

Be Afraid. Be Very Afraid.

An Overview of the Horror Genre

Charly Taylor

Kentucky Department for Libraries & Archives

What is horror?

Horror is a story that, above all else, intends to scare the reader.

What is NOT horror?

Stories with plotlines that focus on things other than the scare.

History of Horror

- Roots lie in religion & folklore
 - The Castle of Otranto by Horace Walpole (1764)
- 19th century
 - Gothic-inspired monsters
- Early 20th century
 - H.P. Lovecraft – Cthulhu
- 1970s resurgence

- Boom in 1980s
 - Horror Writers of America – 1986
 - Bram Stoker Award – 1987
- Continued in 1990s
 - Dark fantasy became popular
- 2000-present
 - Dark fantasy continues
 - Self-publishing, graphic novels
 - Horror in the mainstream

Appeal and Characteristics

- Readers are not violent, creepy, perverse psychopaths
- Why do we read horror?
 - Love a good scare
 - Face fears in a safe environment
 - Safely acknowledge the darkness in humans
 - Escape from everyday life
 - Cautionary tales
 - Validates belief in supernatural
 - Excitement

Appeal and Characteristics

- Painful and intense fear, dread, or dismay
- An emotional genre
- Atmosphere above all else
- A personal genre

Appeal and Characteristics

- Important characteristics:
 - Physical setting
 - Emotional states of characters
 - Fast paced
 - Foreboding
 - Evil antagonist
 - Supernatural
 - Depictions of violence, gore, sex, strong language
 - No happy endings

Gothic Horror

- Mid-1700s through early 1800s
- Atmosphere above all else
 - Beautifully dark, dreary, full of decay
- Popular themes:
 - Catholic Church
 - Gothic hero
 - Gothic heroine
 - Uncanny
 - Manipulations of space and time



Gothic Horror

The Mysteries of Udolpho by Ann Radcliffe (1794)

The Monk by Matthew Lewis (1796)

Wieland by Charles Brockden Brown (1798)

The Vampyre by John Polidori (1819)

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce (1891)

The Picture of Dorian Gray by Oscar Wilde (1891)

Gothic Horror

The Women in the Walls by Amy Lukavics (2016)

The Unusual Possession of Alastair Stubb by David John Griffin (2016)

Alone by Cyn Balog (2017, YA)

The End of Temperance Dare by Wendy Webb (2017)

Volk by David Nickle (2017)

Abigale Hall by Lauren A. Forry (2017)

Paranormal Horror

- Ghosts and hauntings
- Events/occurrences that defy explanation
- Characteristics:
 - Determine why the spirit can't rest
 - Sightings reflect of internal conflict
 - Protagonist must battle their own inner demon
 - Plays on universal fears
- Ghost doesn't necessarily = horror



Paranormal Horror

The Canterville Ghost by Oscar Wilde (1891)

The Haunting of Hill House by Shirley Jackson (1959)

The Shining by Stephen King (1977)

Heart-Shaped Box by Joe Hill (2007)

The Family Plot by Cherie Priest (2016)

The Broken Girls by Simone St. James (2018)

Mary Rose by Geoffrey Girard (2018)

Vampires

- Popularized by early 18th century eastern European folklore
- Traditionally handsome, aristocratic, charming
- Evolved with Anne Rice's Interview With the Vampire
- Modern vampires just want to be loved
- Return of the horrific vampire
- No definitive subgenre characteristics
 - Must consume blood in order to survive



Vampires

The Vampyre by John Polidori (1819)

Dracula by Bram Stoker (1897)

“The Vampire Chronicles” by Anne Rice (1976-)

The Strain by Guillermo del Toro (2009)

The Passage by Justin Cronin (2010)

Certain Dark Things by Silvia Moreno-Garcia (2016)

In the Valley of the Sun by Andy Davidson (2017)

Zombies

- Popularized in early 20th century
- Explosion in last decade
- Basic characteristics:
 - The dead rise, search for flesh to consume
 - Can only be stopped by blow to the head
 - Humans infected, creating more zombies
- Political/social commentary
- Breakdown of civilization



