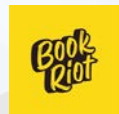


CREATED BY THE SPRINGFIELD-GREENE COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:



Springfield-Greene County Library District
Springfield, Missouri • thelibrary.org



SUMMER SCARES

Summer Scares, a reading program from The Horror Writers Association (HWA), in partnership with United for Libraries, Book Riot, and Booklist, 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.

New York Times bestselling author Silvia Moreno-Garcia and a committee of five library workers 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.

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.

SILVIA MORENO-GARCIA

Silvia Moreno-Garcia is the bestselling author of the novels *Mexican Gothic*, *Gods of Jade and Shadow*, and *Certain Dark Things*, among others. She has edited several anthologies, including the World Fantasy Award-winning *She Walks in Shadows* (a.k.a. *Cthulhu's Daughters*). *Gods of Jade and Shadow* was the 2020 American Library Association Reading List winner in the Fantasy category, appeared on many year's best lists, and won the 2020 Sunburst Award for Excellence in Canadian Literature of the Fantastic. Silvia is also the publisher of *Innsmouth Free Press*, a columnist for *The Washington Post*, and a book reviewer for NPR.



“Horror has a bad reputation, even though it’s the genre that gave us classics such as Mary Shelley’s ‘Frankenstein,’ Shirley Jackson’s ‘The Lottery’ or Daphne du Maurier’s ‘Don’t Look Now.’ Like any other genre, horror is multifaceted and has a rich history. From pulpy scares to cerebral thrills, horror deserves more love and we’re here to share some exciting titles.”

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.



Konrad Stump is a Local History Associate for the Springfield-Greene County (MO) Library, where he works on *Big Read* and the library’s popular “Oh, the Horror!” series, which attracts hundreds of patrons during October. He also created the *Donuts & Death* horror book group, featured in “Book Club Reboot: 71 Creative Twists” (ALA).



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*.



Julia Smith is a senior editor at *Booklist* and a member of the Books for Youth team. Her lifelong love of horror movies and middle-grade literature draws her to creepy children’s stories and books with bone in the title.



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*.



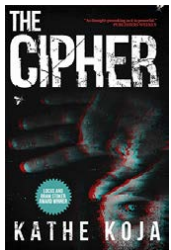
SUMMER SCARES

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

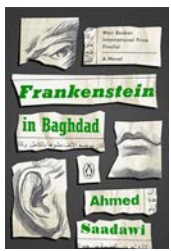
ADULT



The Hunger
by Alma Katsu
As the Donner Party heads west, members of the group begin to disappear. The survivors start to wonder whether something disturbing, and hungry, waits for them in the mountains and whether evil has been growing within them all along.

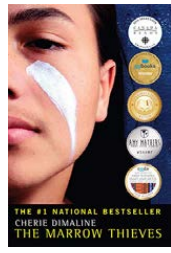


The Cipher
by Kathe Koja
When a strange hole materializes in a storage room, Nicholas and Nakota allow their curiosity to lead them into the depths of terror, toward obsession, violence and life-altering transformation from getting too close to the Funhole.

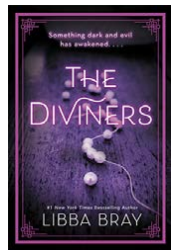


Frankenstein in Baghdad
by Ahmed Saadawi
After Hadi builds a corpse from body parts found on the rubble-strewn streets of Baghdad, he wants the government to prepare a proper burial. But when the corpse disappears, a series of murders occurs and he realizes he made a monster.

YOUNG ADULT



The Marrow Thieves
by Cherie Dimaline
In a future where only North America's indigenous peoples still dream, where their bone marrow holds the cure for humanity and they are hunted for it, 15-year-old Frenchie and his companions struggle to survive as they make their way north.

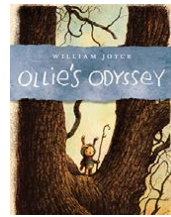


The Diviners
by Libba Bray
Seventeen-year-old Evie ditches Ohio for New York City in 1926, but soon she and her curator uncle are thrust into the investigation of a rash of occult-based murders, and she discovers her mysterious powers could help catch a killer.

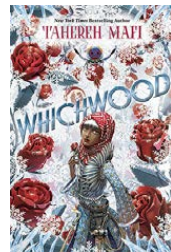


Undead Girl Gang
by Lily Anderson
While investigating the deaths of three girls at her school, 16-year-old Wiccan Mila Flores accidentally brings the girls back to life, but they don't remember their murders, and Mila must work fast before the killer strikes again.

