Books.

Escape the House of Horrors

Register teams to puzzle their way out of a haunted house by unraveling historical mysteries, gaining guidance from friendly and helpful ghosts, and collecting powers to escape the house before its malevolent spirits possess them.

Make and Take: Haunted House Terrariums

Construct a 3D paper haunted house and create a mason jar terrarium for it using craft twigs, mosses and tombstones while chatting about what creeps you out the most.

Family Movie Night: Goosebumps

Gather in a library meeting room for a screening of *Goosebumps* (2015). Decorate creepy rice crispy treats using colored frostings and various candies to make your own edible movie monsters.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Harper and her family just moved to a new neighborhood. How does Harper react to the move?

Have you ever had to move to a new place? What was the scariest part, or what was the most exciting?

Harper's younger brother, Michael, starts to act strangely shortly after they move into the house. How does Harper start to tell something's wrong? What does she do to help Michael?

The book includes sections of Harper's journal entries. How do these sections help us understand what she's experiencing?

Harper and Dayo investigate the history of Harper's house. What was the most interesting thing they discovered? What's something interesting about your house or neighborhood?

Harper's mother is Korean, but disagrees with parts of the culture. What kinds of tension has this caused in the family? How does this change over the course of the book?

We learn a lot about Korean traditions and folklore from Harper's grandmother. What are some interesting traditions in your family?

Harper learns a lot about herself and shows a lot of courage. How do you think Harper grew? What's something that helps you feel confident and courageous?

CASE FILE 13: ZOMBIE KID by J. SCOTT SAVAGE



Nick, Carter and Angelo are obsessed with monsters. And every Halloween they get to show off their monster knowledge with elaborate homemade costumes. But this year, a trip to the house of an aunt who may have been a voodoo queen lands Nick with a cursed amulet that turns him into a real, live (well, undead) zombie.

The boys have to go on a chilling adventure to reverse the curse — one that involves a talking cat,

a skeleton who likes candy corn, and even the dreaded Zombie King himself.

APPEAL FACTORS

Themes: Cursed!; Monster mayhem

Tone: Funny; Scary

Writing Style: Attention-grabbing

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows Nick, who loves Halloween and who, after finding a cursed amulet during his mysterious great-aunt's funeral, turns into a zombie. At first, he and his two best friends think this is awesome, but when Nick starts falling apart they realize undoing the curse won't be easy. Readers will enjoy following the three friends as they meet ghosts, skeletons and secret-keeping cats on their journey to defeat the Zombie King in this funny and scary tale of monster mayhem.

READ-ALIKES



Max Helsing and the Thirteenth Curse by Curtis Jobling

The Zombie Chasers by John Kloepfer

The Bone Garden by Heather Kassner

Mighty Jack by Ben Hatke

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Animating Corpses: Chatting with J. Scott Savage

Lead an interactive discussion with Savage about creating Nick, Carter and Angelo and how they complement one another, his research into zombies and voodoo while working on *Zombie Kid*, animating the characters with illustrator Doug Holgate, and the further adventures of the Three Monsterteers.

Zombie Insects Amongst Us

Partner with area biologists, botanists, and entomologists for an interactive presentation on creatures in the natural world — parasites, fungi, and insects — that eat brains and zombify their hosts (or get zombified), from the “zombie” ant to the crypt-keeper wasp.

Make and Take: Cursed Amulet

Create your own power-imbued amulet out of perler beads. Chat about what powers everyone would like to have and what objects provide comfort and make you feel powerful.

Family Movie Night: ParaNorman

Gather in a library meeting room for a screening of *ParaNorman*. Decorate powdered donuts with red gel/icing and M&Ms to create edible zombie eyeballs.

READING GROUP GUIDE

The friendship between Nick, Carter and Angelo is at the heart of the book. What were some of the ways you could tell they were so close? What's something you like about your friends?

The book takes place during Halloween. What are some of the Halloween traditions the characters have? What Halloween traditions do you have?

When Nick turns into a zombie, he and his friends are kind of excited about his new abilities. What were some of the cool things about being a zombie? What would you do if you had those powers?

There's a lot in the book about zombie lore and about voodoo. What was the neatest thing you learned? What would you like to learn more about?

Nick and his friends encounter a lot of interesting characters on the way to facing the Zombie King. Which was your favorite character they encountered?

There are a lot of funny parts in the book. What's something that really made you laugh? What was the grossest part?

Nick has to rely on both Carter and Angelo to defeat the Zombie King and turn Nick back. What does each of them add to their trio? What's something that makes you unique among your friends?

HOODOO

by RONALD L. SMITH



Twelve-year-old Hoodoo Hatcher was born into a family with a rich tradition of practicing folk magic. Despite his name, Hoodoo can't seem to cast spells. Then a mysterious man called the Stranger comes to town, and Hoodoo starts dreaming of the dead rising from their graves. Even worse, he learns the Stranger is looking for a boy. A boy named Hoodoo. The entire town is at risk from the Stranger's black magic, and only Hoodoo can defeat him. He'll just need to learn how to conjure, first.

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Believable; Courageous

Tone: Scary

Writing Style: Attention-grabbing; Richly detailed

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows 12-year-old Hoodoo Hatcher, who comes from a long line of conjurers, but who can't yet work magic himself. Then one day a man called the Stranger comes to town, and the Stranger is looking for a boy. A boy named Hoodoo. Richly detailed and attention-grabbing, readers will enjoy following Hoodoo as he finds the magic and courage inside himself to harness his powers to defeat the Stranger in this scary and relatable coming-of-age story full of folklore and family history.

READ-ALIKES



The Jumbies by Tracey Baptiste
The Night Gardener by Jonathan Auxier

Doll Bones by Holly Black

The Graveyard Book by Neil Gaiman

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Conjuring Creepiness: Chatting with Ronald L. Smith

Lead an interactive chat with Smith about his switch from working in advertising to writing middle-grade fiction, his own childhood fears (hint: chickens), his Alabama-born parents' influence on Hoodoo, his research into hoodoo traditions and folklore, and writing southern gothic and historical fiction for middle graders.

Weird Weeds and Fearsome Flowers

Partner with local nature center staff, biologists or gardening groups for an interactive presentation on creepy plants that can be grown in home gardens, from the Venus Flytrap and Doll's Eyes to Medusa's Head and Black Bat Flowers.

Make and Take: Franktentoy

Cut, pry and twist apart toys — stuffed animals, action figures and dolls — to construct your own monstrous creation while chatting about a backstory for your new strange friend.

Monster Mad Libs and Moonpies

Gather around the [YouTube] campfire and work as a group to make scary and side-splitting Monster Mad Libs while enjoying MoonPies and green punch.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Hoodoo's grandparents are raising him. Mama Frances in particular plays a huge role in his life. What's their relationship like? What are your grandparents like?

Magic runs deep in Hoodoo's family, and there are a lot of traditions around it. How does Hoodoo feel about these traditions and connect with them?

Hoodoo connects more deeply with his family roots during the course of the book. What was the most interesting thing you learned about conjuring? What's a tradition in your family?

The book takes place in the 1930s, during both the Great Depression and segregation. What was the most surprising thing to you about this time and how it affected Hoodoo's family?

We get some really creepy descriptions of the Stranger, such as snakes under his hat and a mouth full of swamp water. What did you think was the creepiest thing about the Stranger?

Hoodoo suffers a devastating loss partway through the book. How does this loss change him and change his journey?

Hoodoo has to take heart and find his courage to defeat the Stranger. How does he find his courage and his powers? What's something that helps you feel courageous?

Thrilling Communities with Chilling Experiences

by **Konrad Stump**

Local History Associate, Springfield-Greene County Library District, and Summer Scares Programming Consultant



THE SUMMER SCARES PROGRAMMING GUIDE is intended to ease the fears of librarians looking to engage patrons with the horror genre, specifically official Summer Scares titles, through Readers' Advisory, book discussions and programming.

Each Summer Scares title includes ideas for booktalks, read-alikes, reading group guides for book discussion leaders and sample programs, so you have the tools to connect your communities with these titles.

The simplest way to incorporate Summer Scares titles into your library is through Readers' Advisory. Last year, Springfield-Greene created a full-page flyer of the Summer Scares list. Many branches created book displays featuring the flyer, and librarians told me that being able to hand out the list made chatting with patrons about the Summer Scares titles, and horror in general, much easier.

The read-alikes provided in this guide will allow you to prominently feature the official titles, while also giving you more options to flesh out the displays and recommend to patrons when they return for more.

Horror can often be a hard sell to book discussion leaders. Having the list and being able to tout the respected organizations behind it helped me last year when convincing discussion leaders to choose Summer Scares titles. The book clubs engaged in lively discussions about genres and ideas they hadn't considered, and now they're more likely to expand their reading comfort zones.

You can feel more confident discussing Summer Scares titles with the reading group guides provided here.

Plan a small program series with any of these covering different bases: An author event or featured speaker, a local history program, a craft-based program, and something that incorporates pop culture, such as a movie viewing or trivia.

The 36 sample programs provided in this guide are intended to make you more comfortable with everything from author interviews, to mixing academia and pop culture, to leading craft or writing programs, and to show that horror-themed library programs can appeal to even the most skeptical audience.

Programming is a way to connect patrons with resources and services. Each program is another opportunity to offer RA, promote a database, or simply remind patrons about the great experiences libraries offer communities and hopefully create more life-long library advocates.

Whether you create book displays, hold a single discussion or program, or plan an entire series, just remember: Don't let it scare you.

Library workers and authors who are interested in cultivating horror programming can contact Konrad Stump at konrads@thelibrary.org for assistance.



Author Daniel Kraus signing books after "The Shape of Fear: A Sit-Down with Daniel Kraus" at The Library Center in July 2019, part of the Springfield-Greene County Library District's Summer Scares program series.



Authors from "Feral: A Journal of Ozarkian Gothic" performing during "Ozarkian Campfire Tales," part of The Library's 2019 Summer Scares program series.



Check out Summer Scares' official podcast partner, Ladies of the Fright, by visiting ladiesofthefright.com for updates and to listen to past Summer Scares podcasts, including:

