

Horror Books for the Squeamish

Many readers enjoy the suspense and supernatural aspects of horror books but do not enjoy a lot of blood and guts. These books are examples of stories which provoke fear in a more subtle fashion. While blood, guts, and horrific monsters do not dominate these works, a dark and menacing atmosphere most certainly does.

King, Stephen and Peter Straub. ***Black House***
Seventeen years after *The Talisman*, the authors revisit its hero. Now in his thirties, Jack Sawyer remembers nothing from his adventures in the Territories, but he is suddenly drawn back when young children begin getting murdered in his small Wisconsin town.

McCammon, Robert. ***A Boy's Life***
Cory Mackenson is a typical 12-year-old in a sleepy Alabama town when he witnesses a murder. In his quest to help solve the mystery, Cory must come to terms with the fact that someone within his trusted community was responsible for such evil. This is a story of a murderer lurking "among us," and the tale of a young boy growing up.

Brockmeier, Kevin. ***The Brief History of the Dead***
As a deadly virus kills off everyone on Earth, Laura Byrd, a researcher in Antarctica, is apparently the last person left alive. This apocalyptic story alternates between Laura's struggle for survival and an alternate universe called "the city," populated by the dead still remembered by those living on Earth. This compelling and original tale is chilling and thought provoking.

Hamilton, Laurell K. ***Danse Macabre***
Anita Blake, a powerful vampire hunter, tries to keep in check those attending the performance of a vampire ballet troupe, while also dealing with her own increasingly complicated life—whether or not she is pregnant, who the father may be, and how the pregnancy may effect her necromantic powers. This is the fourteenth book in the bestselling series.

Jackson, Shirley. ***The Haunting of Hill House***
In this horror classic, four different people come together for a stay at the notorious Hill House. What transpires in this eerie mansion is both physically and emotionally terrifying.

Hynes, James. ***The Lecturer's Tale***
After being fired from his teaching job at a Midwestern University, Nelson Humboldt severs his right index finger. After it is reattached, Nelson realizes that he can control a person's behavior by touching them with the repaired digit. Once the finger and Nelson get started, can they stop?

Gaiman, Neil. ***Neverwhere***
Richard Mayhew is your average young Londoner, until he stops to help a young homeless girl he finds on the street. This chance encounter leads Richard into "London Below," a dark and magical parallel city under the familiar streets of his hometown. Before he can return to the world above, Richard must battle monsters and henchmen, visit with a fallen angel, and find his own inner strength. *Neverwhere* is a dark fantasy masterpiece.

Du Maurier, Daphne. ***Rebecca***
Mrs. De Winter may be a new bride, but she is not the first Mrs. De Winter; the deceased Rebecca preceded her. Silently deceived by her husband, treated evilly by Rebecca's former housekeeper, and continually reminded of Rebecca by Manderley, whose very walls seem to have absorbed Rebecca's secrets, obsession, and betrayal, the new Mrs. De Winter must grow from a timid girl to a woman capable of uncovering the mystery of Rebecca.

Bradbury, Ray. ***Something Wicked This Way Comes***
When a carnival comes into a small Illinois town a week before Halloween, two adolescent boys are forever changed by its secrets, mysteries, and horrors.

Donohue, Keith. ***The Stolen Child***
At age 7, Henry Day is kidnapped by a pack of hobgoblins who replace him with one of their own. The chapters alternate between the experiences of human Henry and hobgoblin Henry. Neither Henry feels content in his life, and both are losing a grip on their true pasts. Their concurrent struggle to find where they came from lead the two Henry's to finally meet decades later.

Setterfield, Diane. ***The Thirteenth Tale***
Vida Winter is England's most popular and most mysterious author. As she faces her own mortality, Winter is finally willing to divulge her biggest secrets and chooses Margaret Lea, a rare bookseller, to be her biographer. As Winter's life story is slowly unraveled, Lea gets caught up in the tale of ghosts, lies, and half-truths and is forced to come to terms with some of her own family secrets. *The Thirteenth Tale* is a modern take on the gothic ghost stories of yore.

Bronte, Emily. ***Wuthering Heights***
Driven mad by his thwarted love, Heathcliff seeks to destroy the Linton and Earnshaw families after the death of his beloved, Catherine. Revenge, however, cannot calm the deluded Heathcliff, who is forever haunted by Catherine's ghost at Wuthering Heights.

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