Zombies

Book of the Dead edited by John Skipp (1989)

World War Z by Max Brooks (2006)

Devil's Wake by Steven Barnes and Tananarive Due (2012)

Omega Days series by John L. Campbell (2014-)

Positive by David Wellington (2015)

Blue Plague series by Thomas A. Watson (2017-)

Come to Dust by Bracken MacLeod (2017)

Shapeshifters

- Werewolves, snakes, spiders, birds, etc.
- Beast with craving for murder or human flesh
- Hereditary or transmitted by bite
- Primal fear of animal attack, wild or domesticated
- Represents good vs. evil within us all
- Readers may enjoy violent plant stories



Shapeshifters

The Ruins by Scott Smith (2006)

The Conqueror Worms by Brian Keene (2006)

The Last Werewolf (series) by Glen Duncan (2011-2014)

The Wolf Gift (series) by Anne Rice (2012-)

Clickers vs. Zombies by J.F. Gonzalez & Brian Keene (2012)

Red Moon by Benjamin Percy (2013)

Mongrels by Stephen Graham Jones (2016)

The Hatching by Ezekiel Boone (2016)

The Occult

- Witches, shamans, fortune tellers, etc.
- Stories have existed for thousands of years
- Witches come in all shapes and sizes
 - Unifying element – the use of black magic
- Setting important
 - New England
 - New Orleans
 - Isolated area



The Occult

Conjure Wife by Fritz Leiber (1953)

"The Mayfair Witches" by Anne Rice (1990-1994)

A Dark Matter by Peter Straub (2010)

The End of the Sentence by Maria Headley & Kat Howard (2014)

HEX by Thomas Olde Heuvelt (2016)

The Ballad of Black Tom by Victor LaValle (2016)

Monsters

- Ancients (mummies, golems) to small-town creatures
- Explain the unexplainable
- Protagonist often has inner demons
- H.P. Lovecraft's Cthulhu
- Richard Laymon
- Pervasive violence and gore
 - Major characters never safe



Monsters

"The Pine Deep Trilogy" by Jonathan Maberry (2006-2008)

The Terror by Dan Simmons (2007)

The Golem by Edward Lee (2009)

Castaways by Brian Keene (2009)

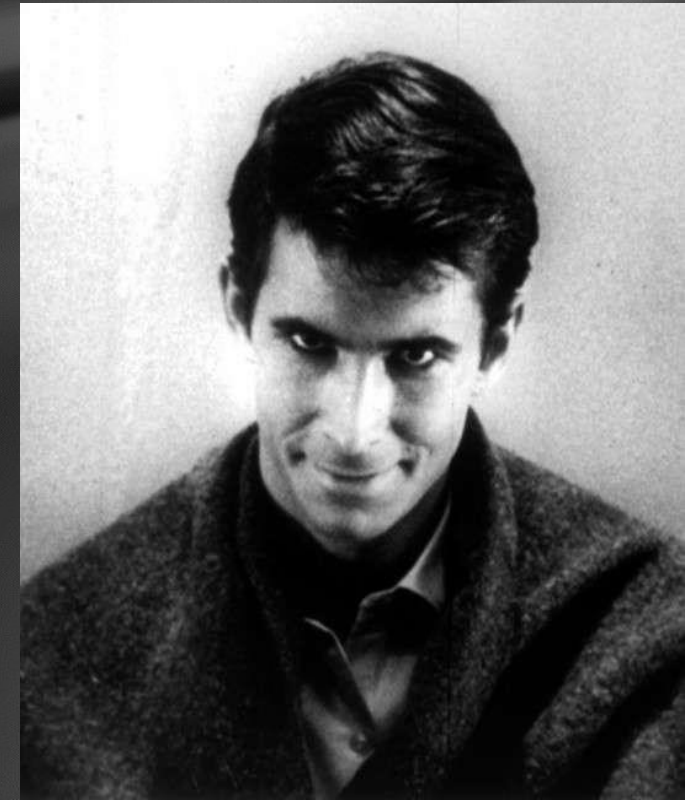
The Jersey Devil by Hunter Shea (2016)

Ararat by Christopher Golden (2017)

Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi (2018)

Psychological Horror

- Human monsters – maniacs, murderers, serial killers
- Edgar Allan Poe
- Antagonist often trusted by victim
 - Focus on personal guilt, mental illness, hallucinations, blurred reality
- Appeal for reader:
 - Amplifies personal demons
 - Subtle threat – killer lives among us
 - Realistic situations



Psychological Horror

Psycho by Robert Bloch (1959)

The Silence of the Lambs by Thomas Harris (1988)

John Cleaver series by Dan Wells (2010-)

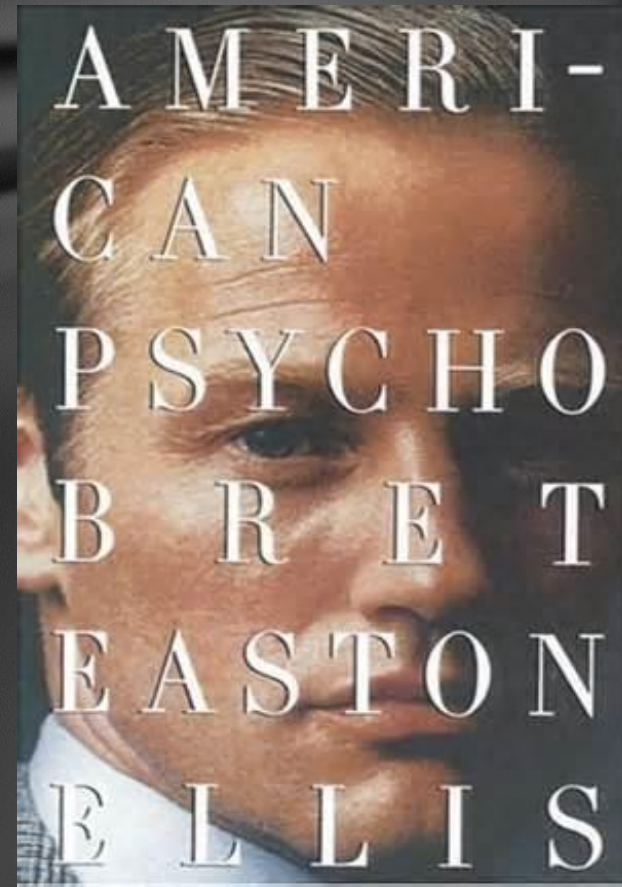
Within These Walls by Ania Ahlborn (2015)

Children of the Dark by Jonathan Janz (2016, YA)

The Mask of Sanity by Jacob M. Appel (2017)

Visceral Horror

- Update of 1980s “splatterpunk”
- Deeply subversive, no-holds-barred
- Everything in excess, with no taboos
- Very fast paced, gore from start to finish
- You don't have to like it; you do have to know about it



Visceral Horror

American Psycho by Bret Easton Ellis (1991)

Lost Souls by Poppy Z. Brite (1992)

Afraid by Jack Kilborn (2009)

Brother by Ania Ahlborn (2015)

Security by Gina Wohlsdorf (2016)

Little Heaven by Nick Cutter (2017)

Splatterpunk: Fighting Back edited by Jack Bantry & Kit Power (2017)

The Devil

- The Devil is a universal symbol of evil
- Universal fears of death and evil
- Religious aspects are a draw for many
- Four basic plotlines:
 - Demonic possession
 - Satanic worship/rituals
 - Curse/cursed object
 - Sold soul to Devil



The Devil

The Hellbound Heart by Clive Barker (1986)

House of Leaves by Mark Z. Danielewski (2000)

The Devil's Labyrinth by John Saul (2007)

Horns by Joe Hill (2010)

The Last Days of Jack Sparks by Jason Arnopp (2016)

The Devil's Board by L. Sydney Fisher (2017)

Bone White by Ronald Malfi (2017)

Humorous Horror

- Recent explosion, influenced by films
- Characteristics:
 - Dark comedy
 - Anything can/does happen
 - Odd situations
 - Ridiculous antagonists



Humorous Horror

Gil's All Fright Diner by A. Lee Martinez (2005)

Breathers: A Zombie's Lament by S.G. Browne (2009)

Night of the Living Trekkies by Kevin D. Anderson (2010)

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies by Seth Grahame-Smith (2009)

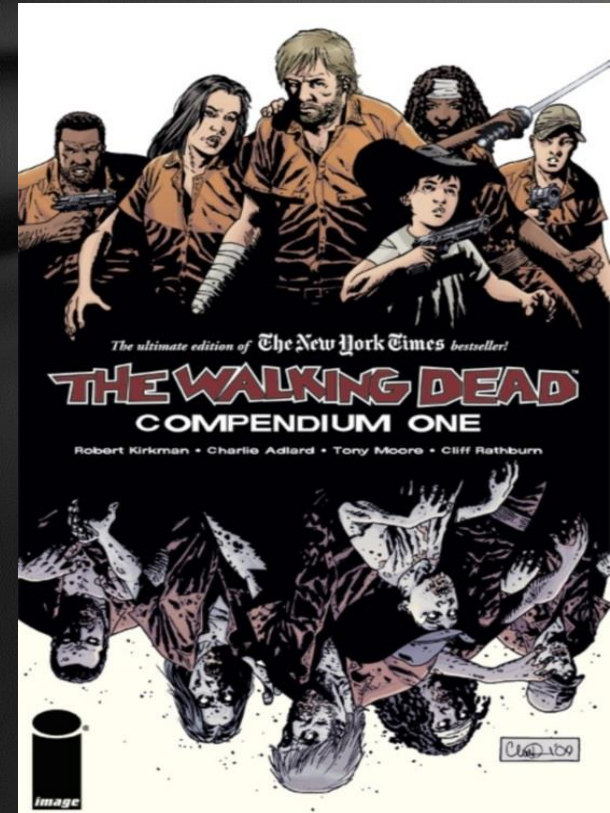
Horrorstör by Grady Hendrix (2014)

The Consultant by Bentley Little (2015)

My Best Friend's Exorcism by Grady Hendrix (2016)

Graphic Novels

- Horror is emotional genre
- Illustrations help convey the emotions
- Match the reader with the style and gore



Graphic Novels

Hellboy series by Mike Mignola (1994-)

The Walking Dead series by Robert Kirkman (2006-)

Locke and Key series by Joe Hill (2008-)

Arkham Asylum by Grant Morrison (1989)

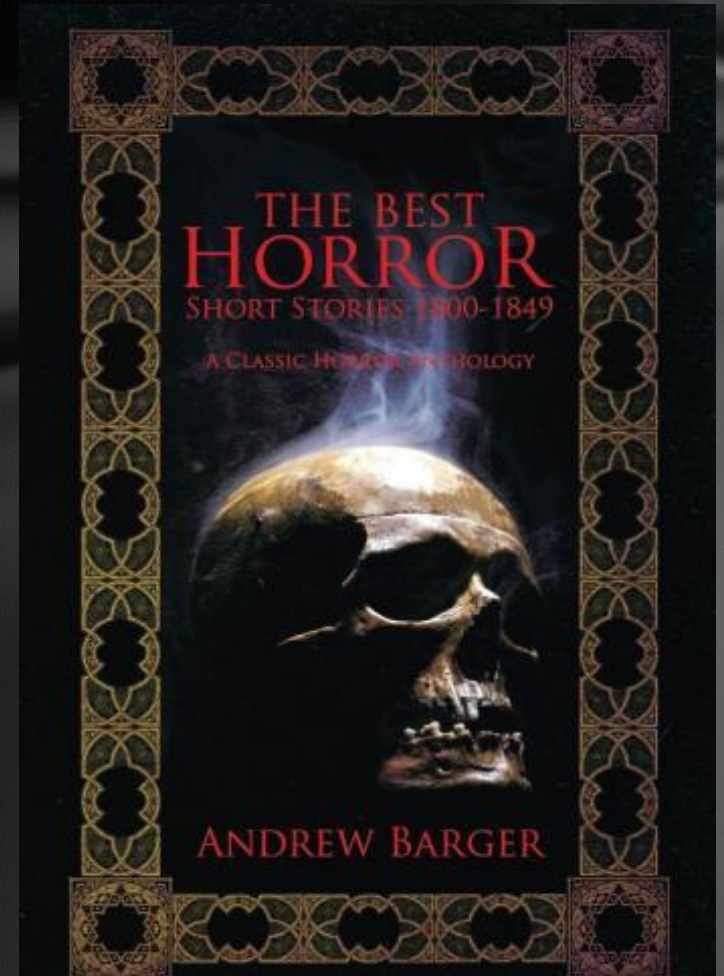
Wytches, Vol. 1 by Scott Snyder (2015)

Poe: Stories & Poems by Gareth Hinds (2017, YA)

Mr. Higgins Comes Home by Michael Mignola (2017)

Short Stories

- Lets readers identify new authors
- Become familiar with top editors
 - Ellen Datlow
 - Lisa Morton
 - Michael Bailey
 - R.J. Cavender
 - Eric Guignard
 - Stephen Jones



Short Stories

The Best Horror of the Year edited by Ellen Datlow

Midnight Walk edited by Lisa Morton

Poe's Children: The New Horror edited by Peter Straub

Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos by H.P. Lovecraft

Stories: All-New Tales edited by Neil Gaiman and Al Sarrantonio

Japanese Tales of Mystery & Imagination by Edogawa Rampo

Haunted Nights edited by Lisa Morton & Ellen Datlow

Readers' Advisory

- Level of violence, gore, sex
- Subgenre preference
- Read-alikes list
- Horror is year-round!



Print Resources

Genreflecting: A Guide to Popular Reading Interests, Cynthia Orr and Diana Tixier Herald, editors

Hooked on Horror III: A Guide to Reading Interests by Anthony Fonseca and June Michelle Pulliam

Read On...Horror Fiction by Anthony Fonseca and June Michelle Pulliam

The Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror by Becky Siegel Spratford

Danse Macabre by Stephen King

Horror Isn't a 4-Letter Word: Essays on Writing and Appreciating the Genre by Matthew Warner

Web Resources

<http://www.monsterlibrarian.com/TheCirculationDesk/>

<http://raforallhorror.blogspot.com>

www.horror.org

<http://horror.org/bram-stoker-awards/>

<http://www.thisishorror.co.uk/>

<http://thehorrorfictionreview.blogspot.com>

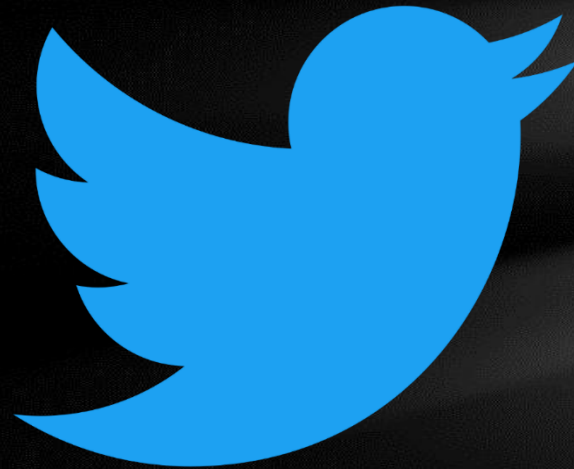
www.horrorworld.org



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Guys Read, Too

Thursday, February 15 – 10:00-11:00 am ET

Planning for Child Abuse Prevention Month

Tuesday, February 20 – 1:00-2:00 pm ET

You Can HOMAGO Too! Connected Learning & 21st Century Teen Library Services

Tuesday, February 27 – 10:00-11:00 am ET

African American Fiction Readers' Advisory

Tuesday, February 27 – 2:00-3:30 pm ET

Thank you for attending!

Charly Taylor

KDLA CE Consultant

502-564-8371

Charly.Taylor@ky.gov

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