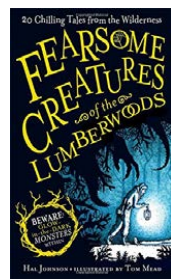
MIDDLE GRADE



Ollie's Odyssey
by William Joyce
When Billy's favorite toy Ollie is toynapped by the clown king Zozo and his toy henchmen the Creeps, Billy must journey past the park, through the woods and into the night to rescue Ollie from Zozo's lair in the old Carnival Place.



Whichwood
by Tahereh Mafi
Thirteen-year-old Laylee, a Mordeshoor who tends to the dead, is worn out from work and being shunned by the villagers of Whichwood, but then two strangers arrive to help Laylee rediscover color, magic, and the healing power of friendship.



Fearsome Creatures of the Lumberwoods
by Hal Johnson
Meet some of the most fearsome creatures in American folklore, from the snoligoster, who feeds on its victims' shadows, to the whirling whimper, who once laid low an entire Boy Scout troop, as narrated by one of the last surviving cryptozoologists.



Springfield-Greene County Library District
thelibrary.org

THE HUNGER

by ALMA KATSU



PHOTO: PATRICK MILLIKEN

Evil is invisible and everywhere. That is the only way to explain the misfortunes that plague the Donner Party. Depleted rations, bitter quarrels and death have driven them to the brink of madness. Though they dream of a life out west, long-buried secrets begin to emerge, and they cannot seem to escape tragedy. As members of the group begin to disappear, the survivors wonder if something disturbing, and

hungry, waits in the mountains...and whether the evil unfolding has been growing within them all along.

APPEAL FACTORS

Storyline: Intricately plotted; Character-driven

Tone: Atmospheric; Creepy

Writing Style: Compelling; Richly detailed

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

A fictional account of the doomed Donner Party with a supernatural twist, this intricately plotted novel follows the travelers as they head west in hopes of a better future. But members of the group begin to disappear, and those left alive begin to wonder whether evil lies within the group, or whether something sinister lurks in the mountains. An atmospheric retelling of an integral American story, this novel mixes horror and historical fiction to create one creepy Western.

READ-ALIKES



Unbury Carol by Josh Malerman

Water Ghosts by Shawna Yang Ryan

Devolution by Max Brooks

Silver on the Road by Laura Anne Gilman

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

The Horror of Desperation: A Discussion with Alma Katsu

Interview Katsu about researching the Donner Party, balancing fact and fiction in historical horror, her podcast Damned History, and how her career in intelligence informed her new novel, Red Widow.

Doomed Journeys and Cursed Voyages

Partner with area academics or experts in literature, religion, film, or psychology for a discussion on unfortunate travelers in history, their depictions in pop culture, and why we find their stories so fascinating.

Friday Night Frights: Bone Tomahawk

Have patrons view S. Craig Zahler's 2015 film Bone Tomahawk on Hoopla, then hop onto Zoom for a half-hour chat about the movie, horror Westerns and cannibalism in pop culture.

Stranger Than Fiction: [Insert Town/City]

Partner with area historians/local history library staff to highlight area historical events of the bizarre or unbelievable, with particular focus on the macabre or spine-tingling.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Katsu takes the Donner Party story and puts a supernatural twist on it. What did you know about the Donner Party going into the novel, and what did you learn?

The members of the party join it for varying reasons. How do these reasons affect their decisions during the expedition? Whose backstory struck you the most?

What was the most interesting historical tidbit you gleaned from the novel, and how did the historical details help inform your understanding of the characters?

How do relationships within the group change throughout the journey? How do these dynamics inform what ultimately transpires?

The roles and perceptions of the women in the party alter over the course of the journey. How do the women, particularly Tamsen Donner, use this to their advantage in order to survive?

Much of the novel focuses on the real-life horrors experienced by the party. How did this affect your perception of the supernatural aspects once they were revealed?

How did reading The Hunger change your outlook on the Donner Party's choices, and how do you think you would act in a similar circumstance?

THE CIPHER by KATHE KOJA

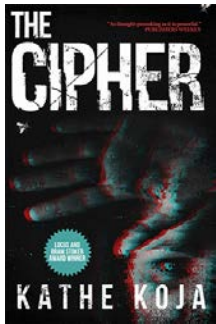


PHOTO: PRICK LIEDER

When a strange hole materializes in a storage room, would-be poet Nicholas and his feral lover Nakota allow their curiosity to lead them into the depths of terror. The two set out to see what happens when objects are lowered into the “Funhole” — first insects,

then a mouse, then a camcorder that produces a disturbing but addicting video. But no one is in control, and their experiments lead to obsession,

violence, and a very final transformation for everyone who gets too close to the Funhole.

APPEAL FACTORS

Tone: Bleak; Disturbing; Haunting

Character: Flawed; Twisted

Writing Style: Gritty; Lyrical

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This novel follows two twisted but complex 20-somethings, Nicholas and Nakota, who discover a strange dark hole in a storage room that they dub the Funhole. They soon find that anything lowered into the hole returns transformed, and as they delve deeper into the hole’s mysteries, it changes them. A bleak, haunting story about the descent into obsession, the novel’s distinct lyrical prose and flawed characters will transform any reader who experiences the Funhole.

READ-ALIKES



The Rust Maidens by Gwendolyn Kiste

When Darkness Loves Us by Elizabeth Engstrom

Universal Harvester by John Darnielle

The Only Good Indians by Stephen Graham Jones

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Into the Abyss: An Interview with Kathe Koja

Interview Koja about publishing with the Dell Abyss line and how horror moved into the 1990s, turning horror into performance art, the importance of voice in fiction, and the genesis and legacy of *The Cipher*.

False Gods and Fanatics

Partner with area academics or experts from the realms of literature, religion, film or psychology for a discussion on enigmatic figures in pop culture, from how they gain a following to why people get caught up in cult-like movements.

[Insert Town/City] In the 90s

Partner with area historians/local history library staff to examine your town or region during the 1990s, with a particular focus on the art scene, from poetry, to music, to painting and sculpture.

The Art of Horror

Partner with local and/or regional horror artists where they discuss early indelible images of horror that inspired them, their favorite horror artists and illustrations, and show their own work.

READING GROUP GUIDE

The Funhole already exists when we enter the story. How does this contribute to its mystery? Where do you think it came from?

Nicholas and Nakota find the Funhole in an ordinary, unexotic location — Nicholas’ apartment complex. What’s the significance of it existing in such a place?

Nicholas and Nakota are in a toxic relationship, but in what ways do they positively push one another? What are each one’s redeemable qualities?

Nicholas and Nakota gradually progress in what they put into the Funhole — insects, a mouse, etc. How does each of them react to their involvement in these experiments?

Nicholas and Nakota create a video of the Funhole. Why do you think Nakota’s so concerned with the video, and what kind of edge does it give her?

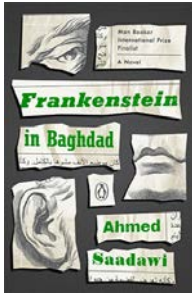
The Funhole doesn’t do anything without Nicholas there. How does this change how he is treated by everyone around him? What kind of power does it give him?

A lot of people come into Nicholas’ orbit. How is Vanese unique?

The Funhole physically alters what gets too close to it, but how are Nakota and Nicholas changed by it as people over the course of the novel?

FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD

by AHMED SAADAWI



After Hadi, a scavenger and an odd-ball fixture at a local café, builds a corpse from body parts found on the rubble-strewn streets of Baghdad, he wants the government to recognize the parts as people and prepare a proper burial for the corpse. But when the corpse goes missing, a wave of eerie murders sweeps the city, and reports stream in of a horrendous-looking criminal who, though shot, cannot be killed. Hadi soon realizes he's created a monster, one that needs human flesh to survive—first from the guilty, and then from anyone in its path.

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Culturally diverse; Large cast of characters

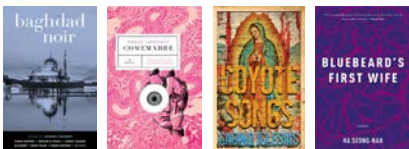
Storyline: Intricately plotted; Issue-oriented; Own voices

Tone: Darkly humorous; Gruesome; Strong sense of place

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This novel reinterprets Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" to tell a darkly humorous tale of the horrors of war, as a junk dealer constructs a corpse from random body parts around war-torn Baghdad only to have the corpse become possessed by a spirit and start seeking vengeance. An intricately plotted story told from multiple points of view that muddy the waters on what's to be believed as the monster runs amok, Baghdad circa 2005 begins to sound like a terrible dystopian future.

READ-ALIKES



Baghdad Noir ed. Samuel Shimon

Comemadre by Roque Larraquy

Coyote Songs by Gabino Iglesias

Bluebeard's First Wife by Ha Seong-nanSchweblin

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

War-torn Horrors: An Interview with Ahmed Saadawi

Interview Saadawi with his translator about the cultural heritage of Baghdad, working for the BBC's Arabic service, the line between reality and dystopia, and mitigating horror with humor.

Strange Science and Man-made Monsters

Partner with people in the fields of literature and film, folklore and mythology, and/or more current fields like robotics and cloning for a discussion on man-made monsters and their creators, including moral and ethical dilemmas presented.

Friday Night Frights: Pan's Labyrinth

Partner with a local theater to screen Guillermo del Toro's "Pan's Labyrinth." Follow up with a half-hour panel on the universality of horror and war, and the experience of escape that horror and fantasy offer.

Shadow Box Summer Writing Workshop

Partner with local writers who will lead a four-session workshop around the idea of found objects, asking participants to locate four types of items around town to create a story for a shadow box.

READING GROUP GUIDE

The book uses "Frankenstein" to tackle the real horrors of war in Baghdad. How does the fantastic help mitigate the real life horror depicted?

The story told is constructed from documents representing multiple points of view. How should we interpret their veracity? How might the POVs be influenced by the day-to-day horrors in Baghdad?

Elishva has suffered loss by death and distance, but continues to live in Baghdad. How have multiple wars shaped her life? How have they shaped Baghdad?

Hadi's intentions for his creation go awry. What responsibility does he claim for this? What is Saadawi saying, through Hadi, about responsibility for conflict in Iraq?

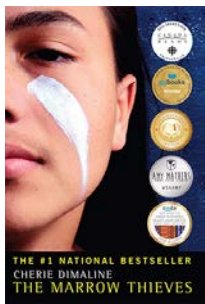
Whatsitsname seeks vengeance for his body parts. How does his mission get clouded? What is Saadawi saying about the nature of war? What about guilt and innocence?

Mahmoud sensationalizes the story of Whatsitsname. What does this say about how the media shapes narratives? How has Baghdad been portrayed in U.S. media?

The book is set in 2005, but the Iraqi conflict still persists. Where is Baghdad by the end of the book? How does that compare to where it is today?

THE MARROW THIEVES

by CHERIE DIMALINE



In a future world ravaged by global warming, people have lost the ability to dream. Only North America's indigenous population still dream — and their marrow holds the cure for the rest of the world. But getting the marrow means death for the unwilling donors. Driven to flight, 15-year-old Frenchie and his companions struggle for survival, attempt to reunite with loved ones, and take refuge from the “recruiters” who seek them to bring them to the marrow-stealing “factories.” *Promote alongside the American Indian Library Association's “Read Native” reading challenge.*

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Complex; Culturally diverse; LGBTQIA diverse

Storyline: Character-driven; Own voices; World-building

Writing Style: Compelling; Lyrical

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows 15-year-old Frenchie and a cast of culturally and LGBTQIA diverse characters through a dystopian future where global warming has ravaged the land and Canada's indigenous peoples are hunted for their bone marrow because it can save the rest of humanity. Featuring fantastic world-building, this character-driven story of survival presents a terrifying future to highlight historical horrors experienced by indigenous peoples while holding out hope for a better future.

READ-ALIKES



Shadows Cast by Stars by Catherine Knutsson

Smoketown by Tenea D. Johnson

Orleans by Sherri L. Smith

Unwind by Neal Shusterman

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Dreaming in Dystopia: A Discussion with Cherie Dimaline

Interview Dimaline about the importance of showing indigenous youth as heroes, building a dystopian future out of historical horrors, preserving traditions, and holding onto hope in hardship.

Survive the Night Pillowcase Preparedness Kit

Partner with the American Red Cross to teach teens about The Pillowcase Project, while also discussing keepsakes to take, how to keep family stories alive, and ways they can best serve the environment, all while enjoying some fun on-the-run rations.

Frightening Futures and Desolate Lands

Partner with people in the fields of literature, film, science, and/or technology to discuss Sci-Fi classics, the line between reality and dystopia, and the potential threat of everything from climate change to artificial intelligence like Siri, tracking, and deepfakes.

Teen Writing Workshop: Dreams Explored

Chat about how groups have interpreted dreams through history, as well as psychological theories. Using group examples, work together to write a scary story about a group of teens haunted by their dreams.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Climate change has altered the characters' world and lives. What has changed? What lessons can we take for our own world?

Frenchie is 11 when we meet him. How has he grown by the time we meet him again at 16? What does he learn about family over the course of the book?

We learn about the group members through their coming-to stories. What is the importance of storytelling to the group members? Whose story struck you the most?

Miig asks the group to consider what they would do to protect their own. What hard choices do the characters make in order to survive? How might you respond in similar situations?

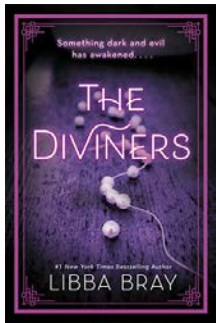
At first, Frenchie thinks Minerva is just an eccentric elder. How does the group grow to appreciate Minerva? What can she teach us about appreciating our elders?

The book tackles some of the horrific things indigenous peoples have suffered historically. What were you most shocked to learn? What lessons can we take away from this history?

Despite taking place in a frightening future, the book has glimmers of hope. Where do the characters find hope throughout the book? What scenes made you hopeful for their futures?

THE DIVINERS

by **LIBBA BRAY**



Seventeen-year-old Evie O'Neill is thrilled to be exiled from her boring Ohio hometown and sent off to New York City. It's 1926, and New York is bustling. The only catch is that she has to live with her uncle Will and his interest in the occult. Evie worries he'll

discover her darkest secret: a supernatural power that has only brought her trouble so far. When the police find a murdered girl branded with a cryptic symbol and Will is called to the scene, Evie realizes her gift could help catch a serial killer. And unknown to all, something dark and evil has awakened...

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Culturally diverse; Large cast of characters; LGBTQIA diverse
Storyline: Action-packed; Intricately plotted
Tone: Atmospheric; Suspenseful

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

Set in 1920s New York City, this book follows 17-year-old Evie O'Neill and a large cast of culturally and LGBTQIA diverse characters who possess unique powers as they work together to catch a supernatural serial killer. Intricately plotted with both interesting history and suspenseful mystery, this atmospheric story is full of fun and frightening twists that will keep you on the edge of your seat.

READ-ALIKES



Born of Illusion by Teri J. Brown
Iron Cast by Destiny Soria
The Name of the Star by Maureen Johnson
Katie by Michael McDowell

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

A Divine Discussion with Libba Bray

Interview Bray about American life in the 1920s and the confluence of cultural movements at the time, the women who influenced Evie, how the Diviners series has grown, and what lessons teens today can take from the stories.

Macabre Museum Meet-and-Greet

Partner with a macabre museum anywhere in the world to host a virtual meet-and-greet, including the museum's history & mission, acquisition process, notable items, and a behind-the-scenes tour.

Teen Writing Workshop: Cursed Objects

Host a zoom writing workshop. After each teen registers, send an image of a regular object that has a "cursed" history (and name), and let participants create everything from its original owners, to how it has changed hands, to deaths associated with it.

[Insert Town/City] Weird and Wondrous History Hunt

Create a guide of "weird" and "wondrous" places around town, then have patrons visit a number of the spots, or share selfies from the spots with your library's social media team, to score library swag.

READING GROUP GUIDE

What were your first impressions of Evie? How did she fit into a 1920s idea of womanhood? How do you think she'd fit into today's world?

Evie continues to mourn the loss of her brother, James. How has his death shaped Evie's worldview? How does their connection continue throughout the book?

Each of the Diviners possess different powers. Whose power would you want? Which character did you connect with the most?

We get to see 1920s New York from different points of view. How does Memphis's version of New York differ from Evie's? What similar disparities do you see in today's world?

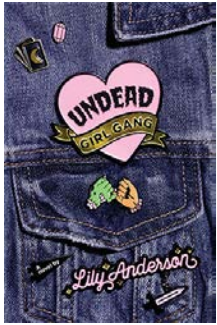
Sam's mother's supposed death seems tied to Project Buffalo, and it pops up throughout the novel. What do you think it is? What do you think Will knows about it?

Sam and Jericho are set up as potential love interests for Evie. How do they differ, and what are each one's attributes? Which of the two do you prefer?

Evie is initially hesitant for people to know about her powers. How does she grow to feel about her powers over the course of the book? What do you hope for her as the series continues?

UNDEAD GIRL GANG

by LILY ANDERSON



While investigating the supposed suicides of her best friend, Riley, and Fairmont Academy mean girls June Phelan-Park and Dayton Nesseth, 16-year-old Wiccan Mila Flores accidentally brings the dead girls back to life. Unfortunately, Riley, June and Dayton have no recollection of their murders. But they do have unfinished business to attend to. Now, with only seven days until the spell wears off and the girls return to their graves, Mila must wrangle the distracted group of undead teens and work fast to discover their murderer...before the killer strikes again.

APPEAL FACTORS

Storyline: Character-driven; Own Voices

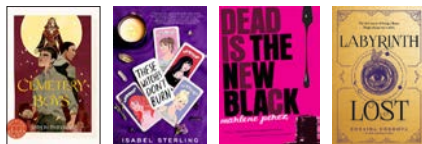
Character: Courageous; Quirky

Tone: Darkly humorous; Offbeat

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows 16-year-old Wiccan Mila Flores, who accidentally brings her best friend and two school mean girls back to life while looking into their murders. But they can't recall their deaths, and now Mila and this undead girl gang have seven days to find the murderer before they return to the grave. A darkly humorous tale of female friendship that tackles topics like body positivity and microaggressions, the courageous and quirky characters bring this story to life.

READ-ALIKES



Cemetery Boys by Aiden Thomas

These Witches Don't Burn by Isabel Sterling

Dead Is the New Black by Marlene Perez

Labyrinth Lost by Zoraida Córdova

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Female Friendship From Beyond the Grave: A Conversation with Lily Anderson

Interview Anderson about the dark comedy influences in *Undead Girl Gang*, managing grief with humor, her own spiritual connection to Wicca, being a reformed mean girl, and the power of female friendship.

The Dead Do Tell Tales

Partner with professionals in murder-solving fields, such as forensic anthropology, crime scene investigation, and/or genetic genealogy for a discussion on what can be gleaned from bodies to solve murders.

Friday Night Frights: The Craft

Partner with a local theater to screen Andrew Fleming's "The Craft." Follow up with a half-hour panel on witchcraft and female empowerment, teen friendships, and witches and wiccans in 90s pop culture.

Zombie in the Stacks: A Murder Mystery

A corpse has arisen from behind the catalog computer. Help your new undead friend find clues from various characters and resources around the library to figure out the killer who stalks the stacks.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Mila is mourning her best friend Riley. What kinds of things connected the friends? How is Mila processing her grief, and how does she perceive others are mourning?

Mila has a longstanding crush on Riley's brother, Xander. How do her feelings influence her choices throughout the book? What does Mila learn from their relationship?

Mila brings the dead girls back by accident, and there are rules. What challenges does Mila's new situation create for her, and how does she handle them?

June and Dayton are shocked to learn people considered them mean. What do they do with this new knowledge? How is bullying addressed throughout the book?

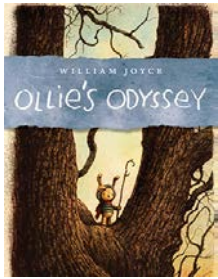
The gang only gets a week to solve the murders. How does the time constraint influence their attitudes and sense of urgency?

Mila and Riley and June and Dayton start out as two very different duos. How do their friendships evolve, and what do they learn to appreciate about one another's personalities and lived experiences?

Mila has to say goodbye to her newly formed undead girl gang. How does Mila handle this, and how do you think she'll treat her life moving forward?

OLLIE'S ODYSSEY

by WILLIAM JOYCE



Made by hand by Billy's mother, Ollie is a special toy. He becomes Billy's best friend, confidant, and yes, Billy's "favorite." But there are villains in the Toy World, and Zozo, the clown king, is the most feared. He and his toy henchman (the Creeps) have sworn to steal

and imprison favorite toys until they forget their children and become forever lost. When Ollie is toynapped, Billy must rescue his beloved favorite from Zozo's subterranean lair in the old Carnival Place, past the park, through the woods, and into the night. Never has a journey of ten blocks been more epic.

APPEAL FACTORS

Character: Believable; Character duos; Courageous

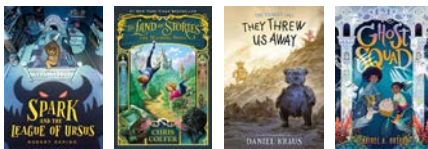
Tone: Scary; Suspenseful

Writing Style: Attention-grabbing; Well-crafted dialogue

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book follows young Billy, whose favorite toy Ollie is toynapped by an evil carnival-game clown doll named Zozo, who's sworn to imprison favorite toys until they're forgotten by their owners. A suspenseful rescue mission ensues as Billy sets out to save Ollie, and both members of this dynamic duo have to find their courage in order to reunite in this attention-grabbing adventure about growing up and remembering the past.

READ-ALIKES



Spark and the League of Ursus by Robert Repino

The Wishing Spell by Chris Colfer

They Threw Us Away by Daniel Kraus

Ghost Squad by Claribel A. Ortega

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Treasured Toys and Creepy Clowns: Chatting with William Joyce

Lead an interactive chat with Joyce about the importance of treasured toys in his life, the process for his toy illustrations, choosing a clown king as his villain, and the Netflix adaptation.

Creepy Creations with [Insert Artist Here]

Partner with local artists for an interactive live art demonstration using audience suggestions to take some of our favorite toys and turn them into frightful monsters.

Escape the Creepy Carnival

Use Google Forms to create a Creepy Carnival escape room, replete with rides, prizes, carnival-goers and workers. Record videos or librarians as characters who clear or obstruct the path to the finish line.

Family Movie Night: The Brave Little Toaster

Register patrons for a library screening of "The Brave Little Toaster." Work on some toy-themed coloring pages while enjoying Pop Tarts. Or, partner with a local theater and provide a take-home toy-themed programming kit.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Ollie is very important to both Billy and Billy's parents. What makes Ollie so special to each of them?

Billy and Ollie's bond strengthens until Ollie is Billy's favorite thing. What kind of adventures and learning do they experience together? What's your favorite toy to play with right now?

Zozo lost someone close while at the carnival. Why was Zozo so upset by this loss? How does it shape his mission against toys?

After Ollie's toynapping, Billy decides to rescue him. What kinds of things does Billy bring along with him? What would you bring if you were on an "A-venture" alone?

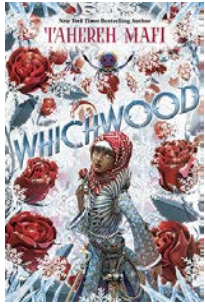
Ollie meets a lot of interesting characters during his toynapping. Who was your favorite character Ollie met? How were they important to Ollie's journey?

Billy and Ollie both have to muster their courage in order to reunite with each other. How does being brave help them each grow? What do you think about when you want to feel brave?

Memory plays an important part for everyone in the story, but notably for Ollie and Zozo. How does memory help resolve their issues? What can we do to better remember things we love?

WHICHWOOD

by TAHEREH MAFI



Thirteen-year-old Laylee can barely remember the happier times before her beloved mother died, before her father lost his wits, and before she was left as the sole remaining mordseshoor in Whichwood, destined to spend her days preparing the dead for the afterlife. It's become easy to ignore not only her ever-increasing loneliness, but the way her overworked hands are stiffening and turning silver, just like her hair. But soon, a pair of familiar strangers appears, and Laylee's world is turned upside down as she rediscovers color, magic, and the healing power of friendship.

APPEAL FACTORS

Storyline: Character-driven, Own voices; World-building

Tone: Atmospheric; Gruesome; Hopeful

Writing Style: Lyrical

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This lyrically written book follows 13-year-old Laylee, the last mordseshoor in Whichwood and therefore destined to spend her days caring for the dead, as she's visited by two magical strangers who help her process her loneliness and anger so she can remember what's good in the world. A Persian-inspired fantasy featuring beautiful world-building, this atmospheric and at times gruesome tale turns hopeful as Laylee discovers the healing power of friendship.

READ-ALIKES



Nevermoor by Jessica Townsend

The Girl Who Drank the Moon by Kelly Barnhill

Spirit Hunters by Ellen Oh

Race to the Sun by Rebecca Roanhorse

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

The World of Whichwood: Talking with Tahereh Mafi

Lead an interactive talk with Mafi about building the winter world of Whichwood, how her mother's memories inspired her, writing with husband Ransom Riggs, and taking Shatter Me from page to screen.

Creepy Callings and Macabre Jobs

Hold a Career Day meet-and-greet featuring people working in fields like taxidermy, forensic entomology and cemetery care, while highlighting the importance of these professions to society.

Spooky Stories Around the World

Hold an ongoing story series featuring a different short, public-domain tale from anywhere in the world. Talk about the area's folklore and customs while doing a craft or enjoying a snack (or both!) that ties into the story or culture.

Wintertime Tales Workshop

Finding inspiration from barren branches, the cold snow, and even woolen mittens, work together to craft a wintertime tale as each group member takes an object associated with winter to continue the tale while enjoying hot cocoa and gingerbread cookies.

READING GROUP GUIDE

Laylee's life is different from other 13-year-olds' lives. What has Laylee had to deal with? What do you think the life of a kid her age should be like?

Laylee's responsibilities leave her angry and overwhelmed. How does Laylee process her feelings? What do you find helpful when you're feeling overwhelmed?

Through Laylee's job we learn a lot about death and burial practices where she lives. What was the most interesting thing about the practices in Whichwood? How does it differ from where you live?

Laylee is visited by two strangers, Alice and Oliver. How do they differ from one another? How do their lives compare to Laylee's?

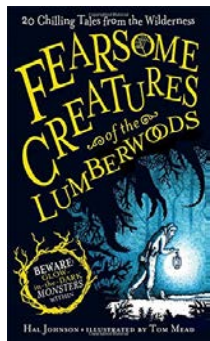
Laylee is hesitant to befriend Alice and Oliver. How do they get her to let them into her life? How does her friendship with each of them grow throughout the book?

Laylee's anger and the townsfolk's actions have consequences. What do you think is being said about letting our feelings simmer? What about appreciating one another?

The ending leaves the door open for meeting these characters again. Who would you like another book to focus on? What do you hope for them in a future story?

FEARSOME CREATURES OF THE LUMBERWOODS

by HAL JOHNSON



Meet the snoligoster, who feeds on the shadows of its victims. The whirling whimpus, who once laid low an entire Boy Scout troop. And the hoop snake, who can chase prey at speeds of up to 60 miles per hour and then, with one sting

of its venomous tail, cause it to turn purple, swell up, and—alas—die. These are just some of the most fantastical beasts in American folklore. Their stories, as narrated by one of the last surviving

cryptozoologists and accompanied by spine-tingling illustrations, are best enjoyed while sitting around a campfire. If you dare.

APPEAL FACTORS

Tone: Funny; Scary

Writing Style: Attention-grabbing

Illustration: Black-and-white

BOOKTALK THIS BOOK

This book is a scary and funny compendium of 20 fearsome creatures from American folklore, from the Hodag, to the Wapaloosie, to the Hyampom Hog Bear, told by one of the last surviving cryptozoologists. Accompanied by a bunch of creepy black-and-white illustrations, some of which even glow in the dark, this book is best consumed around a campfire with friends or while hiding under the covers with a flashlight.

READ-ALIKES



Scary Stories for Young Foxes by Christian M. Heidicker

A Tale Dark & Grimm by Adam Gidwitz

Don't Turn Out the Lights ed. Jonathan Maberry

Monsterland by James Crowley

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

Fearsome Creatures: Chatting with Hal Johnson

Lead an interactive chat with Johnson about American folklore, stories that scared him as a kid, working with illustrator Tom Mead, and expanding on his love of monsters for *The Big Book of Monsters*.

Fearsome Creatures of [Town/Region]

Partner with local zoo or nature center staff for an evening-time exploration of local fearsome creatures. Or, create a twilight storywalk that tells monstrous tales from regional folklore.

Monsters in the House Programming Bag

Create a take-home monster-themed bag with a terracotta planter and ideas for making monster pots, monster bingo sheets, a checklist of monster movies to watch, and packaged Rice Krispies Treats with a recipe for turning them into monsters.

Family Movie Night: Monsters, Inc.

Register patrons for a library screening of “Monsters, Inc.,” and enjoy a candy corn monster craft (with extra candy corn for eating!), or partner with a local theater and provide a take-and-make craft bag.

READING GROUP GUIDE

We’re told the book is a re-imagining of another book from 1910. Do you think monsters would have been more likely to show themselves over 100 years ago? What might keep monsters from showing up in today’s world?

The stories are told to us by someone who studies strange creatures. What other books, movies, or shows have you liked that explore strange creatures?

The book features a bunch of fantastical beasts from American folklore. Which one would you be the most scared to meet? What kinds of monsters creep you out?

Since the stories come from American legends and folklore, what’s an interesting story you’ve heard about your town or state?

These are creatures you likely won’t see in a zoo, but some could be close cousins of animals at the zoo. What monsters reminded you of zoo animals? What’s the scariest zoo animal you’ve seen?

The book features a ton of fun illustrations. Which drawing creeped you out the most? Which did you find the funniest?

The book includes some resources to help you learn about other monsters. How do you plan to find out more about other creatures from around the world?

Fruitful Programming Lessons From a Frightening Pandemic

by **Konrad Stump**

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered how we approach meaningful library programming as distance remains paramount, but there are tangible lessons we can carry with us. Most importantly, our innovative offerings aren't going away, nor should they. The virtual world is our oyster. Librarians no longer need to feel limited by their location or their budget.

As we move back toward in-person programs, consider virtual offerings as additional content. You'll not only reach community members unable to visit a library branch, you'll enhance the visibility of your library's work.

Keep virtual events under 45 minutes and post them to your library's YouTube page afterward. Patrons are accustomed to digital content being viewable anytime, so expecting everyone to be online at a set time will exclude people. Clarify your intent to post the program with your speakers, and get their permission. Holding a Q & A or a panel will make speakers more likely to agree to this, as they won't feel like they're diminishing other opportunities by making content readily available.

Topical programs that mix academia and pop culture can include panelists from anywhere in the world, or even consist of a hybrid of in-person and virtual panelists. For programs about regional history, consider recording short videos on the subject featuring applicable people or places, and posting those to YouTube. Brief 7- 10-minute videos provide great digestible, online content for your community.

Rethink book discussions. If you're hosting via Facebook or Goodreads, keep things general and focus on themes instead of specific titles. The main goal is interaction, and you'll still be able to sneak in information about the Summer Scares initiative. You can also host themed virtual chats like "What's Hot in Horror" in lieu of book discussions. The more general the discussion, the more comfortable patrons will feel participating.

Patrons love programs in bags. Whether it's a take-and-make craft, or a themed programming bag, providing program kits bridges the divide between the library building and a patron's home life. "Summer Scares" is an easy-to-use theme to have fun with when compiling crafts, word puzzles, book/movie lists, and tchotchkes for a program kit.

Get out into your community. There are options for history hunts and story walks in this guide, but many of the local history programs can also be turned into history hunts, and the crafts and panel presentations lend themselves to working with community partners to hold events outdoors or in larger venues as we adjust to allowing groups in our buildings again.

The sample programs in this guide are meant to be a jumping off point for you to plan programs that best serve your library and community. Whether you create book displays, hold a single discussion or program, or plan an entire series, just remember: Don't be scared.

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



A Lovecraft-themed "Program in a Bag," including a book list, craft, puzzle, and 3D-printed tchotchke. Part of the Springfield-Greene County Library's Oh, The Horror! 2020 programming.



Konrad Stump and "Ozarks Live" host Joy Robertson visited The Calaboose, Springfield's historic jail, during a segment about The Library's "Springfield Hidden History Hunt."



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:

