CRASH COURSE IN HORROR
The Midnight Society

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Speculative Fiction

Science Fiction
What if our scientific theories are real?

Fantasy
What if magic or magical creatures exist?

Horror
What if our nightmares are real?
The Pull of the Grave
“It shows us that the control we believe we have is purely illusory, and that every moment we teeter on chaos and oblivion.”

-Clive Barker

‘Visceral’ Fiction
History of the Genre
Gothic Horror in the 18th Century

A significant amount of horror fiction of this era was marketed towards a female audience, a typical scenario being a resourceful female menaced in a gloomy castle.
19th Century Horror

The gothic tradition turns to the genre modern readers call horror and many foundational characters are born.

- Frankenstein (1818)
- The Fall of the House of Usher (1839)
- Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1886)
- Dracula (1897)
Early 20th Century Pulp Fiction

Pulp magazines emerged to give more genre writers an outlet. H.P. Lovecraft, Ray Bradbury, and Robert Bloch, among many others, published stories in magazines.
Pre-Modern Era

The real-life horrors of World War II and the looming paranoia and menace of the Cold War usher in a new generation as horror novels gain mainstream acceptability.

1954

1959

1967

1974
NoveList Appeals and Themes
Gruesome
Creepy
Compelling
Moody
Violent
Menacing
Suspenseful
Brooding
Atmospheric
Flawed
Strong female
Disturbing
Intensifying
Darkly humorous
Menacing
Flawed
Moody
Bleak
Compelling
Intensifying
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Plot</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cursed!</td>
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<td>Possessed!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trapped!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Childhood trauma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t go in there!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evil transformations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Witchcraft and the occult</td>
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<td>Zombie apocalypse</td>
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Trapped!

Think isolated cabins, Arctic research bases, submarines, graves, or elevators.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters</th>
<th>Band of survivors</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Creature feature</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Creepy clowns and bad seeds</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Evil animals</td>
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<td>Final girls</td>
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<td>Real life monsters</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Vampire menace</td>
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<td>Werewolves among us</td>
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Creepy Clowns and Bad Seeds

Menace lurks behind things that seem innocent.
<table>
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<th>Style</th>
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<td>Body horror</td>
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<td>Found footage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lovecraftian horror</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monster mashups</td>
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Found Footage

Framing devices (such as letters or diaries) highlight the horror in real time.
Subgenres and Trends
Subgenres

- Historical horror
- Gothic fiction
- Ghost stories
More Subgenres!

- Supernatural mysteries
- Psychological suspense
- Weird Westerns
Socially Conscious Horror
(Deconstructing)
Lovecraftian Horror
Folk Horror
Books as Hooks
Anthologies
Horror in Translation
Nonfiction
Conversations with the Dead
(or, questions to ask horror fans.)
“What’s your scare level?”

Atmospheric dread

Intense terror and gore
“What horror movies/podcasts/shows do you like?”
“What’s your monster?”
Horror Starter Pack

- Representative of genre
- Well-reviewed
- Wide appeal
- Stand-alone or series starter
My Best Friend’s Exorcism by Grady Hendrix (2016)

- Darkly humorous
- Strong female friendship
- Nostalgic (1980s music playlists)
- Meticulous attention to period detail
- Possessed!
White is for Witching
by Helen Oyeyemi (2009)

- Gothic
- Creepy British manor house
- Atmospheric
- Ghosts! Maybe!
- Nonlinear
- Under 250 pages
John Dies at the End
by David Wong (2007)

- Jokes jokes jokes
- Gross-out body horror
- So meta
- Fast-paced
- Well-developed characters, in spite of it all
The Passage
by Justin Cronin (2010)

- Band of survivors
- Vampire menace
- First in a trilogy
- Sweeping epic
- Bleak
- Menacing
Her Body and Other Parties  
by Carmen Maria Machado (2017)

- Short stories
- Queer feminist take on body horror and fantasy
- Creepy and surreal
- Thought-provoking
- Multiple award winner
- In development as an FX anthology series
Resources
RA FOR ALL: HORROR
THE ONLINE HOME OF THE READERS' ADVISORY GUIDE TO HORROR, AN ALA PUBLICATION.

purgimg the black female horror fan from the margins
Indie Publishers
Awards

The **Bram Stoker Award** is awarded by the Horror Writers Association for “superior achievement” in horror writing. [thebramstokerawards.com](http://thebramstokerawards.com)

The **Shirley Jackson Award** is for outstanding achievement in horror, the dark fantastic, and psychological suspense. [shirleyjacksonawards.org](http://shirleyjacksonawards.org)
2018 Bram Stoker Shortlist
NoveList Resources
Keeping up pages

**GETTING UP TO SPEED IN HORROR**

**By Sarah S. Davis**

What is Horror?

The goal of horror is to inspire fear. Horror manipulates our deep-seated anxieties and brings them vividly to life on the page. These fears could be real—clowns, wolves, vampires—or they could be intangible, like socialized poverty and failure. Escalating tension pits an everyday against his own mind in a clash that is often more psychological than physical.

What happens in a Horror novel?

Horror takes often begin in a fairly normal world, suddenly and disastrously invaded by monsters, and lead to a horrific climax. Many layer tension upon tension as the story builds toward a showdown with a psychological and/or corporeal tormentor, possibly with a shocking twist. In all horror stories, expect an unease atmosphere intensified by graphic violence, strong language, and explicit sex. These novels explore the dark side of human nature.

Why do people like to read Horror?

They expect to be scared and are drawn to stories that hurtle them down dark roads at a fast clip. Horror allows readers to face their worst fears in a safe environment. Horror can also be a vehicle for social commentary. The genre can be a mirror that reflects the personal or go down those dark basement steps, to conform what is told past the line of reality. Fans of horror value the genre's ability to follow temptation and take pleasure in terror.

**Key titles**

- **A Head Full of Ghosts**
  - Paul Tremblay
  - A great novel of ghost story where things go wrong in an upper class household.
  - A novel that explores the themes of fear, survival, and the supernatural.
- **The Passage**
  - Justin Cronin
  - A post-apocalyptic story about a virus that turns humans into vampires.
  - A tale of survival, love, and the struggle for humanity.

**Haunted!**

- **Black Rabbit Hall**
  - (Feb 2015)
  - By: Claire Exe
  - Popularity: 5/5
  - Check Availability
- **Widow's Point**
  - (Feb 2013)
  - By: Cherie Richard T.
  - Popularity: 4/5
  - Check Availability
- **The Graveyard Apartment**
  - (Oct 2013)
  - By: Kiana, Marias.
  - Popularity: 5/5
  - Check Availability

**Recommended reads list**

**About Horror**

Whether you're looking for a lesson in fear or an electrifying rush that has you running to turn on the lights, horror has the stuff. This genre shames the unknown, the unexpected, and the unexpected to expose and exploit our deepest, darkest fears. From the creepy to the outright gory, and readers may have strong headaches by this point. Novelist types often call help native search results to find the perfect horror read.

**Explore HORROR themes...**

- **Playing Dead**
  - An experiment gone awry...not enough to prevent disaster, however.
  - Find more books with this theme.
- **Love these lists!**
  - **Adults**
    - For Fans of Strange Things
    - Psychological Horror
    - Horror Short Stories
  - **Teens**
    - For Fans of The Walking Dead
    - For Fans of Horror Films
    - Monsters and Creeps
  - **Older Kids**
    - For Fans of Horror Films
    - For Fans of Horror Films
    - Snap Short Stories

**We Recommend...**

- **The Shining**
  - (Jan 2016)
  - By: Stephen King
  - Popularity: 5/5
  - Check Availability
- **The Haunting of Hill House**
  - (Jul 2016)
  - By: Shirley Jackson
  - Popularity: 5/5
  - Check Availability
- **Maps of it Interior**
  - (Jun 2017)
  - By: Jeyn, Jic.
  - Popularity: 4/5
  - Check Availability

**About us:**

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Books we can’t wait to read

THE ONLY GOOD INDIANS

Stephen Graham Jones

A COSMOLOGY OF MONSTERS

Shaun Hamill

THE DEEP

Alma Katsu

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Questions?
Thank you

Learn more at
ebscohost.com/novelist & libraryreads.org
Finding Horror in NoveList