THE READERS’ ADVISORY GUIDE TO
HORROR
SECOND EDITION
The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Horror

Becky Siegel Spratford
The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Horror

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American Library Association
Chicago 2012

www.alastore.ala.org
Becky Siegel Spratford coauthored the first edition of *The Horror Readers’ Advisory: The Librarian’s Guide to Vampires, Killer Tomatoes, and Haunted Houses*. She has been a readers’ advisor since 2000 at the Berwyn (Illinois) Public Library. She graduated with honors from Dominican University’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science in January 2001. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at the same school, teaching Readers’ Advisory Service two semesters a year. Spratford also contributes content to NoveList, is a member of both the Adult Reading Round Table Steering Committee and the Horror Writers Association, and is the author of the blog *RA for All: Horror*.

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Printed in the United States of America

16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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ISBNs: 978-0-8389-1112-9 (paper); 978-0-8389-9449-8 (PDF); 978-0-8389-9450-4 (ePUB); 978-0-8389-9451-1 (Mobipocket); 978-0-8389-9452-8 (Kindle). For more information on digital formats, visit the ALA Store at alastore.ala.org and select eEditions.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Spratford, Becky Siegel.
[Horror readers’ advisory]
The readers’ advisory guide to horror / Becky Siegel Spratford.—Second edition.
pages cm.—(ALA Editions’ readers’ advisory series)
Includes bibliographical references and index.
Z711.5.S68 2012
026’.80883—dc23 2011043954

This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

ALA Editions purchases fund advocacy, awareness, and accreditation programs for library professionals worldwide. www.alastore.ala.org
CONTENTS

Series Introduction vii
Preface: Why We Need Horror ix
Acknowledgments xi

1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF HORROR
How the Past Haunts the Present 1

2 THE APPEAL OF HORROR
Feel the Fear, Find the Readers 13

3 HORROR 101
A Crash Course in Today’s Tales of Terror 31

4 THE CLASSICS
Time-Tested Tales of Terror 49

5 GHOSTS AND HAUNTED HOUSES
Home, Scream Home 57

6 VAMPIRES
Books with Bite 65

7 ZOMBIES
Follow the Walking Dead 75

8 SHAPE-SHIFTERS
Nature Morphs into Something Terrifying 83

9 MONSTERS AND ANCIENT EVIL
Cthulhu Comes Calling 91
10  WITCHES AND THE OCCULT
   Double, Double, Toil and Trouble  101

11  SATAN AND DEMONIC POSSESSION
   The Devil Inside  111

12  COMIC HORROR
   Laughing in the Face of Fear  119

13  MOVING BEYOND THE HAUNTED HOUSE
   Whole Collection Options for Horror Readers  127

14  SOWING THE SEEDS OF FEAR
   Horror Resources and Marketing  139

Bibliography  153
Index  157
PREFACE
Why We Need Horror

Readers love fantasy, but we need horror. Smart horror. Truthful horror. Horror that helps us make sense of a cruelly senseless world.

—Brian K. Vaughan

It is hard to go anywhere in America today without confronting a vampire, zombie, or witch in some form or another. While Sookie Stackhouse teams up with vampires on TV and in the pages of Charlaine Harris’s best-selling novels, zombies have stormed the world of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice bringing thousands of readers along for the ride, and Harry Potter has become the universal symbol of the witching world. Although these creatures have gained mainstream traction in popular culture over the last twenty years, they have done so by slowly moving away from the world of horror where they were first conceived. Just the presence of a vampire, zombie, or witch on the pages of a novel or on the big screen no longer automatically makes the story “horror.”

We are in the midst of a supernatural explosion in all fiction. If I had to name one trend in all popular fiction released in the last decade it would be the fact that supernatural elements have snuck their way into every genre. For example, readers can now find zombies populating the pages of political thrillers (Mira Grant’s Feed), wizards running detective agencies (Jim Butcher’s Dresden Files series), and ancient demons appearing as love interests (Sherrilyn Kenyon’s Night Pleasures). This trend is both a blessing and a curse for the readers’ advisory librarian. We now have many more supernatural options for our patrons than we used to, but on the other hand, we have to pay much closer attention to why our patrons are seeking out paranormal scenes, plots, and characters in their leisure reading.

That is the big quandary which this book attempts to tackle head on. How does today’s readers’ advisor untangle true horror works from the larger mass of paranormal offerings? As the epigraph to this chapter reminds us, “we need horror.” Readers have been drawn to works of
horror fiction for centuries, and as readers’ advisors, we have become their navigators. This book, then, becomes your map.

Advisors new to horror might find the prospect of the horror genre daunting, but remember, our horror readers are not monsters themselves, they just like to read about them. If you are worried about not knowing enough to field a horror-related RA question, don’t be. Using this book, you can handle even the scariest of horror-related questions. I have included chapters on the history of horror, its appeal, and a “Horror 101” guide to the genre. There are chapters with annotated lists of horror novels categorized by their subgenres to help our patrons find the books that they would most enjoy, ideas on what other genres and formats our horror readers might enjoy, and tips on how to develop and market our horror collections—basically, everything we need to help our patrons find their next good scare.

Everything in this second edition has been updated and reevaluated, with new authors, trends, annotations, and suggestions. However, the biggest change is that this edition comes with a free electronic update—a blog that will continue to keep you apprised of the world of horror fiction specifically as it applies to librarians and their patrons.4 No other horror resource is so tailored to your specific library needs.

So what are you waiting for? Enter if you dare . . .

NOTES


4. RA for All: Horror, www.raforallhorror.blogspot.com, is produced and maintained by Becky Spratford as the online home of this text.
A BRIEF HISTORY OF HORROR
How the Past Haunts the Present

I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool; if so my stay may be very interesting.

—Bram Stoker, *Dracula*¹

In 1974, Stephen King published *Carrie*, and the world of horror fiction changed forever. However, although Stephen King may be the most accomplished and best-known horror writer ever, he was not the first to write in the genre. Horror has a long and interesting history. Arming yourself with knowledge of this history will assist you as you guide your patrons through the dark passages of horror. Although most of this book will focus on the present state of horror, I am a big proponent of the saying that in order to know where you are now (or even where you are going), you need to know where you have been.

In that spirit, I offer this very brief history of horror. By no means is this review meant to be the definitive word on the genre. For that, you can turn to the many full-length books dedicated to the subject.² This is a history for the general librarian, the person sitting at the service desk and helping leisure readers each and every day. This is the history you need to know, the bullet points, major themes, and changes over time—the history that will let you see the whole picture so that you can feel comfortable talking about the genre to your patrons.

The history of horror is complicated. Horror, like romance, has been slow to gain legitimacy in the literary arena, partly because it has been the victim of fuzzy and overlapping genre boundaries. Horror has moved
from being a literary element within the pages of science fiction, the serial-killer thriller, and dark fantasy novels to having its own defined genre. The merging of horror into other genres continues, and under the umbrella classification of speculative fiction, we often still find horror partnered with fantasy and science fiction. Regardless of our tendencies to blend genres, horror fiction contains elements that differentiate it from other genres. The most prominent of these is the author’s intention of creating a frighteningly uneasy atmosphere. This emotional punch feeds readers’ powerful voyeuristic desire to explore the dark, malevolent side of humanity in an imaginative framework. This feeling, a mainstay of the horror novel, gets at the heart of why readers have been drawn to these stories for centuries.3

The rest of this chapter is a peek into what horror was and how it evolved into what it is today—a genre I define as a story in which the author manipulates the reader’s emotions by introducing situations in which unexplainable phenomena and unearthly creatures threaten the protagonists and provoke terror in the reader.4

**THE GOTHIC NOVEL**

In 1765, Horace Walpole published the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*.5 This publication is widely considered to mark the beginning of the horror genre. Horror elements had been present in literature before this, of course, but after this date there was an explosion of Gothic writings with recurring themes and plot lines characterized by “an emphasis on portraying the terrifying, a common insistence on archaic settings, a prominent use of the supernatural, the prescience of highly stereotyped characters, and the attempt to deploy and perfect techniques of literary suspense.”6 These are stories of ancient castles, dark passageways, and ghosts. Typical plots involved an evil villain pursuing a young woman, and although she is confused and scared, she ultimately triumphs, and the villain is exposed.

Emphasizing atmosphere over plot development, the Gothic novel became synonymous with excess and exaggeration, portraying the terrors of the haunted house, vampires, werewolves, and soulless monsters unleashed on society. Classic examples include Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796), which shocked readers with its account of rape and torture, and John Polidori’s *The Vampyre* (1819), one of the first novels to feature such a being.7 But arguably the most influential Gothic novel of this era
was Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1765). Set in the sixteenth century, this popular novel told the story of the orphaned Emily St. Aubert, who upon her parents’ deaths was made the ward of her aunt, Madame Cheron. The aunt marries the sinister Italian Count Montoni, who carts Emily off to a dilapidated castle in the Apennines and plots to steal her inheritance. Emily must find a way to escape.

Although the Gothic period is said to have ended with the publication of *Frankenstein* in 1818, the Gothic tradition continued to influence some of our best-known classics such as the Brontë sisters’ *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, as well as Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. The Gothic influence is also evident in the writings of nineteenth-century American authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry James. Today we see novels written in the Gothic tradition by authors as varied as Joyce Carol Oates, Alexandra Sokoloff, and Charlaine Harris. Box 1.1 lists some Gothic authors of note.

**Box 1.1  Gothic and Gothic-Influenced Authors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charlotte Brontë</th>
<th>Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Brontë</td>
<td>Matthew Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkie Collins</td>
<td>Edgar Allan Poe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Dickens</td>
<td>John Polidori</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Hawthorne</td>
<td>Ann Radcliffe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. T. A. Hoffman</td>
<td>Horace Walpole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE**

At the close of the eighteenth century, social critics and intellectuals of the time were uniquely situated to witness the rise of science and technology as well as what some perceived to be the social and moral decline of the West. The Enlightenment brought an increased knowledge of the natural world and a weakening of religious dogmas. People began to question what happened after death as well as the existence of God. The works and lectures of T. H. Huxley, a Darwin defender, serve as great examples of the issues and ideas of the era. Huxley believed that science emerged when the human brain had evolved to a certain level of complexity. If wisely used, the marvels of science would allow civilization to reach new heights, and humanity would evolve even further. But, he warned, humans had begun as lowly creatures and still had a primitive side to their nature.
Motivated by this dark side, people could use science to enslave others and manufacture weapons of destruction. The use of science for good, or evil, and humankind’s evolutionary process and primal fears became central themes for the horror genre. The fear that technology and science were taking over our lives was real, and it manifested in writings about the terrible things science could do in the hands of the wrong people.

The Enlightenment and the ideas it spawned were debated by intellectuals and social thinkers for decades, but the first novel to explore these ideas was Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), which gave readers the first mad scientist who attempted to circumvent God and create life in man’s image. The results were disastrous for Dr. Frankenstein, and readers were left with a lasting warning about the consequences of playing God.

Another example from this era is *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson, which delved into the mental health of man, the structure of personality, and the fear that we can unknowingly become our own worst nightmare. The possibility of transforming ourselves only to discover that our alter ego is a monster is as terrifying now as it was back then. The grandfather of science fiction, H. G. Wells, was also experimenting with the new scientific discoveries of the time, focusing on the scarier aspects of these ideas and extrapolating them into a frightening future. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), Wells specifically warned of what the world could expect if it failed to control the outrageous pace of scientific progress. On the surface, Moreau is a mad scientist, in the mold of Dr. Frankenstein. He heartlessly contours the shapes of his innocent animal subjects in a blind search for forbidden knowledge. But what he is really doing is far worse. Moreau has set himself up as the divine creator of vivisected creatures who in turn view him as their god. At a time when scientific progress seemed to be supplanting religion, these books were the scariest stories imaginable.

The nineteenth century came to a close with the most recognizable horror novel of all time. With the publication of *Dracula* (1897), Bram Stoker created a novel that has now become synonymous with the vampire motif. *Dracula* is one of the best-selling novels of all time, has never been out of print, and, in fact, has only become more popular over time. Stoker’s vampire was not the first to ever appear in literature, but in this epistolary novel, Stoker created the stereotype of the vampire as an aristocratic bloodsucker who preys on young women. Stoker’s image of the vampire has become so pervasive in popular culture that Dracula is now the most frequently portrayed character in all horror films. As Brian
Stableford has noted, “No other novel of any kind has ever stamped out an image so firmly and so decisively.” To most people, Count Dracula is not only the vampire, he is the definition of horror. See box 1.2 for a list of authors from this era.

Box 1.2 Key Horror Authors of the Enlightenment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley</th>
<th>Bram Stoker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Robert Louis Stevenson</td>
<td>H. G. Wells</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**THE GHOST STORY AND BEYOND**

The early years of the twentieth century were the golden age of the ghost story. M. R. James set the tone and developed many of the genre classifications of the ghost story, a subgenre that is still very popular. In a ghost story, characters are haunted by a spirit and are forced to battle both the spirit and their own inner demons in order to survive the ordeal. Authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James, Edith Wharton, H. G. Wells, Anne Rice, and Stephen King have all experimented with ghost stories, leaving a rich tradition of the haunted. For a longer list of the ghost story writers of this golden age, see box 1.3.

Box 1.3 Ghost Story Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ambrose Bierce</th>
<th>Henry James</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Algernon Blackwood</td>
<td>M. R. James</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert W. Chambers</td>
<td>Arthur Machen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walter de la Mare</td>
<td>Oliver Onions</td>
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<tr>
<td>W. W. Jacobs</td>
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</table>

However, the most influential horror writer of the early twentieth century was the eccentric hermit H. P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft influenced a number of other writers of his time and beyond with his stories about human encounters with ancient beings of horrific and alien appearance who occasionally intrude into our world from other dimensions. These works are called the Cthulhu Mythos stories, and many of them were published in the popular magazine *Weird Tales*. Both Lovecraft’s stories and the magazine attracted a cult following. In fact, after Lovecraft’s death, writers continued to publish Cthulhu-inspired stories. Even into the twenty-first
century, new tales of Cthulhu continue to appear every few years, and you can find YouTube feeds and entire websites devoted to Cthulhu themes.\textsuperscript{16}

**THE PULP ERA: 1930–1973**

What Lovecraft started took on a life of its own, and a new era of horror literature became popular. Sometimes referred to as the pulp era, this period produced the beginnings of modern horror as we know it. Readers had been primed by Lovecraft’s outrageous and terrifying stories, and after his death in 1937, they craved more. Authors such as Ray Bradbury, Shirley Jackson, and Richard Matheson who grew up reading Lovecraft began their popular and influential careers writing horror novels and stories during this era. Their work is now widely considered among the best genre fiction ever produced and is still being mined by the film industry for popular movies.

In fact, a trip to the movies is the next big step in the history of horror literature. Since cinema’s infancy, horror novels and films have shared themes and characters, such as vampires, zombies, ghosts, and werewolves, and the popularity of horror movies helped to pull horror novels into the mainstream consciousness. During the 1930s and ‘40s, Universal Pictures produced classic, atmospheric horror films based on earlier novels. In 1931, Bela Lugosi played his signature role as Dracula, and Boris Karloff brought Frankenstein to the big screen. Karloff showed his theatrical abilities again in 1932 in the portrayal of Imhotep, a 3,700-year-old Egyptian brought back to life in *The Mummy*. Then in 1941, Universal made the quintessential werewolf film, *The Wolf Man*, with Lon Chaney Jr. and Bela Lugosi. The impact of these films on popular perceptions of these monsters, invented first in the pages of novels, was enormous. The movies expanded and added to the original creations, providing visual images of the classic stories, images that persist. Since that time, the horror movie and the horror novel have been irrevocably linked.

In the 1940s and ‘50s horror fiction was struggling. There was less time for leisure reading in general with the country focused on the war effort, but the movies brought back the genre, which in turn reignited an interest in horror novels. The 1960s brought popular retellings of Poe’s Gothic tales to films starring Vincent Price. However, the most influential horror film of the decade was undoubtedly George Romero’s 1968 classic zombie film, *Night of the Living Dead*. Not only did Romero set the stage for an increase in the explicit gore in horror films, but he also set the standard for all zombie stories, in all formats, forever after.\textsuperscript{17}
Although *Night of the Living Dead* began its life as a movie, two notable horror novels from this era were also made into hugely popular and critically acclaimed motion pictures: Ira Levin’s *Rosemary’s Baby* (1967) and William Peter Blatty’s *The Exorcist* (1971). The former is about a woman impregnated with Satan’s son, while the latter is about the battle for the soul of a young girl who is possessed by an ancient demon. Specifically, *Rosemary’s Baby*, both the novel and Roman Polanski’s 1968 film version, is considered one of the classics of the horror genre and instrumental in its evolution.¹⁸ The film was nominated for numerous awards, including two Academy Awards.¹⁹ *The Exorcist* did even better. When the film came out in 1973, it was the highest grossing film of all time until it was surpassed by *Jaws* in 1974.²⁰ *The Exorcist* was nominated for ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and won two, including one for Blatty’s work on adapting his novel for the screen.²¹ The legacy of these two novels lives on through their films, drawing new readers to their pages year after year. These classic horror novels are also extremely important because of their place at the end of an era. Consult box 1.4 for a further list of the major horror authors of the first seventy-five years of the twentieth century.

**Box 1.4 Major Twentieth-Century Horror Authors, 1900–1973**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peter Benchley</th>
<th>Roald Dahl</th>
<th>H. P. Lovecraft</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. G. Birch</td>
<td>August Derleth</td>
<td>William March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Peter Blatty</td>
<td>Daphne du Maurier</td>
<td>Richard Matheson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. F. Bleiler</td>
<td>L. Ron Hubbard</td>
<td>E. Hoffman Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Bloch</td>
<td>Shirley Jackson</td>
<td>Donald Wandrei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Bradbury</td>
<td>Fritz Leiber</td>
<td>Henry S. Whitehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Cave</td>
<td>Ira Levin</td>
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</table>

Things in the world of horror, however, were about to change forever, as a new author took the reins as horror master.

**THE DAWN OF MODERN HORROR: 1974–1999**

As well as things were going for horror fiction up to this point, everything changed in 1974 when Stephen King published his first novel, *Carrie*. Not only did this event mark the beginning of horror’s modern era, but King has also become one of the most important authors in America.²² After King began publishing, all horror novels would come to be judged by...
the high standard he has set throughout his still vibrant career. The 1970s also introduced readers to Anne Rice’s vampire, Louis de Pointe du Lac, and his confessions in the best-selling _Interview with the Vampire_. Rice went on to romance her readers with many novels of vampires, witches, and mummies for over twenty years and served as the inspiration for today’s immensely popular paranormal titles. Dean Koontz also began his long domination of the best-seller charts with his genre-bending, horrific thrillers in the 1970s. The combination of these three powerhouses moved horror novels into the spotlight; it seemed that just about everyone in America was reading a book by one of these authors. Even more amazing, all three are still widely read, even Rice, who has not written a new horror novel in over a decade.23

As we moved into the 1980s, King, Koontz, and Rice were still leading the charge, but Clive Barker entered the horror scene, intensifying the sex and violence in the genre. Barker’s novels and stories also fed the growing fascination with slasher films—such as the _Halloween_ and _Nightmare on Elm Street_ series—by adding one of his own in the _Hellraiser_ films, featuring the terrifying sadomasochist villain, Pinhead.

Inspired by the writings of these stalwarts, many new horror writers found a readership and prospered during this time. (See box 1.5 for a more complete list.) In fact, horror became so in demand that in 1984, one of its more popular authors, Robert McCammon, used an interview with _Publishers Weekly_ to publicly declare his desire for a writers’ association strictly geared toward the “needs of fellow writers of fear.”24 Working with fellow novelists Dean Koontz and Joe Lansdale, McCammon formed the Horror Writers of America in 1986. The association began issuing the highest honor in horror literature, the Bram Stoker Award, in 1987. The group has since changed its name to the Horror Writers Association and continues to be the leading voice of the horror writing community, promoting the work of its members, issuing internationally recognized genre awards, and educating the world about horror.

The 1990s brought more of the same with King, Koontz, and Rice ruling the genre, but as a result of their intense popularity, a new genre was beginning to emerge. Led by the literary novels of Neil Gaiman, dark fantasy gained popularity as we approached the new millennium. With the sales of horror books staying high and the Horror Writers Association working to promote horror, readers wanted more. Just as past horror writers borrowed from other genres, now fantasy writers were looking toward horror to inject new life into their work. Stephen King even tried his hand at dark fantasy, writing the bulk of his popular Dark Tower series during this decade.25
Box 1.5 provides a longer list of influential horror authors from 1974 to 1999.

Box 1.5  **Major Horror Authors, 1974–1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clive Barker</th>
<th>Joe Lansdale</th>
<th>John Saul</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey Campbell</td>
<td>Richard Laymon</td>
<td>Dan Simmons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglass Clegg</td>
<td>Bentley Little</td>
<td>Michael Slade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tananarive Due</td>
<td>Brian Lumley</td>
<td>Brian Stableford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Farris</td>
<td>Graham Masterton</td>
<td>Peter Straub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Golden</td>
<td>Robert McAmmon</td>
<td>Whitley Strieber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Grant</td>
<td>Christopher Moore</td>
<td>F. Paul Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Ketchum</td>
<td>Kim Newman</td>
<td>Chelsea Quinn Yarbro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen King</td>
<td>Tom Piccirilli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Koontz</td>
<td>Anne Rice</td>
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**A NEW MILLENNIUM: 2000–PRESENT**

The draw of dark fantasy continued to overshadow much of what would be considered true horror as the 2000s began. Popular paranormal series like Jim Butcher’s Harry Dresden series, Charles de Lint’s Newford books, and Charlaine Harris’s Sookie Stackhouse series dominated the decade, often overshadowing true horror. Although these dark fantasy series use common horror monsters or dark, unsettling atmospheres, or both, in their stories, their main appeal is not to induce fear. Rather, their focus is more grounded in the traditional fantasy appeal of creating a magical landscape, albeit a darker one. But the biggest difference between this century’s popular dark fantasy and pure works of horror is the fact that in dark fantasy, the monsters are often the heroes, while in horror, monsters remain monsters.

The attention paid to dark fantasy does not mean that horror novelists have not been producing work of note. The new millennium has seen a reemergence of the paperback horror novel similar to the pulp novels of the mid-twentieth century. Horror writers have also been among the first to embrace new technology, using blogs and e-books in large numbers. One popular horror writer, Scott Sigler, takes the use of technology one step farther by releasing his novels in serial form via free podcasts before they come out in print. Horror has also moved into the graphic novel format with much success. And a true new horror master of the twenty-first
century, Joe Hill, has emerged as a best seller in the vein of his father, Stephen King, to lead the genre into a new century. Box 1.6 lists some of the most influential horror novelists of the 2000s.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gary Braunbeck</th>
<th>Sarah Langan</th>
<th>Harry Shannon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max Brooks</td>
<td>Deborah LeBlanc</td>
<td>Scott Sigler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Everson</td>
<td>Edward Lee</td>
<td>John Skipp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Gifune</td>
<td>Jonathan Maberry</td>
<td>Bryan Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Hill</td>
<td>Robert Masello</td>
<td>Alexandra Sokoloff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Keene</td>
<td>Joe McKinney</td>
<td>Jeff Strand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nate Kenyon</td>
<td>Weston Ochsé</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Laimo</td>
<td>Sarah Pinborough</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TIME TO MOVE ON . . .**

Horror has evolved over time into its own best-selling genre by borrowing themes and techniques from the past as well as by forging new territory and expanding its boundaries. Today’s horror novelists understand this. References to Poe, Lovecraft, Stoker, and many of the pulp writers pop up frequently in horror books. Readers respect this, and they will also expect you to have a basic understanding of the genre’s deep traditions.

For those who are interested in delving further into the books upon which the history of the genre is based, I suggest familiarizing yourself with the twenty-one books Robert Weinberg suggests that all horror writers read for themselves in his article, “What You Are Meant to Know: Twenty-One Horror Classics.”28 The list is annotated to help you to better understand each title’s place within the larger context of the history of horror literature.

But now it is time to leave the past behind and enter the world of horror in the twenty-first century.

**NOTES**


2. For a more detailed history I suggest you begin with David Punter, The Literature of Terror: The History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day (New York:

3. Chapter 2 will provide a more detailed discussion of the appeal of horror.

4. This definition is further discussed in chapter 2, “The Appeal of Horror: Feel the Fear, Find the Readers.”

5. The 2001 Penguin edition of *The Castle of Otranto* has been edited and includes an introduction and notes by Michael Gamer.


14. Chapter 5 contains a lengthy discussion of the ghost story, its history, and suggested titles to read.

15. *Weird Tales* has been resurrected recently and can be accessed at http://weirdtales.net/wordpress/ (accessed October 13, 2010).

16. Examples include an ongoing Cthulhu-inspired graphic novel series titled Fall of Cthulhu written by Michael Alan Nelson, beginning with *The Fugue* (Los Angeles: Boom! Studios, 2008). See also the various collections of new Cthulhu stories, such as John Pelan and Benjamin Adams, *The Children of Cthulhu: Chilling New Tales Inspired by H. P. Lovecraft* (New York: Ballantine, 2002). A Google search for Cthulhu brings up almost 4 million results, and Cthulhu is represented close to 4,000 times on YouTube (accessed October 10, 2010).

17. In Mira Grant’s zombie-filled novel, *Feed* (New York: Orbit, 2010), the protagonist tells the reader that Romero is a godlike figure to her society. His film, she argues, saved their lives when zombies really did come back from the grave. In this fictional world, the zombie of Romero is kept alive for scientific study as a tribute to his importance.


21. Ibid.
22. I’m not the only one who makes these claims. In 2003, King was awarded the National Book Award for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters by the National Book Foundation. Recipients of this award are chosen because they have “enriched our literary heritage over a life of service, or a corpus of work” (www.nationalbook.org/amerletters.html).
23. For more about King and Koontz, see chapter 3 of this text.
27. Chapter 13 addresses the dark fantasy/horror debate in more detail.

TITLE/AUTHOR LIST

Carrie, by Stephen King
The Castle of Otranto, by Horace Walpole
Dracula, by Bram Stoker
The Exorcist, by William Peter Blatty
Frankenstein, by Mary Shelley
Interview with the Vampire, by Anne Rice
The Island of Doctor Moreau, by H. G. Wells
Jane Eyre, by Charlotte Brontë
The Monk, by Matthew Lewis
Mysteries of Udolpho, by Ann Radcliffe
Northanger Abbey, by Jane Austen
Rosemary’s Baby, by Ira Levin
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, by Robert Louis Stevenson
The Vampyre, by John Polidori
Wuthering Heights, by Emily Brontë

www.alastore.ala.org
INDEX

A

Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (Grahame-Smith), 67–68
Abrahams, Peter, 33, 129
academic frame, 25
Acevedo, Mario, 120
Adams, John Joseph, 76
adjectives, use of, 20
Agarwal, Shilpa, 59
Alliance (blog), 142
Amazon.com (marketing), 144
Amazonia (Rollins), 131
American Vampire series (Snyder and King), 133
Ancestor (Sigler), 98
ancient evil. See monsters and ancient evil
Anderson, Kevin David, 120
Anderson, Kevin J., 120–121
Apocalypse of the Dead (McKinney), 80
appeal, horror and
application of, 23–26
characters, 19–20
frame and setting, 22–23
language and style, 20–21
pacing, 20
story line, 21–22
tone and mood, 18–19
Armstrong, Kelley, 17
audiobooks, 134
Austen, Jane
   Northanger Abbey, 3
   Pride and Prejudice, ix
authors
   established, 35–40
   new generation, 32–35
   pulp horror, 40–43
   women writers, 43–45
Await Your Reply (Chaon), 129

B

The Bad Seed (March), 53
Bog of Bones (King), 61
Baldacci, David, 17
Barker, Clive
   Halloween, 8
   The Hellbound Heart, 112, 114
   Hellraiser, 8
   key horror author, 9
   Nightmare on Elm Street, movie series, 8
   Satan and demonic possession, 112
Barlow, Toby, 85
Basilisk (Masterton), 96–97
Bear, Greg, 59
The Beast House (Laymon), 96
Becker, Robin M., 121
Bell, Alden, 77, 129
Benchley, Peter, 7
Benjamin’s Parasite (Strand), 124
Berserk (Lebbon), 79
The Best Horror of the Year (Datlow), 135
Best Horror of the Year series (Datlow), 140
Bierce, Ambrose, 5
Birch, A. G., 7
Bite Marks: A Vampire Testament (Taylor), 72
The Black Carousel (Grant), 95
Black Creek Crossing (Saul), 107
Black House (King and Straub), 46
Black Magic Woman (Gustainis), 104–105
Blackwood, Algeron, 5
Blackwood Farm (Rice), 71
The Blair Witch Project (film), 136
Blatty, William Peter, 7, 50, 112
Bleiler, E. F., 7
Bloom, Robert, 7
blogs, marketing and, 149
Blood and Gold (Rice), 71  
Blood and Ice (Masello), 131  
Blood Canticle (Rice), 71  
Blood Lite (Anderson), 120–121  
Bloodstone (Kenyon), 105  
The Book of Fate (Meltzer), 29  
bookmarks, marketing and, 147  
Bradbury, Ray  
  horror author, 7  
  pulp-era author, 6  
  Something Wicked This Way Comes, 50–51  
Brains: A Zombie Memoir (Becker), 121  
Bram Stoker Award, 8  
Braunbeck, Gary  
  Coffin County, 42  
  Far Dark Fields, 93  
  Keepers, 85  
  major horror author of 21st century, 10  
  pulp horror and, 41–42  
Breathers: A Zombie’s Lament (Browne), 27, 121  
Breeding Ground (Pinborough), 88  
Brimstone (Preston and Child), 134  
Brides of the Impaler (Lee), 68–69  
Brontë, Charlotte, 3  
Brontë, Emily, 3, 51, 57  
Brooks, Max, 10  
  World War Z, 77, 134  
  The Zombie Survival Guide, 132  
Browne, S. G., 27, 121  
Buchan, John, 103  
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (television series), 136  
Bull, Emma, 130  
Burrow, B. J., 121  
Butcher, Jim, 9, 17, 39, 130  

C  
Campbell, Ramsey  
  authors similar to, 37  
  Creatures of the Pool, 93–94  
  The Darkest Part of the Woods, 103–104  
  The Grin of the Dark, 94  
  major horror author, 9  
  Nazareth Hill, 59–60  
  Pact of the Fathers, 104  
  The Caretaker of Lorne Field (Zeltserman), 89  
  Carmilla (Le Fanu), 52  
  Carrie (King), 1, 7, 49  
  Carroll, Jonathan, 130  
  Castaways (Keene), 23–26  
  Casting the Runes and Other Ghost Stories (James), 52  
  The Castle of Los Angeles (Morton), 44  
  The Castle of Otranto (Walpole), 2, 54, 57  
  Catching Hell (Gifune), 114  
  Cave, Hugh, 7  
  Cell (King), 78  
  Chambers, Robert W., 5  
  Chaney, Lon Jr., 6  
  The Changed (Burrow), 121  
  Chaon, Dan, 129  
  characters, horror and, 19–20  
  Child, Lincoln  
    Brimstone, 134  
    Pendergast novels, 131  
    A Choir of Ill Children (Piccirilli), 107  
    Christine (King), 112  
    The City and the City (Miéville), 130  
    City of the Dead (Keene), 115  
  Clark, Simon  
    The Day of the Triffids, 85  
    Ghost Monster, 114  
    The Night of the Triffids, 85  
    This Rage of Echoes, 94  
    Vampyrhic, 67  
classic horror  
  characteristics of, 49–50  
  titles, 50–55  
  Classic Radio Horror, 134  
  classic titles, 49–55  
  Clegg, Douglas, 9  
  Mischief, 60  
  Naomi, 103  
  You Come When I Call You, 94  
  Coffin County (Braunbeck), 42  
collections, 127–136  
  marketing of, 144–150  
  Collins, Wilkie, 3  
  Come Closer (Gran), 115
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>comic horror, 26–27</th>
<th>Haunted Legends, 60</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>characteristics of, 119–120</td>
<td>Inferno, 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>titles, 120–125</td>
<td>The Day of the Triffids (Clark), 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coming-of-age theme, 21</td>
<td>de la Mare, Walter, 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conjure Wife (Leiber), 106</td>
<td>de Lint, Charles, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conlon, Christopher, 135</td>
<td>Dead City (McKinney), 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Conqueror Worms (Keene), 87</td>
<td>Dead Lines (Bear), 59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooper, Seamus, 121</td>
<td>Death: A Life (Pendle), 123–124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corsaro, Frank, 114</td>
<td>Deathbringer (Smith), 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Covenant (Eversion), 41</td>
<td>Death’s Excellent Vacation, 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craven, Wes, 119</td>
<td>Deaver, Jeffery, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creatures of the Pool (Campbell), 93–94</td>
<td>Deeper (Long), 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cree Black series (Hecht), 131</td>
<td>del Toro, Guillermo, 131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creepers (Morrell), 131</td>
<td>Delaney, Matthew, 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crichton, Michael, 131</td>
<td>Demon-Hunting Soccer Mom series (Kenner), 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crimson (Rollo), 117</td>
<td>demonic possession. See Satan and demonic possession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cronin, Justin, 16, 67</td>
<td>Depraved (Smith), 98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cryptopedia (Maberry and Kramer), 132</td>
<td>Derleth, August, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cthulhu Mythos stories, 5</td>
<td>Descendant (Masterton), 69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cujo (King), 87</td>
<td>The Descent (Long), 116–117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cycle of the Werewolf (King), 87</td>
<td>Desperate Souls (Lamberson), 78–79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Dexter (television series), 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dahl, Roald, 7</td>
<td>Dickens, Charles, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielewski, Mark Z., 114</td>
<td>Different Kinds of Darkness (Langford), 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danse Macabre (King), 132</td>
<td>A Dirty Job (Moore), 123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Delicacies series (Howison and Gelb), 135</td>
<td>displays, marketing and, 146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dark fantasy</td>
<td>Dobyns, Stephen, 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>characteristics, 129</td>
<td>Donohue, Keith, 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>titles, 130</td>
<td>Doyle, Arthur Conan, 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Hollow (Keene), 61</td>
<td>Dracula (film), 136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Harvest (Partridge), 97</td>
<td>Dracula (Stoker), 1, 4, 54, 65–66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Dark Matter (Straub), 108</td>
<td>Dracula: The Un-Dead (Stoker and Holt), 71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Mountain (Laymon), 105</td>
<td>Dresden Files, series (Butcher), ix, 17, 130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Places (Flynn), 129</td>
<td>Drood (Simmons), 134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Scribe Magazine, 42, 140–141</td>
<td>du Maurier, Daphne, 7, 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Sister (Joyce), 105</td>
<td>Due, Tananarive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dark Tower series (King), 8</td>
<td>The Good House, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darker Angels (Somtow), 80–81</td>
<td>major horror author, 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Darkest Part of the Woods (Campbell), 103–104</td>
<td>My Soul to Keep, 94–95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darkly Dreaming Dexter (Lindsay), 129</td>
<td>Dunbar, Robert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Datlow, Ellen</td>
<td>Martyrs and Monsters, 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Horror of the Year series, 140</td>
<td>The Pines, 42, 95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Best Horror of the Year, 135</td>
<td>The Shore, 95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Dunwich Horror and Others (Lovecraft), 53
Dust (Turner), 81
Dweller (Strand), 46, 98
Dziemianowicz, Stephen, 104

Edgar Allan Poe Audio Collection (Poe), 134
Egolf, Tristan, 122
emotion, manipulation of, 13–14
Empire of Salt (Ochse), 80
End of Story (Abrahams), 129
Enlightenment, examples
Dracula, 4
Frankenstein, 4
The Island of Dr. Moreau, 4
key authors, 5
The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 4
Entertainment Weekly (magazine), 36
Eversen, John
Covenant, 41
major horror author, 10
Sacrifice, 104
evil, ancient. See monsters and ancient evil
The Exorcist (Blatty)
classic horror, 50
pulp-era movie, 7, 136
Satan and demonic possession, 112

F
factors, horror appeal, 19
Faerie Tale (Feist), 130
Fangland (Marks), 69
Fang-tastic Fiction (Mathews), 67
fantasy, dark, 129–130
Far Dark Fields (Braunbeck), 93
Farris, John
High Bloods, 85
major horror author, 9
Phantom Nights, 60–61
You Don’t Scare Me, 95
Fat White Vampire Blues (Fox), 122
Feed (Grant), ix, 17
Feist, Raymond, 130

Fiction Core Collection (Jones and Newman), 50
A Field Guide to Demons, Fairies, Fallen Angels, and Other Subversive Spirits (Mack), 132
The 5th Witch (Masterton), 106
films and television series, 136
Finch (VanderMeer), 130
Fingerman, Bob, 77
Fires Rising (Laimo), 116
flashbacks, style and, 20–21
Floating Dragon (Straub), 98
Flynn, Gillian, 129
Fonseca, Anthony J.
Hooked on Horror III, 50, 140
Read On . . . Horror Fiction, 140
The Forbidden Zone (Strieber), 89
Fox, Andrew, 122
frame and setting, horror and, 22–23
Frankenstein (Shelley)
classic horror, 53–54
end of Gothic era, 3
Enlightenment influence, 4
The Frenzy Way (Lamberson), 87
Frostbite (Wellington), 89

G
Gagliani, W. D., 85–86
Gaiman, Neil
The Graveyard Book, 134
Neverwhere, 130
Sandman series, 133
Stories: All-New Tales, 135
Garton, Ray
Live Girls, 67
The Loveliest Dead, 60
Ravenous, 86
Gates, R. Patrick, 102, 104
A Gathering of Crows (Keene), 87
Geillor, Harrison, 122
Gelb, Jeff, 135
genres
monsters, 16–17
paranormal, 15–16
serial killers, 16
zombies, 17
INDEX

Ghost Monster (Clark), 114
Ghost Radio (Gout), 60, 134
Ghost Road Blues (Maberry), 34, 96
Ghost Story (Straub), 36–37, 63
ghosts and haunted houses
   characteristics of, 57–59
   key authors, 5
   titles, 59–64
Ghoul (Keene), 95
Gifune, Greg F., 10, 114
Gil’s All Fright Diner (Martinez), 123
Golden, Christopher
   major horror author, 9
   The New Dead, 77
   Wildwood Road, 114–115
Goldsher, Alan, 122
Goldsmith, Francisca, 133
The Golem (Lee), 96
Gonzalez, J. F., 86
The Good House (Due), 95
Goshgarian, Gary, 104
Gospel of the Living Dead (Paffenroth), 132
Gothic novels
   The Castle of Otranto, 2
   Jane Eyre, 3
   key authors, 3
   The Monk, 2
   Mysteries of Udolpho, 3
   Northanger Abbey, 3
   The Vampyre, 2
   Wuthering Heights, 3
Gout, Leopoldo, 60, 134
Grahame-Smith, Seth, 67–68, 119–120, 122–123
Grande, Sara, 115
Grant, Charles, 9, 37, 95
Grant, Mira, ix, 17, 131
graphic novels, 133
Graphic Novels (Pawuk), 133
The Graveyard Book (Gaiman), 134
Greenberg, Martin H., 104
Greer, John Michael, 132
Gregory, Daryl, 115
Grimm Memorials (Gates), 102, 104
The Grin of the Dark (Campbell), 94
Gustaines, Justin, 104–105
H
Halloween (film), 8, 136
Halloween, marketing beyond, 148
Handling the Undead (Lindqvist), 79
Harris, Charlaine
   Death’s Excellent Vacation, 123
   Gothic-style novels, 3
   Sookie Stackhouse series, 9, 66
The Harrowing (Sokoloff), 44, 63
Harry Dresden series (Butcher), 9, 39
Haunted America (Norman and Scott), 132
haunted houses. See ghosts and haunted houses
Haunted Legends (Datlow and Mamatas), 60
Haunting Bombay (Agarwal), 59
The Haunting of Hill House (Jackson), 52
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 3, 51
He Is Legend (Conlon), 135
Heart-Shaped Box (Hill), 32, 61
Hecht, Daniel, 131
The Hellbound Heart (Barker), 112, 114
Hellboy series (Mignola), 133
Hellraiser (modern horror movie), 8
Her Fearful Symmetry (Niffenegger), 130
High Bloods (Farris), 85
Highsmith, Patricia, 129
Hill, Joe
   Heart-Shaped Box, 61
   Horns, 46, 112, 115
   Locke and Key series, 133
   major horror author, 10
   new-generation horror, 32–33
The Historian (Kostova), 68
history of horror
   about, 1–2
   beginning of modern horror, 7–9
   the Enlightenment, 3–5
   future of, 10
   ghost stories, 5–6
   Gothic novels, 2–3
   new millennium of, 9–10
   pulp era, 6–7
The Hitchhiker (television series), 136
Hoffman, E. T. A., 3
Hogan, Chuck, 131

www.alastore.ala.org
Holland, David, 86
Hollands, Neil, 15
Holt, Ian, 71
Hooked on Horror III (Fonseca and Pulliam), 50, 140
Horns (Hill), 32, 112, 115
horror
as an emotion, 13–14
appeal of, 13–28
classics of, 49–55
collection options, 127–136
comic horror, 119–125
defined, 13, 14
ghosts and haunted houses, 57–63
history of, 1–10
monsters and ancient evil, 91–100
need for, ix–x
reference guide for, 31–45
resources and marketing, 139–150
Satan and demonic possession, 111–118
shape-shifters and, 83–90
trends in, 26–27
twentieth-century authors, 7
twentieth-century, 10
vampires and, 16–17, 65–73
witches and the occult, 101–109
zombies and, 75–81
Horror: The 100 Best Books (Jones and Newman), 50
horror authors
Enlightenment, 5
ghost story, 5
Gothic, 3
modern, 9
twentieth century, 7
twenty-first century, 10
The Horror Fiction Review (blog), 141
horror films, 136
Horror in the Air (Classic Radio Horror), 134
Horror Isn’t a 4-Letter Word (Warner), 140
horror novels, identifying
appeal of, 18–23
applying appeal, 23–26
defining horror, 13–15
horror vs. non-horror, 17
paranormal fiction, 15–16
serial killers, 16
traditional monsters, 16–17
horror television series, 136
Horror World (web community), 141
Horror Writers Association, 8, 141
A House Divided (LeBlanc), 44, 62
House of Blood (Smith), 63
House of Bones (Masterton), 62
House of Leaves (Danielewski), 114
The House of the Seven Gables (Hawthorne), 51
Howison, Del, 135
Hubbard, L. Ron, 7
The Hunger (Strieber), 72
Huston, Charlie, 131
Huxley, T. H., 3
I
In the Night Room (Straub), 63
Infected (Sigler), 134
Inferno (Datlow), 135
Interview with a Vampire (Rice), 8, 16, 66, 70
The Invisible Man (Wells), 54–55
Irving, Washington, 51–52
The Island of Dr. Moreau (Wells), 4
isolated frame, 25
J
Jackson, Shirley
The Haunting of Hill House, 52
horror author, 7
pulp-era author, 6
Jacobs, W. W., 5
James, Henry
Gothic novels and, 3, 5
The Turn of the Screw, 52, 57, 129
James, M. R., 5, 52
Jane Eyre (Brontë), 3
Jaws (film), 136
Jinn (Delaney), 94
Joe Pitt series (Huston), 131
John Dies at the End (Wong), 124
Jones, Stephen, 50
Joyce, Graham, 105
www.alastore.ala.org
INDEX

K
Karloff, Boris, 6
Keene, Brian
Castaways, 23–26, 41, 95
as character-centered author, 35
City of the Dead, 115
The Conqueror Worms, 87
Dark Hollow, 61
A Gathering of Crows, 87
Ghoul, 95
major horror author, 10
The Rising, 41, 77–78
The Keep (Wilson), 71, 72
The Keeper (Langan), 61
Keepers (Braunbeck), 85
Kelner, Toni L. P., 123
Kenner, Julie, 17
Kent, Jasper, 68
Kenyon, Nate
Bloodstone, 105
major horror author, 10
pulp horror and, 41
The Reach, 116
Sparrow Rock, 17, 47, 78
Kenyon, Sherrilyn, ix
Ketchum, Jack, 9, 95
Kiernan, Caitlin
The Red Tree, 45, 87
women horror authors, 45
King, Stephen
American Vampire series, 133
authors similar to, 36
Bag of Bones, 61
Black House, 46
Carrie, 1, 7, 49
Cell, 78
Christine, 112
Cujo, 87
Cycle of the Werewolf, 87
Danse Macabre, 132
Dark Tower series, 8
as established author, 35–36
ghost story author, 5
Joe Hill and, 10, 32–33
key horror author, 9
The Mist, 134
Pet Sematary, 78
’Salem’s Lot, 68
The Shining, 36, 61
The Stand, 36, 47
The Talisman, 47
The Tommyknockers, 61
Kirkman, Robert, 78, 133
Knipfel, Jim, 130
Koontz, Dean
established horror author, 38–39
Horror Writers of America and, 8
key horror author, 9
Watchers, 38, 47
Kornwolf (Egolf), 122
Kostova, Elizabeth, 68
Kramer, David F., 132
Kunna (Corsaro), 114
L
Laimo, Michael
Fires Rising, 116
major horror author, 10
Satan and demonic possession, 112
Lamberson, Gregory
Desperate Souls, 78–79
The Frenzy Way, 87
The Land of Laughs (Carroll), 130
Langan, John, 135
Langan, Sarah
The Keeper, 61
major horror author, 10
The Missing, 79
women horror authors, 43–44
Langford, David, 123
language and style, horror and, 20–21
Lansdale, Joe
Horror Writers of America and, 8
key horror author, 9
Retro Pulp Tales series, 135
Lasher (Rice), 107
The Last Man on Earth (film), 136
Last Things (Searcy), 97–98
The Last Vampire (Strieber), 72
Layman, John, 133
Laymon, Richard
The Beast House, 96
Dark Mountain, 105
major horror author, 9

www.alastore.ala.org
The Traveling Vampire Show, 68
To Wake the Dead, 96
The Woods Are Dark, 96
Le Fanu, Joseph Sheridan, 3, 52
Lebbon, Tim, 79
LeBlanc, Deborah
A House Divided, 44, 62
major horror author of the 21st century, 10
Water Witch, 105
Lee, Edward
Brides of the Impaler, 68–69
The Golem, 96
major horror author, 10
The Messenger, 116
Slither, 87–88
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Irving), 51–52
Leiber, Fritz, 7, 106
Let Me In (Lindqvist), 69
Let the Right One In (Lindqvist), 69
Levin, Ira, 7, 53
Lewis, Matthew
Gothic author, 3
The Monk, 2
Library Journal, 127
Lilith’s Dream (Strieber), 72
Lindqvist, John Ajvide, 69, 79
Lindsay, Jeff, 129
lists, marketing and, 146
Little, Bentley
major horror author, 9
The Return, 96
The Town, 116
The Walking, 79–80
The Little Stranger (Waters), 129
Live Girls (Garton), 67
The Living Dead (Adams), 76
The Living Dead 2 (Adams), 76
Locke and Key series (Hill), 133
Long, Jeff, 116–117
Lovecraft, H. P.
Cthulhu Mythos stories, 5
The Dunwich Horror and Others, 53
horror author, 7
pulp era and, 6
Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, 135
The Loveliest Dead (Garton), 60
Lugosi, Bela, 6
Lumley, Brian, 9
M
Maberry, Jonathan
The Cryptopedia, 132
Ghost Road Blues, 34, 96
major horror author, 10
new-generation horror, 34–35
Rot and Ruin, 80
The Wolfman, 88
Machen, Arthur, 5
Mack, Carol K., 132
The Magician (Maugham), 106
The Mall of Cthulhu (Cooper), 121
Mamatas, Nick, 60
Manitou Blood (Masterton), 69
March, William, 7, 53
marketing, autumn, 145
Marks, John, 69
Martinez, A. Lee, 123
Martyrs and Monsters (Dunbar), 42
Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness series (Layman), 133
Masello, Robert, 10, 131
Masters of Horror (television series), 136
Masterton, Graham
Basilisk, 96–97
Descendant, 69
The 5th Witch, 106
House of Bones, 62
major horror author, 9
Manitou Blood, 69
Matheson, Richard
horror author, 7
pulp-era author, 6
Mathews, Patricia O’Brien, 67
Maugham, W. Somerset, 106
Mayfair Witches series (Rice), 107
McCammon, Robert
Horror Writers of America and, 8
key horror author, 9
The Wolf’s Hour, 88
McKinney, Joe
Apocalypse of the Dead, 80
www.alastore.ala.org
Dead City, 80
major horror author, 10
Melton, J. Gordon, 132
Meltzer, Brad, 17, 29
Memnoch the Devil (Rice), 70
Merrick (Rice), 71
The Messenger (Lee), 116
The Midnight Guardian (Stratford), 45
Midnight Mass (Wilson), 72
The Midnight Road (Piccirilli), 131
Midnight Walk (Morton), 135
Miéville, China, 130
Mignola, Mike, 133
Mischief (Clegg), 60
The Missing (Langan), 43, 79
The Mist (King), 134
Mitchell, Mary Ann, 106
The Monk (Lewis), 2
Monster (Peretti), 97
Monster Librarian (website), 141
monster revolt vs. horror, 16–17
Monster trilogy (Wellington), 81
monsters and ancient evil
characteristics of, 91–93
titles, 93–100
mood and tone, 18–19
Moore, Alan, 133
Moore, Christopher
comic horror, 119
A Dirty Job, 123
major horror author, 9
You Suck, 119
Morrell, David, 35, 131
Morton, Lisa, 44, 135
Mostert, Natasha, 106
Mr. Gaunt and Other Uneasy Encounters (Langan), 135
The Mummy (pulp-era movie), 6
Murcheston: The Wolf’s Tale (Holland), 86
My Soul to Keep (Due), 94–95
Mysteries of Udolpho (Radcliffe), 3
Naomi (Clegg), 103
Nathaniel (Saul), 62
Nazareth Hill (Campbell), 37, 59–60
Neverwhere (Gaiman), 130
The New Dead (Golden), 77
The New Encyclopedia of the Occult (Greer), 132
new-generation authors, 32–35
Newford books (de Lint), 9
Newman, Kim, 9, 50
Newsflesh series (Grant), 131
Niffenegger, Audrey, 130
Night of the Living Dead (pulp-era movie), 6–7, 136
Night of the Living Trekkies (Anderson), 120
The Night of the Triffids (Clark), 85
Night Pleasures (Kenyon), ix
Nightmare on Elm Street, series (modern horror movies), 8
Niles, Steve, 133
nonfiction horror
characteristics, 131–132
titles, 132
Norman, Michael, 132
Northanger Abbey (Austen), 3
Nosferatu (silent film), 65
NovelList (database), 142
The Nymphos of Rocky Flats (Acevedo), 120
Oates, Joyce Carol, 3, 129
occult. See witches and the occult
Ochse, Weston, 10, 80
Odd Thomas paranormal series (Koontz), 38
100 Wicked Little Witch Stories (Dziemianowicz, et al.), 104
Onions, Oliver, 5
Pacing, horror and, 20
Pact of the Fathers (Campbell), 104
Paffenroth, Kim, 132
Pandemonium (Gregory), 115
paranormal vs. horror, 15–16
Pariah (Fingerman), 77
Partridge, Norman, 97
The Passage (Cronin), 16, 67
Passarella, J. G., 107
INDEX

Paul is Undead (Goldsher), 122
Pawuk, Michael, 133
Pendle, George, 123–124
Penzler, Otto, 69
Peretti, Frank E., 97
Pendergast novels (Preston and Child), 131
Pet Sematary (King), 78
Phantom Nights (Farris), 60–61
phenomena, unexplainable (horror feature), 14
Piccirilli, Tom
A Choir of Ill Children, 107
major horror author, 9
The Midnight Road, 131
Pinborough, Sarah
Breeding Ground, 88
major horror author of the 21st century, 10
The Taken, 45, 62
Tower Hill, 112, 117
Pine Deep trilogy (Maberry), 34–35
The Pines (Dunbar), 42, 95
Poe, Edgar Allen
Edgar Allan Poe Audio Collection, 134
ghost story author, 5
key Gothic author, 3
“The Tell-Tale Heart,” 53
Poe’s Children (Straub), 135
Polidori, John
Gothic influence, 2
key Gothic author, 3
Pratt, Tim, 117
The Presence (Saul), 97
Preston, Douglas
Brimstone, 134
Pendergast novels, 131
Prey (Crichton), 131
Price, E. Hoffman, 7
Price, Vincent, 6
Pride and Prejudice (Austen), ix, 122–123
Pride and Prejudice and Zombies (Grahame-Smith), 119–120, 122–123
Prime Evil (Winter), 135
psychological suspense characteristics, 128–129
titles, 129
Pulliam, June Michele
Hooked on Horror III, 50, 140
Read On . . . Horror Fiction, 140
Q
Queen of Blood (Smith), 63
The Queen of the Damned (Rice), 70
Quirk Books, 119
R
RA for All: Horror (website), 141, 143
Radcliffe, Ann, 3
Ravenous (Garton), 86
The Reach (Kenyon), 116
Read On . . . Horror Fiction (Fonseca and Pulliam), 140
read-alike author pages, marketing and, 149–150
readers, matching books with, 27–29
readers’ advisory department, marketing and, 149
The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Graphic Novels (Goldsmith), 133
Readers’ Advisory Service in the Public Library (Saricks), 18
The Reapers Are the Angels (Bell), 77, 129
Rebecca (du Maurier), 51
The Red Tree (Kiernan), 45, 86
Rendell, Ruth, 129
resources, horror, 139–144
Retro Pulp Tales series (Lansdale), 135
The Return (Little), 96
Rice, Anne
ghost story author, 5
Interview with a Vampire, 8, 16, 66
key horror author, 9
Mayfair Witches series, 107
Vampire Chronicles, 70–71
The Witching Hour, 102
The Ring (film), 136
Rise Against (Tripp), 81
The Rising (Keene), 41, 77–78
Rod Serling’s Night Gallery (television series), 136

www.alastore.ala.org
Rollins, James, 35, 131
Rollo, Gord, 117
Romero, George, 6
*Rosemary's Baby* (film), 136
*Rosemary's Baby* (Levin)
  classic horror, 53  
pulp-era movie, 7
*Rot and Ruin* (Maberry), 80
*The Ruins* (Smith), 30, 88–89, 90, 147
Rule, Ann, 132

S
*Sacrifice* (Everson), 104
'Salem's Lot* (King), 68
Sandford, John, 38–39
Sandicks, Joyce, 18
Sarrantonio, Al, 135
Satan and demonic possession
  characteristics of, 111–113
  titles, 114–118
  satirical frame, 26
Saul, John
  *Black Creek Crossing*, 107
  *The Devil's Labyrinth*, 117
  major horror author, 9
  *Nathaniel*, 62
  *The Presence*, 97
science, use in horror, 3–5
Scott, Beth, 132
*Scream* (comic horror movie), 119
Searcy, David, 97–98
*Season of the Witch* (Mostert), 106
serial killers vs. horror, 16
setting and frame, 22–23
Shannon, Harry, 10
Shapeshifter* (Gonzalez), 86
shape-shifter stories
  characteristics of, 83–85
  titles, 85–90
*Sharp Teeth* (Barlow), 85
*Shaun of the Dead* (comic horror movie), 119
*She Wakes* (Ketchum), 95
Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft
  *Frankenstein*, 4, 53–54
  key Enlightenment author, 5
*The Shining* (King)
  classic horror, 36, 61
  film, 136
*The Shore* (Dunbar), 95
short story collections, 134–135
Sigler, Scott
  *Ancestor*, 98
  *Infected*, 134
  major horror author, 10
Simmons, Dan
  *Drood*, 134
  established horror authors, 39–40
  major horror author, 9
  *Song of Kali*, 62
  *Summer of Night*, 62
  *The Terror*, 40, 47, 98
  *A Winter Haunting*, 62
Skipp, John, 10
Slade, Michael, 9
Slither* (Lee), 87–88
Smith, Bryan
  *Deathbringer*, 80
  *Depraved*, 98
  *House of Blood*, 63
  major horror author, 10
  *Queen of Blood*, 63
  *Soultaker*, 88
Smith, Scott, 30, 88, 90, 129, 147
Snyder, Scott, 133
Sokoloff, Alexandra
  *The Harrowing*, 44, 63
  key Gothic author, 3
  key horror author, 10
  *The Unseen*, 23–26
  women horror writers, 43–44
Something Wicked This Way Comes* (Bradbury), 50–51
Somtow, S.P., 80–81
*Song of Kali* (Simmons), 62
Sookie Stackhouse series, 9, 66
Soultaker* (Smith), 88
Sparrow Rock* (Kenyon), 17, 47, 78
Stableford, Brian, 9, 89
*The Stand* (King), 36
Stevenson, Robert Louis
  key Enlightenment author, 5

www.alastore.ala.org
Stevenson, Robert Louis (cont.)

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 4, 54

Stoker, Bram

Dracula, 4, 54
key Enlightenment author, 5
vampire book examples, 65–66

Stoker, Dacre, 71

The Stolen Child (Donohue), 134
The Stone Circle (Goshgarian), 104
Stories: All-New Tales (Gaiman and Sarrantonio), 135

story line, horror and, 21–22

Strain series (del Toro and Hogan), 131

Strand, Jeff

Benjamin’s Parasite, 124
Dweller, 46, 98
major horror author, 10
pulp horror, 42

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Stevenson), 4, 54
The Stranger beside Me (Rule), 132

Stratford, Sarah Jane

The Midnight Guardian, 71
women horror authors, 45

Straub, Peter

Black House, 46
A Dark Matter, 108
Floating Dragon, 98
Ghost Story, 36–37, 47, 63
major horror author, 9
In the Night Room, 63
Poe’s Children, 135
pulp horror, 36

The Talisman, 47

Strieber, Whitley, 72, 89
style and language, horror and, 20–21

Summer of Night (Simmons), 62
supernatural thriller
characteristics of, 130–131

titles, 131
Survivor (television series), 41
Swamp Thing series (Moore), 133

Sympathy for the Devil (Pratt), 117

T

The Taken (Pinborough), 45, 62
The Tale of the Body Thief (Rice), 70

Tales from the Crypt (television series), 136
Tales from the Darkside (television series), 136
Tales of Terror and Mystery (Doyle), 51

Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos (Lovecraft), 135
The Talisman (King and Straub), 47
Taltos (Rice), 107

death scenes, 91

Taylor, Karen E., 31
taylor, Terence, 72
television series and film, 136

“The Tell-Tale Heart” (Poe), 53
Templesmith, Ben, 133
terror (horror feature), 14

The Terror (Simmons), 40, 47, 98
themes, horror and, 21

These Children Who Come at You with Knives (Knipfel), 130

“Things That Go Bump in the Stacks,” 15

13 Bullets: A Vampire Tale (Wellington), 72
13 Steps Down (Rendell), 129

30 Days of Night (Niles), 133
This Rage of Echoes (Clark), 94

The Tomb (Wilson), 39, 47
The Tommyknockers (King), 61
tone and mood, 18–19

Tower Hill (Pinborough), 112, 117
The Town (Little), 116

The Traveling Vampire Show (Laymon), 68
trends in horror, 26–27

Tripp, Ben, 81

The Turn of the Screw (James), 52, 57, 129

Turner, Joan Frances, 81

Twelve (Kent), 68
The Twilight Zone (television series), 136

Twin Peaks (television series), 136

U

The Ultimate Witch (Preiss and Betancourt), 104

The Unseen (Sokoloff), 23–26, 63
## V
- The Vampire Archives (Penzler), 69
- The Vampire Armand (Rice), 70
- The Vampire Book (Melton), 132
- The Vampire Lestat (Rice), 70

### Vampires
- characteristics of, 65–67
- titles, 67–74

- The Vampyre (Polidori), 2
- Vampyrrhic (Clark), 67
- VanderMeer, Jeff, 130
- Vaughan, Brian K., ix, 133

## W
- To Wake the Dead (Laymon), 96
- The Walking Dead (Kirkman)
  - graphic novels, 133
  - television series, 136
  - zombie novel, 78
- Walpole, Horace
  - The Castle of Otranto, 2, 54, 57
  - key Gothic author, 3
- Wandrei, Donald, 7
- War for the Oaks (Bull), 130
- Warner, Matthew, 140
- Watchers (Koontz), 38, 47
- Water Witch (LeBlanc), 105
- Waters, Sarah, 129
- Weinberg, Robert
  - major horror author, 10
  - 100 Wicked Little Witch Stories, 104
  - “What You Are Meant to Know,” 50
- Weird Tales (magazine), 53
- Weird Times (magazine), 5
- Wellington, David
  - 13 Bullets: A Vampire Tale, 72
  - Frostbite, 89
  - Monster trilogy, 81
- Wells, H. G.
  - ghost story author, 5
  - The Invisible Man, 54–55
  - The Island of Doctor Moreau, 4
  - key Enlightenment author, 5
- The Werewolves of London (Stableford), 89
- Wharton, Edith, 5

### “What You Are Meant to Know” (Weinberg), 10, 50
- Whitby Vampyrrhic (Clark), 67
- Whitehead, Henry S., 7
- whole collection readers’ advisory, 127–128
- Wildwood Road (Golden), 114–115
- Wilson, F. Paul
  - established horror author, 39
  - major horror author, 9
  - Midnight Mass, 72
  - The Tomb, 39
- Winter, Douglas, 13, 135
- A Winter Haunting (Simmons), 62
- The Witch (Mitchell), 106
- Witch Wood (Buchan), 103
- witches and the occult
  - characteristics of, 101–103
  - titles, 103–109
- The Witching Hour (Rice), 102, 107
- Wither (Passarella), 107
- The Wolf Man (pulp-era movie), 6
- The Wolfman (Maberry), 99
- The Wolf’s Hour (McCammon), 88
- Wolf’s Trap (Gagliani), 85–86
- Women of the Otherworld series (Armstrong), 17, 130
- Wong, David, 124
- The Woods Are Dark (Laymon), 96
- World War Z (Brooks), 77, 134
- Wormwood: Gentleman Corpse series (Templesmith), 133
- Wuthering Heights (Brontë), 3, 51, 57
- Wyatt, Neal, 127

## Y
- Y: The Last Man series (Vaughn), 133
- Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn, 9
- You Come When I Call You (Clegg), 94
- You Don’t Scare Me (Farris), 95
- You Suck (Moore), 119

## Z
- Zeltserman, Dave, 89
- Zombie (Oates), 129

www.alastore.ala.org
zombie books
  characteristics of, 75–76
  titles, 76–82
The Zombies of Lake Woebegotten (Geillor), 122
The Zombie Survival Guide (Brooks), 132

zombies vs. horror, 17
zombies vs. vampires, 26
zombify website, 76
You may also be interested in

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Becky Siegel Spratford coauthored the first edition of *The Horror Readers’ Advisory: The Librarian’s Guide to Vampires, Killer Tomatoes, and Haunted Houses*. She has been a readers’ advisor since 2000 at the Berwyn (Illinois) Public Library. She graduated with honors from Dominican University’s Graduate School of Library and Information Science in January 2001. She is currently an adjunct faculty member at the same school, teaching Readers’ Advisory Service two semesters a year. Spratford also contributes content to NoveList, is a member of both the Adult Reading Round Table Steering Committee and the Horror Writers Association, and is the author of the blog *RA for All: Horror.*

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Printed in the United States of America

16 15 14 13 12 5 4 3 2 1

Extensive effort has gone into ensuring the reliability of the information in this book; however, the publisher makes no warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein.

ISBNs: 978-0-8389-1112-9 (paper); 978-0-8389-9449-8 (PDF); 978-0-8389-9450-4 (ePUB); 978-0-8389-9451-1 (Mobipocket); 978-0-8389-9452-8 (Kindle). For more information on digital formats, visit the ALA Store at alastore.ala.org and select eEditions.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Spratford, Becky Siegel.

[Horror readers’ advisory]

The readers’ advisory guide to horror / Becky Siegel Spratford.—Second edition.  
pages cm.—(ALA Editions’ readers’ advisory series)  
Includes bibliographical references and index.  

Z711.5.S68 2012  
026.80883—dc23 2011043954

© This paper meets the requirements of ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (Permanence of Paper).

ALA Editions purchases fund advocacy, awareness, and accreditation programs for library professionals worldwide. www.alastore.ala.org
CONTENTS

Series Introduction vii
Preface: Why We Need Horror ix
Acknowledgments xi

1 A BRIEF HISTORY OF HORROR
How the Past Haunts the Present 1

2 THE APPEAL OF HORROR
Feel the Fear, Find the Readers 13

3 HORROR 101
A Crash Course in Today’s Tales of Terror 31

4 THE CLASSICS
Time-Tested Tales of Terror 49

5 GHOSTS AND HAUNTED HOUSES
Home, Scream Home 57

6 VAMPIRES
Books with Bite 65

7 ZOMBIES
Follow the Walking Dead 75

8 SHAPE-SHIFTERS
Nature Morphs into Something Terrifying 83

9 MONSTERS AND ANCIENT EVIL
Cthulhu Comes Calling 91
10 WITCHES AND THE OCCULT
   Double, Double, Toil and Trouble  101

11 SATAN AND DEMONIC POSSESSION
   The Devil Inside  111

12 COMIC HORROR
   Laughing in the Face of Fear  119

13 MOVING BEYOND THE HAUNTED HOUSE
   Whole Collection Options for Horror Readers  127

14 SOWING THE SEEDS OF FEAR
   Horror Resources and Marketing  139

Bibliography  153
Index  157
PREFACE

Why We Need Horror

Readers love fantasy, but we need horror. Smart horror. Truthful horror. Horror that helps us make sense of a cruelly senseless world.

—Brian K. Vaughan

It is hard to go anywhere in America today without confronting a vampire, zombie, or witch in some form or another. While Sookie Stackhouse teams up with vampires on TV and in the pages of Charlaine Harris’s best-selling novels, zombies have stormed the world of Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice bringing thousands of readers along for the ride, and Harry Potter has become the universal symbol of the witching world. Although these creatures have gained mainstream traction in popular culture over the last twenty years, they have done so by slowly moving away from the world of horror where they were first conceived. Just the presence of a vampire, zombie, or witch on the pages of a novel or on the big screen no longer automatically makes the story “horror.”

We are in the midst of a supernatural explosion in all fiction. If I had to name one trend in all popular fiction released in the last decade it would be the fact that supernatural elements have snuck their way into every genre. For example, readers can now find zombies populating the pages of political thrillers (Mira Grant’s Feed), wizards running detective agencies (Jim Butcher’s Dresden Files series), and ancient demons appearing as love interests (Sherrilyn Kenyon’s Night Pleasures). This trend is both a blessing and a curse for the readers’ advisory librarian. We now have many more supernatural options for our patrons than we used to, but on the other hand, we have to pay much closer attention to why our patrons are seeking out paranormal scenes, plots, and characters in their leisure reading.

That is the big quandary which this book attempts to tackle head on. How does today’s readers’ advisor untangle true horror works from the larger mass of paranormal offerings? As the epigraph to this chapter reminds us, “we need horror.” Readers have been drawn to works of
horror fiction for centuries, and as readers’ advisors, we have become their navigators. This book, then, becomes your map.

Advisors new to horror might find the prospect of the horror genre daunting, but remember, our horror readers are not monsters themselves, they just like to read about them. If you are worried about not knowing enough to field a horror-related RA question, don’t be. Using this book, you can handle even the scariest of horror-related questions. I have included chapters on the history of horror, its appeal, and a “Horror 101” guide to the genre. There are chapters with annotated lists of horror novels categorized by their subgenres to help our patrons find the books that they would most enjoy, ideas on what other genres and formats our horror readers might enjoy, and tips on how to develop and market our horror collections—basically, everything we need to help our patrons find their next good scare.

Everything in this second edition has been updated and reevaluated, with new authors, trends, annotations, and suggestions. However, the biggest change is that this edition comes with a free electronic update—a blog that will continue to keep you apprised of the world of horror fiction specifically as it applies to librarians and their patrons. No other horror resource is so tailored to your specific library needs.

So what are you waiting for? Enter if you dare . . .

NOTES
4. RA for All: Horror, www.raforallhorror.blogspot.com, is produced and maintained by Becky Spratford as the online home of this text.
I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool; if so my stay may be very interesting.

—Bram Stoker, Dracula

In 1974, Stephen King published Carrie, and the world of horror fiction changed forever. However, although Stephen King may be the most accomplished and best-known horror writer ever, he was not the first to write in the genre. Horror has a long and interesting history. Arming yourself with knowledge of this history will assist you as you guide your patrons through the dark passages of horror. Although most of this book will focus on the present state of horror, I am a big proponent of the saying that in order to know where you are now (or even where you are going), you need to know where you have been.

In that spirit, I offer this very brief history of horror. By no means is this review meant to be the definitive word on the genre. For that, you can turn to the many full-length books dedicated to the subject. This is a history for the general librarian, the person sitting at the service desk and helping leisure readers each and every day. This is the history you need to know, the bullet points, major themes, and changes over time—the history that will let you see the whole picture so that you can feel comfortable talking about the genre to your patrons.

The history of horror is complicated. Horror, like romance, has been slow to gain legitimacy in the literary arena, partly because it has been the victim of fuzzy and overlapping genre boundaries. Horror has moved
from being a literary element within the pages of science fiction, the serial-killer thriller, and dark fantasy novels to having its own defined genre. The merging of horror into other genres continues, and under the umbrella classification of speculative fiction, we often still find horror partnered with fantasy and science fiction. Regardless of our tendencies to blend genres, horror fiction contains elements that differentiate it from other genres. The most prominent of these is the author’s intention of creating a frighteningly uneasy atmosphere. This emotional punch feeds readers’ powerful voyeuristic desire to explore the dark, malevolent side of humanity in an imaginative framework. This feeling, a mainstay of the horror novel, gets at the heart of why readers have been drawn to these stories for centuries.3

The rest of this chapter is a peek into what horror was and how it evolved into what it is today—a genre I define as a story in which the author manipulates the reader’s emotions by introducing situations in which unexplainable phenomena and unearthly creatures threaten the protagonists and provoke terror in the reader.4

THE GOTHIC NOVEL

In 1765, Horace Walpole published the first Gothic novel, The Castle of Otranto.5 This publication is widely considered to mark the beginning of the horror genre. Horror elements had been present in literature before this, of course, but after this date there was an explosion of Gothic writings with recurring themes and plot lines characterized by “an emphasis on portraying the terrifying, a common insistence on archaic settings, a prominent use of the supernatural, the prescience of highly stereotyped characters, and the attempt to deploy and perfect techniques of literary suspense.”6 These are stories of ancient castles, dark passageways, and ghosts. Typical plots involved an evil villain pursuing a young woman, and although she is confused and scared, she ultimately triumphs, and the villain is exposed.

Emphasizing atmosphere over plot development, the Gothic novel became synonymous with excess and exaggeration, portraying the terrors of the haunted house, vampires, werewolves, and soulless monsters unleashed on society. Classic examples include Matthew Lewis’s The Monk (1796), which shocked readers with its account of rape and torture, and John Polidori’s The Vampyre (1819), one of the first novels to feature such a being.7 But arguably the most influential Gothic novel of this era
was Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1765). Set in the sixteenth century, this popular novel told the story of the orphaned Emily St. Aubert, who upon her parents’ deaths was made the ward of her aunt, Madame Cheron. The aunt marries the sinister Italian Count Montoni, who carts Emily off to a dilapidated castle in the Apennines and plots to steal her inheritance. Emily must find a way to escape.

Although the Gothic period is said to have ended with the publication of *Frankenstein* in 1818, the Gothic tradition continued to influence some of our best-known classics such as the Brontë sisters’ *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, as well as Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. The Gothic influence is also evident in the writings of nineteenth-century American authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and Henry James. Today we see novels written in the Gothic tradition by authors as varied as Joyce Carol Oates, Alexandra Sokoloff, and Charlaine Harris. Box 1.1 lists some Gothic authors of note.

**Box 1.1 Gothic and Gothic-Influenced Authors**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Charlotte Brontë</th>
<th>Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emily Brontë</td>
<td>Matthew Lewis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilkie Collins</td>
<td>Edgar Allan Poe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Dickens</td>
<td>John Polidori</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nathaniel Hawthorne</td>
<td>Ann Radcliffe</td>
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<tr>
<td>E. T. A. Hoffman</td>
<td>Horace Walpole</td>
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**THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS INFLUENCE**

At the close of the eighteenth century, social critics and intellectuals of the time were uniquely situated to witness the rise of science and technology as well as what some perceived to be the social and moral decline of the West. The Enlightenment brought an increased knowledge of the natural world and a weakening of religious dogmas. People began to question what happened after death as well as the existence of God. The works and lectures of T. H. Huxley, a Darwin defender, serve as great examples of the issues and ideas of the era. Huxley believed that science emerged when the human brain had evolved to a certain level of complexity. If wisely used, the marvels of science would allow civilization to reach new heights, and humanity would evolve even further. But, he warned, humans had begun as lowly creatures and still had a primitive side to their nature.
Motivated by this dark side, people could use science to enslave others and manufacture weapons of destruction. The use of science for good, or evil, and humankind’s evolutionary process and primal fears became central themes for the horror genre. The fear that technology and science were taking over our lives was real, and it manifested in writings about the terrible things science could do in the hands of the wrong people.

The Enlightenment and the ideas it spawned were debated by intellectuals and social thinkers for decades, but the first novel to explore these ideas was Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (1818), which gave readers the first mad scientist who attempted to circumvent God and create life in man’s image. The results were disastrous for Dr. Frankenstein, and readers were left with a lasting warning about the consequences of playing God.

Another example from this era is *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson, which delved into the mental health of man, the structure of personality, and the fear that we can unknowingly become our own worst nightmare. The possibility of transforming ourselves only to discover that our alter ego is a monster is as terrifying now as it was back then. The grandfather of science fiction, H. G. Wells, was also experimenting with the new scientific discoveries of the time, focusing on the scarier aspects of these ideas and extrapolating them into a frightening future. In *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), Wells specifically warned of what the world could expect if it failed to control the outrageous pace of scientific progress. On the surface, Moreau is a mad scientist, in the mold of Dr. Frankenstein. He heartlessly contours the shapes of his innocent animal subjects in a blind search for forbidden knowledge. But what he is really doing is far worse. Moreau has set himself up as the divine creator of vivisected creatures who in turn view him as their god. At a time when scientific progress seemed to be supplanting religion, these books were the scariest stories imaginable.

The nineteenth century came to a close with the most recognizable horror novel of all time. With the publication of *Dracula* (1897), Bram Stoker created a novel that has now become synonymous with the vampire motif. *Dracula* is one of the best-selling novels of all time, has never been out of print, and, in fact, has only become more popular over time. Stoker’s vampire was not the first to ever appear in literature, but in this epistolary novel, Stoker created the stereotype of the vampire as an aristocratic bloodsucker who preys on young women. Stoker’s image of the vampire has become so pervasive in popular culture that Dracula is now the most frequently portrayed character in all horror films. As Brian
Stableford has noted, “No other novel of any kind has ever stamped out an image so firmly and so decisively.” To most people, Count Dracula is not only the vampire, he is the definition of horror. See box 1.2 for a list of authors from this era.

**Box 1.2 Key Horror Authors of the Enlightenment**

| Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley | Bram Stoker |
| Robert Louis Stevenson      | H. G. Wells |

**THE GHOST STORY AND BEYOND**

The early years of the twentieth century were the golden age of the ghost story. M. R. James set the tone and developed many of the genre classifications of the ghost story, a subgenre that is still very popular. In a ghost story, characters are haunted by a spirit and are forced to battle both the spirit and their own inner demons in order to survive the ordeal. Authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, Henry James, Edith Wharton, H. G. Wells, Anne Rice, and Stephen King have all experimented with ghost stories, leaving a rich tradition of the haunted. For a longer list of the ghost story writers of this golden age, see box 1.3.

**Box 1.3 Ghost Story Authors**

| Ambrose Bierce                     | Henry James |
| Algernon Blackwood                | M. R. James |
| Robert W. Chambers                | Arthur Machen |
| Walter de la Mare                  | Oliver Onions |
| W. W. Jacobs                       |              |

However, the most influential horror writer of the early twentieth century was the eccentric hermit H. P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft influenced a number of other writers of his time and beyond with his stories about human encounters with ancient beings of horrific and alien appearance who occasionally intrude into our world from other dimensions. These works are called the Cthulhu Mythos stories, and many of them were published in the popular magazine *Weird Tales*. Both Lovecraft’s stories and the magazine attracted a cult following. In fact, after Lovecraft’s death, writers continued to publish Cthulhu-inspired stories. Even into the twenty-first
century, new tales of Cthulhu continue to appear every few years, and you can find YouTube feeds and entire websites devoted to Cthulhu themes.16

THE PULP ERA: 1930–1973

What Lovecraft started took on a life of its own, and a new era of horror literature became popular. Sometimes referred to as the pulp era, this period produced the beginnings of modern horror as we know it. Readers had been primed by Lovecraft’s outrageous and terrifying stories, and after his death in 1937, they craved more. Authors such as Ray Bradbury, Shirley Jackson, and Richard Matheson who grew up reading Lovecraft began their popular and influential careers writing horror novels and stories during this era. Their work is now widely considered among the best genre fiction ever produced and is still being mined by the film industry for popular movies.

In fact, a trip to the movies is the next big step in the history of horror literature. Since cinema’s infancy, horror novels and films have shared themes and characters, such as vampires, zombies, ghosts, and werewolves, and the popularity of horror movies helped to pull horror novels into the mainstream consciousness. During the 1930s and ’40s, Universal Pictures produced classic, atmospheric horror films based on earlier novels. In 1931, Bela Lugosi played his signature role as Dracula, and Boris Karloff brought Frankenstein to the big screen. Karloff showed his theatrical abilities again in 1932 in the portrayal of Imhotep, a 3,700-year-old Egyptian brought back to life in The Mummy. Then in 1941, Universal made the quintessential werewolf film, The Wolf Man, with Lon Chaney Jr. and Bela Lugosi. The impact of these films on popular perceptions of these monsters, invented first in the pages of novels, was enormous. The movies expanded and added to the original creations, providing visual images of the classic stories, images that persist. Since that time, the horror movie and the horror novel have been irrevocably linked.

In the 1940s and ’50s horror fiction was struggling. There was less time for leisure reading in general with the country focused on the war effort, but the movies brought back the genre, which in turn reignited an interest in horror novels. The 1960s brought popular retellings of Poe’s Gothic tales to films starring Vincent Price. However, the most influential horror film of the decade was undoubtedly George Romero’s 1968 classic zombie film, Night of the Living Dead. Not only did Romero set the stage for an increase in the explicit gore in horror films, but he also set the standard for all zombie stories, in all formats, forever after.17
Although *Night of the Living Dead* began its life as a movie, two notable horror novels from this era were also made into hugely popular and critically acclaimed motion pictures: Ira Levin’s *Rosemary’s Baby* (1967) and William Peter Blatty’s *The Exorcist* (1971). The former is about a woman impregnated with Satan’s son, while the latter is about the battle for the soul of a young girl who is possessed by an ancient demon. Specifically, *Rosemary’s Baby*, both the novel and Roman Polanski’s 1968 film version, is considered one of the classics of the horror genre and instrumental in its evolution.¹⁸ The film was nominated for numerous awards, including two Academy Awards.¹⁹ *The Exorcist* did even better. When the film came out in 1973, it was the highest grossing film of all time until it was surpassed by *Jaws* in 1974.²⁰ *The Exorcist* was nominated for ten Academy Awards, including Best Picture, and won two, including one for Blatty’s work on adapting his novel for the screen.²¹ The legacy of these two novels lives on through their films, drawing new readers to their pages year after year. These classic horror novels are also extremely important because of their place at the end of an era. Consult box 1.4 for a further list of the major horror authors of the first seventy-five years of the twentieth century.

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Box 1.4  Major Twentieth-Century Horror Authors, 1900–1973

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peter Benchley</th>
<th>Roald Dahl</th>
<th>H. P. Lovecraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. G. Birch</td>
<td>August Derleth</td>
<td>William March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Peter Blatty</td>
<td>Daphne du Maurier</td>
<td>Richard Matheson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. F. Bleiler</td>
<td>L. Ron Hubbard</td>
<td>E. Hoffman Price</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Bloch</td>
<td>Shirley Jackson</td>
<td>Donald Wandrei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ray Bradbury</td>
<td>Fritz Leiber</td>
<td>Henry S. Whitehead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hugh Cave</td>
<td>Ira Levin</td>
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Things in the world of horror, however, were about to change forever, as a new author took the reins as horror master.

**THE DAWN OF MODERN HORROR: 1974–1999**

As well as things were going for horror fiction up to this point, everything changed in 1974 when Stephen King published his first novel, *Carrie*. Not only did this event mark the beginning of horror’s modern era, but King has also become one of the most important authors in America.²² After King began publishing, all horror novels would come to be judged by...
the high standard he has set throughout his still vibrant career. The 1970s also introduced readers to Anne Rice’s vampire, Louis de Pointe du Lac, and his confessions in the best-selling Interview with the Vampire. Rice went on to romance her readers with many novels of vampires, witches, and mummies for over twenty years and served as the inspiration for today’s immensely popular paranormal titles. Dean Koontz also began his long domination of the best-seller charts with his genre-bending, horrific thrillers in the 1970s. The combination of these three powerhouses moved horror novels into the spotlight; it seemed that just about everyone in America was reading a book by one of these authors. Even more amazing, all three are still widely read, even Rice, who has not written a new horror novel in over a decade.23

As we moved into the 1980s, King, Koontz, and Rice were still leading the charge, but Clive Barker entered the horror scene, intensifying the sex and violence in the genre. Barker’s novels and stories also fed the growing fascination with slasher films—such as the Halloween and Nightmare on Elm Street series—by adding one of his own in the Hellraiser films, featuring the terrifying sadomasochist villain, Pinhead.

Inspired by the writings of these stalwarts, many new horror writers found a readership and prospered during this time. (See box 1.5 for a more complete list.) In fact, horror became so in demand that in 1984, one of its more popular authors, Robert McCammon, used an interview with Publishers Weekly to publicly declare his desire for a writers’ association strictly geared toward the “needs of fellow writers of fear.”24 Working with fellow novelists Dean Koontz and Joe Lansdale, McCammon formed the Horror Writers of America in 1986. The association began issuing the highest honor in horror literature, the Bram Stoker Award, in 1987. The group has since changed its name to the Horror Writers Association and continues to be the leading voice of the horror writing community, promoting the work of its members, issuing internationally recognized genre awards, and educating the world about horror.

The 1990s brought more of the same with King, Koontz, and Rice ruling the genre, but as a result of their intense popularity, a new genre was beginning to emerge. Led by the literary novels of Neil Gaiman, dark fantasy gained popularity as we approached the new millennium. With the sales of horror books staying high and the Horror Writers Association working to promote horror, readers wanted more. Just as past horror writers borrowed from other genres, now fantasy writers were looking toward horror to inject new life into their work. Stephen King even tried his hand at dark fantasy, writing the bulk of his popular Dark Tower series during this decade.25
Box 1.5 provides a longer list of influential horror authors from 1974 to 1999.

**Box 1.5 ** **Major Horror Authors, 1974–1999**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Author</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clive Barker</td>
<td>Joe Lansdale</td>
<td>John Saul</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramsey Campbell</td>
<td>Richard Laymon</td>
<td>Dan Simmons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Douglass Clegg</td>
<td>Bentley Little</td>
<td>Michael Slade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tananarive Due</td>
<td>Brian Lumley</td>
<td>Brian Stableford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Farris</td>
<td>Graham Masterton</td>
<td>Peter Straub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Golden</td>
<td>Robert McCammon</td>
<td>Whitley Strieber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Grant</td>
<td>Christopher Moore</td>
<td>F. Paul Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Ketchum</td>
<td>Kim Newman</td>
<td>Chelsea Quinn Yarbro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephen King</td>
<td>Tom Piccirilli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean Koontz</td>
<td>Anne Rice</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**A NEW MILLENNIUM: 2000–PRESENT**

The draw of dark fantasy continued to overshadow much of what would be considered true horror as the 2000s began. Popular paranormal series like Jim Butcher’s Harry Dresden series, Charles de Lint’s Newford books, and Charlaine Harris’s Sookie Stackhouse series dominated the decade, often overshadowing true horror. Although these dark fantasy series use common horror monsters or dark, unsettling atmospheres, or both, in their stories, their main appeal is not to induce fear. Rather, their focus is more grounded in the traditional fantasy appeal of creating a magical landscape, albeit a darker one. But the biggest difference between this century’s popular dark fantasy and pure works of horror is the fact that in dark fantasy, the monsters are often the heroes, while in horror, monsters remain monsters.

The attention paid to dark fantasy does not mean that horror novelists have not been producing work of note. The new millennium has seen a reemergence of the paperback horror novel similar to the pulp novels of the mid-twentieth century. Horror writers have also been among the first to embrace new technology, using blogs and e-books in large numbers. One popular horror writer, Scott Sigler, takes the use of technology one step farther by releasing his novels in serial form via free podcasts before they come out in print. Horror has also moved into the graphic novel format with much success. And a true new horror master of the twenty-first
century, Joe Hill, has emerged as a best seller in the vein of his father, Stephen King, to lead the genre into a new century. Box 1.6 lists some of the most influential horror novelists of the 2000s.

### Box 1.6  Major Horror Authors of the Twenty-first Century

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gary Braunbeck</th>
<th>Sarah Langan</th>
<th>Harry Shannon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Max Brooks</td>
<td>Deborah LeBlanc</td>
<td>Scott Sigler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Everson</td>
<td>Edward Lee</td>
<td>John Skipp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greg Gifune</td>
<td>Jonathan Maberry</td>
<td>Bryan Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joe Hill</td>
<td>Robert Masello</td>
<td>Alexandra Sokoloff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brian Keene</td>
<td>Joe McKinney</td>
<td>Jeff Strand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nate Kenyon</td>
<td>Weston Ochse</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Laimo</td>
<td>Sarah Pinborough</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**TIME TO MOVE ON . . .**

Horror has evolved over time into its own best-selling genre by borrowing themes and techniques from the past as well as by forging new territory and expanding its boundaries. Today’s horror novelists understand this. References to Poe, Lovecraft, Stoker, and many of the pulp writers pop up frequently in horror books. Readers respect this, and they will also expect you to have a basic understanding of the genre’s deep traditions.

For those who are interested in delving further into the books upon which the history of the genre is based, I suggest familiarizing yourself with the twenty-one books Robert Weinberg suggests that all horror writers read for themselves in his article, “What You Are Meant to Know: Twenty-One Horror Classics.” The list is annotated to help you to better understand each title’s place within the larger context of the history of horror literature.

But now it is time to leave the past behind and enter the world of horror in the twenty-first century.

**NOTES**

2. For a more detailed history I suggest you begin with David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: The History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (New York: www.alastore.ala.org

3. Chapter 2 will provide a more detailed discussion of the appeal of horror.

4. This definition is further discussed in chapter 2, “The Appeal of Horror: Feel the Fear, Find the Readers.”

5. The 2001 Penguin edition of *The Castle of Otranto* has been edited and includes an introduction and notes by Michael Gamer.


14. Chapter 5 contains a lengthy discussion of the ghost story, its history, and suggested titles to read.

15. *Weird Tales* has been resurrected recently and can be accessed at http://weirdtales.net/wordpress/ (accessed October 13, 2010).

16. Examples include an ongoing Cthulhu-inspired graphic novel series titled Fall of Cthulhu written by Michael Alan Nelson, beginning with *The Fugue* (Los Angeles: Boom! Studios, 2008). See also the various collections of new Cthulhu stories, such as John Pelan and Benjamin Adams, *The Children of Cthulhu: Chilling New Tales Inspired by H. P. Lovecraft* (New York: Ballantine, 2002). A Google search for Cthulhu brings up almost 4 million results, and Cthulhu is represented close to 4,000 times on YouTube (accessed October 10, 2010).

17. In Mira Grant’s zombie-filled novel, *Feed* (New York: Orbit, 2010), the protagonist tells the reader that Romero is a godlike figure to her society. His film, she argues, saved their lives when zombies really did come back from the grave. In this fictional world, the zombie of Romero is kept alive for scientific study as a tribute to his importance.


21. Ibid.
22. I’m not the only one who makes these claims. In 2003, King was awarded the National Book Award for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters by the National Book Foundation. Recipients of this award are chosen because they have “enriched our literary heritage over a life of service, or a corpus of work” (www.nationalbook.org/amerletters.html).
23. For more about King and Koontz, see chapter 3 of this text.
27. Chapter 13 addresses the dark fantasy/horror debate in more detail.

**TITLE/AUTHOR LIST**

*Carrie*, by Stephen King  
*The Castle of Otranto*, by Horace Walpole  
*Dracula*, by Bram Stoker  
*The Exorcist*, by William Peter Blatty  
*Frankenstein*, by Mary Shelley  
*Interview with the Vampire*, by Anne Rice  
*The Island of Doctor Moreau*, by H. G. Wells  
*Jane Eyre*, by Charlotte Brontë  
*The Monk*, by Matthew Lewis  
*Mysteries of Udolpho*, by Ann Radcliffe  
*Northanger Abbey*, by Jane Austen  
*Rosemary’s Baby*, by Ira Levin  
*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, by Robert Louis Stevenson  
*The Vampyre*, by John Polidori  
*Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë
INDEX

A
Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (Grahame-Smith), 67–68
Abrahams, Peter, 33, 129
academic frame, 25
Acevedo, Mario, 120
Adams, John Joseph, 76
adjectives, use of, 20
Agarwal, Shilpa, 59
Alliance (blog), 142
Amazon.com (marketing), 144
Amazonia (Rollins), 131
American Vampire series (Snyder and King), 133
Ancestor (Sigler), 98
ancient evil. See monsters and ancient evil
Anderson, Kevin David, 120
Anderson, Kevin J., 120–121
Apocalypse of the Dead (McKinney), 80
appeal, horror and
application of, 23–26
characters, 19–20
frame and setting, 22–23
language and style, 20–21
pacing, 20
story line, 21–22
tone and mood, 18–19
Armstrong, Kelley, 17
audiobooks, 134
Austen, Jane
Northanger Abbey, 3
Pride and Prejudice, ix
authors
established, 35–40
new generation, 32–35
pulp horror, 40–43
women writers, 43–45
Await Your Reply (Chaon), 129

B
The Bad Seed (March), 53
Bog of Bones (King), 61
Baldacci, David, 17
Barker, Clive
Halloween, 8
The Hellbound Heart, 112, 114
Hellraiser, 8
key horror author, 9
Nightmare on Elm Street, movie series, 8
Satan and demonic possession, 112
Barlow, Toby, 85
Basilisk (Masterton), 96–97
Bear, Greg, 59
The Beast House (Laymon), 96
Becker, Robin M., 121
Bell, Alden, 77, 129
Benchley, Peter, 7
Benjamin’s Parasite (Strand), 124
Berserk (Lebbon), 79
The Best Horror of the Year (Datlow), 135
Best Horror of the Year series (Datlow), 140
Bierce, Ambrose, 5
Birch, A. G., 7
Bite Marks: A Vampire Testament (Taylor), 72
The Black Carousel (Grant), 95
Black Creek Crossing (Saul), 107
Black House (King and Straub), 46
Black Magic Woman (Gustainis), 104–105
Blackwood, Algernon, 5
Blackwood Farm (Rice), 71
The Blair Witch Project (film), 136
Blatty, William Peter, 7, 50, 112
Bleiler, E. F., 7
Bloom, Robert, 7
blogs, marketing and, 149
Blood and Gold (Rice), 71
Blood and Ice (Masello), 131
Blood Canticle (Rice), 71
Blood Lite (Anderson), 120–121
Bloodstone (Kenyon), 105
The Book of Fate (Meltzer), 29
bookmarks, marketing and, 147
Bradbury, Ray
  horror author, 7
  pulp-era author, 6
  Something Wicked This Way Comes, 50–51
Brains: A Zombie Memoir (Becker), 121
Bram Stoker Award, 8
Braunbeck, Gary
  Coffin County, 42
  Far Dark Fields, 93
  Keepers, 85
  major horror author of 21st century, 10
  pulp horror and, 41–42
Breathers: A Zombie’s Lament (Browne), 27, 121
Breeding Ground (Pinborough), 88
Brimstone (Preston and Child), 134
Brides of the Impaler (Lee), 68–69
Brontë, Charlotte, 3
Brontë, Emily, 3, 51, 57
Brooks, Max, 10
  World War Z, 77, 134
  The Zombie Survival Guide, 132
Browne, S. G., 27, 121
Buchan, John, 103
Buffy the Vampire Slayer (television series), 136
Bull, Emma, 130
Burrow, B. J., 121
Butcher, Jim, 9, 17, 39, 130

C
Campbell, Ramsey
  authors similar to, 37
  Creatures of the Pool, 93–94
  The Darkest Part of the Woods, 103–104
  The Grin of the Dark, 94
  major horror author, 9
  Nazareth Hill, 59–60
  Pact of the Fathers, 104
  The Caretaker of Lorne Field (Zeltserman), 89
  Carmilla (Le Fanu), 52
  Carrie (King), 1, 7, 49
  Carroll, Jonathan, 130
  Castaways (Keene), 23–26
  Casting the Runes and Other Ghost Stories (James), 52
  The Castle of Los Angeles (Morton), 44
  The Castle of Otranto (Walpole), 2, 54, 57
  Catching Hell (Gifune), 114
  Cave, Hugh, 7
  Cell (King), 78
  Chambers, Robert W., 5
  Chaney, Lon Jr., 6
  The Changed (Burrow), 121
  Chaon, Dan, 129
  characters, horror and, 19–20
  Child, Lincoln
    Brimstone, 134
    Pendergast novels, 131
  A Choir of Ill Children (Piccirilli), 107
  Christine (King), 112
  The City and the City (Miéville), 130
  City of the Dead (Keene), 115
  Clark, Simon
    The Day of the Triffids, 85
    Ghost Monster, 114
    The Night of the Triffids, 85
    This Rage of Echoes, 94
    Vampyrhic, 67
classic horror
  characteristics of, 49–50
  titles, 50–55
Classic Radio Horror, 134
classic titles, 49–55
Clegg, Douglas, 9
  Mischief, 60
  Naomi, 103
  You Come When I Call You, 94
Coffin County (Braunbeck), 42
collections, 127–136
  marketing of, 144–150
Collins, Wilkie, 3
  Come Closer (Gran), 115

www.alastore.ala.org
comic horror, 26–27
  characteristics of, 119–120
titles, 120–125
coming-of-age theme, 21
Conjure Wife (Leiber), 106
Conlon, Christopher, 135
The Conqueror Worms (Keene), 87
Cooper, Seamus, 121
Corsaro, Frank, 114
Covenant (Everson), 41
Craven, Wes, 119
Creatures of the Pool (Campbell), 93–94
Cree Black series (Hecht), 131
Creepers (Morrell), 131
Crichton, Michael, 131
Crimson (Rollo), 117
Cronin, Justin, 16, 67
The Cryptopedia (Maberry and Kramer), 132
Cujo (King), 87
Cycle of the Werewolf (King), 87
D
Dahl, Roald, 7
Danielewski, Mark Z., 114
Danse Macabre (King), 132
Dark Delicacies series (Howison and Gelb), 135
dark fantasy
  characteristics, 129
titles, 130
Dark Hollow (Keene), 61
Dark Harvest (Partridge), 97
A Dark Matter (Straub), 108
Dark Mountain (Laymon), 105
Dark Places (Flynn), 129
Dark Scribe Magazine, 42, 140–141
Dark Sister (Joyce), 105
Dark Tower series (King), 8
Darker Angels (Somtow), 80–81
The Darkest Part of the Woods (Campbell), 103–104
Darkly Dreaming Dexter (Lindsay), 129
Datlow, Ellen
  Best Horror of the Year series, 140
  The Best Horror of the Year, 135
Haunted Legends, 60
  Inferno, 135
The Day of the Triffids (Clark), 85
de la Mare, Walter, 5
de Lint, Charles, 9
Dead City (McKinney), 80
Dead Lines (Bear), 59
Death: A Life (Pendle), 123–124
Deathbringer (Smith), 80
Death’s Excellent Vacation, 123
Deaver, Jeffery, 39
Deeper (Long), 117
del Toro, Guillermo, 131
Delaney, Matthew, 94
Demon-Hunting Soccer Mom series
  (Kenner), 17
demonic possession. See Satan and demonic possession
Depraved (Smith), 98
Derleth, August, 7
Descendant (Masterton), 69
The Descent (Long), 116–117
Desperate Souls (Lamberson), 78–79
Dexter (television series), 136
Dickens, Charles, 3
Different Kinds of Darkness (Langford), 123
A Dirty Job (Moore), 123
displays, marketing and, 146
Dobyns, Stephen, 37
Donohue, Keith, 134
Doyle, Arthur Conan, 51
Dracula (film), 136
Dracula (Stoker), 1, 4, 54, 65–66
Dracula: The Un-Dead (Stoker and Holt), 71
Dresden Files, series (Butcher), ix, 17, 130
Drood (Simmons), 134
du Maurier, Daphne, 7, 51
Due, Tananarive
  The Good House, 95
  major horror author, 9
  My Soul to Keep, 94–95
Dunbar, Robert
  Martyrs and Monsters, 46
  The Pines, 42, 95
  The Shore, 95
The Dunwich Horror and Others
(Lovecraft), 53
Dust (Turner), 81
Dweller (Strand), 46, 98
Dziemianowicz, Stephen, 104

E
Edgar Allan Poe Audio Collection (Poe), 134
Egolf, Tristan, 122
demotion, manipulation of, 13–14
Empire of Salt (Ochse), 80
End of Story (Abrahams), 129
Enlightenment, examples
   Dracula, 4
   Frankenstein, 4
   The Island of Dr. Moreau, 4
   key authors, 5
   The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, 4
Entertainment Weekly (magazine), 36
Eversen, John
   Covenant, 41
   major horror author, 10
   Sacrifice, 104
evil, ancient. See monsters and ancient evil
The Exorcist (Blatty)
classic horror, 50
pulp-era movie, 7, 136
Satan and demonic possession, 112

F
factors, horror appeal, 19
Faerie Tale (Feist), 130
Fangland (Marks), 69
Fang-tastic Fiction (Mathews), 67
fantasy, dark, 129–130
Far Dark Fields (Braunbeck), 93
Farris, John
   High Bloods, 85
   major horror author, 9
   Phantom Nights, 60–61
   You Don’t Scare Me, 95
Fat White Vampire Blues (Fox), 122
Feed (Grant), ix, 17
Feist, Raymond, 130

Fiction Core Collection (Jones and Newman), 50
A Field Guide to Demons, Fairies, Fallen Angels, and Other Subversive Spirits
(Mack), 132
The 5th Witch (Masterton), 106
films and television series, 136
Finch (VanderMeer), 130
Fingerman, Bob, 77
Fires Rising (Laimo), 116
flashbacks, style and, 20–21
Floating Dragon (Straub), 98
Flynn, Gillian, 129
Fonseca, Anthony J.
   Hooked on Horror III, 50, 140
   Read On . . . Horror Fiction, 140
The Forbidden Zone (Strieber), 89
Fox, Andrew, 122
frame and setting, horror and, 22–23
Frankenstein (Shelley)
classic horror, 53–54
end of Gothic era, 3
Enlightenment influence, 4
The Frenzy Way (Lamberson), 87
Frostbite (Wellington), 89

G
Gagliani, W. D., 85–86
Gaiman, Neil
   The Graveyard Book, 134
   Neverwhere, 130
   Sandman series, 133
   Stories: All-New Tales, 135
Garton, Ray
   Live Girls, 67
   The Loveliest Dead, 60
   Ravenous, 86
Gates, R. Patrick, 102, 104
A Gathering of Crows (Keene), 87
Geillor, Harrison, 122
Gelb, Jeff, 135
generes
   monsters, 16–17
   paranormal, 15–16
   serial killers, 16
   zombies, 17
**INDEX**

**Halloween (film)**, 8, 136
Halloween, marketing beyond, 148
*Handling the Undead* (Lindqvist), 79
Harris, Charlaine
  *Death’s Excellent Vacation*, 123
Gothic-style novels, 3
Sookie Stackhouse series, 9, 66
*The Harrowing* (Sokoloff), 44, 63
Harry Dresden series (Butcher), 9, 39
*Haunted America* (Norman and Scott), 132
haunted houses. See ghosts and haunted houses
*Haunted Legends* (Datlow and Mamatas), 60
*Haunting Bombay* (Agarwal), 59
*The Haunting of Hill House* (Jackson), 52
Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 3, 51
*He Is Legend* (Conlon), 135
*Heart-Shaped Box* (Hill), 32, 61
Hecht, Daniel, 131
*The Hellbound Heart* (Barker), 112, 114
Hellboy series (Mignola), 133
*Hellraiser* (modern horror movie), 8
*Her Fearful Symmetry* (Niffenegger), 130
*High Bloods* (Farris), 85
Highsmith, Patricia, 129
Hill, Joe
  *Heart-Shaped Box*, 61
  *Horns*, 46, 112, 115
  Locke and Key series, 133
  major horror author, 10
  new-generation horror, 32–33
*The Historian* (Kostova), 68
history of horror
  about, 1–2
  beginning of modern horror, 7–9
  the Enlightenment, 3–5
  future of, 10
  ghost stories, 5–6
  Gothic novels, 2–3
  new millennium of, 9–10
  pulp era, 6–7
*The Hitchhiker* (television series), 136
Hoffman, E. T. A., 3
Hogan, Chuck, 131

**Ghost Monster** (Clark), 114
**Ghost Radio** (Gout), 60, 134
**Ghost Road Blues** (Maberry), 34, 96
**Ghost Story** (Straub), 36–37, 63
ghosts and haunted houses
  characteristics of, 57–59
  key authors, 5
titles, 59–64
**Ghoul** (Keene), 95
Gifune, Greg F., 10, 114
**Gil’s All Fright Diner** (Martinez), 123
Golden, Christopher
  major horror author, 9
  *The New Dead*, 77
  *Wildwood Road*, 114–115
Goldsher, Alan, 122
Goldsmith, Francisca, 133
*The Golem* (Lee), 96
Gonzalez, J. F., 86
**The Good House** (Due), 95
Gogsharian, Gary, 104
**Gospel of the Living Dead** (Paffenroth), 132
**Gothic novels**
  *The Castle of Otranto*, 2
  *Jane Eyre*, 3
  key authors, 3
  *The Monk*, 2
  *Mysteries of Udolpho*, 3
  *Northanger Abbey*, 3
  *The Vampyre*, 2
  *Wuthering Heights*, 3
Gout, Leopoldo, 60, 134
Grahame-Smith, Seth, 67–68, 119–120, 122–123
Gran, Sara, 115
Grant, Charles, 9, 37, 95
Grant, Mira, ix, 17, 131
graphic novels, 133
**Graphic Novels** (Pawuk), 133
*The Graveyard Book* (Gaiman), 134
Greenberg, Martin H., 104
Greer, John Michael, 132
Gregory, Daryl, 115
**Grimm Memorials** (Gates), 102, 104
*The Grin of the Dark* (Campbell), 94
Gustaisis, Justin, 104–105
Holland, David, 86
Hollands, Neil, 15
Holt, Ian, 71
Hooked on Horror III (Fonseca and Pulliam), 50, 140
Horns (Hill), 32, 112, 115
horror
as an emotion, 13–14
appeal of, 13–28
classics of, 49–55
collection options, 127–136
comic horror, 119–125
defined, 13, 14
ghosts and haunted houses, 57–63
history of, 1–10
monsters and ancient evil, 91–100
need for, ix–x
reference guide for, 31–45
resources and marketing,
139–150
Satan and demonic possession,
111–118
shape-shifters and, 83–90
trends in, 26–27
twentieth-century authors, 7
vampires and, 16–17, 65–73
witches and the occult, 101–109
zombies and, 75–81
Horror: The 100 Best Books (Jones and Newman), 50
horror authors
Enlightenment, 5
ghost story, 5
Gothic, 3
modern, 9
twentieth century, 7
twenty-first century, 10
The Horror Fiction Review (blog), 141
horror films, 136
Horror in the Air (Classic Radio Horror), 134
Horror Isn’t a 4-Letter Word (Warner), 140
horror novels, identifying
appeal of, 18–23
applying appeal, 23–26
defining horror, 13–15
horror vs. non-horror, 17
paranormal fiction, 15–16
serial killers, 16
traditional monsters, 16–17
horror television series, 136
Horror World (web community), 141
Horror Writers Association, 8, 141
A House Divided (LeBlanc), 44, 62
House of Blood (Smith), 63
House of Bones (Masterton), 62
House of Leaves (Danielewski), 114
The House of the Seven Gables (Hawthorne), 51
Howison, Del, 135
Hubbard, L. Ron, 7
The Hunger (Strieber), 72
Huston, Charlie, 131
Huxley, T. H., 3
I
In the Night Room (Straub), 63
Infected (Sigler), 134
Inferno (Datlow), 135
Interview with a Vampire (Rice), 8, 16, 66, 70
The Invisible Man (Wells), 54–55
Irving, Washington, 51–52
The Island of Dr. Moreau (Wells), 4
isolated frame, 25
J
Jackson, Shirley
The Haunting of Hill House, 52
horror author, 7
pulp-era author, 6
Jacobs, W. W., 5
James, Henry
Gothic novels and, 3, 5
The Turn of the Screw, 52, 57, 129
James, M. R., 5, 52
Jane Eyre (Brontë), 3
Jaws (film), 136
Jinn (Delaney), 94
Joe Pitt series (Huston), 131
John Dies at the End (Wong), 124
Jones, Stephen, 50
Joyce, Graham, 105
K

Karloff, Boris, 6
Keene, Brian
  Castaways, 23–26, 41, 95
  as character-centered author, 35
  City of the Dead, 115
  The Conqueror Worms, 87
  Dark Hollow, 61
  A Gathering of Crows, 87
  Ghoul, 95
  major horror author, 10
  The Rising, 41, 77–78
The Keep (Wilson), 71, 72
The Keeper (Langan), 61
Keepers (Braunbeck), 85
Kelner, Toni L. P., 123
Kenner, Julie, 17
Kent, Jasper, 68
Kenyon, Nate
  Bloodstone, 105
  major horror author, 10
  pulp horror and, 41
  The Reach, 116
  Sparrow Rock, 17, 47, 78
Kenyon, Sherrilyn, ix
Ketchum, Jack, 9, 95
Kiernan, Caitlin
  The Red Tree, 45, 87
  women horror authors, 45
King, Stephen
  American Vampire series, 133
  authors similar to, 36
  Bag of Bones, 61
  Black House, 46
  Carrie, 1, 7, 49
  Cell, 78
  Christine, 112
  Cujo, 87
  Cycle of the Werewolf, 87
  Danse Macabre, 132
  Dark Tower series, 8
  as established author, 35–36
  ghost story author, 5
  Joe Hill and, 10, 32–33
  key horror author, 9
  The Mist, 134
  Pet Sematary, 78

'Salem’s Lot, 68
  The Shining, 36, 61
  The Stand, 36, 47
  The Talisman, 47
  The Tommyknockers, 61
Kirkman, Robert, 78, 133
Knipfel, Jim, 130
Koontz, Dean
  established horror author, 38–39
  Horror Writers of America and, 8
  key horror author, 9
  Watchers, 38, 47
Kornwolf (Egolf), 122
Kostova, Elizabeth, 68
Kramer, David F., 132
Kunma (Corsaro), 114

L

Laimo, Michael
  Fires Rising, 116
  major horror author, 10
  Satan and demonic possession, 112
Lamberson, Gregory
  Desperate Souls, 78–79
  The Frenzy Way, 87
The Land of Laughs (Carroll), 130
Langan, John, 135
Langan, Sarah
  The Keeper, 61
  major horror author, 10
  The Missing, 79
  women horror authors, 43–44
Langford, David, 123
language and style, horror and, 20–21
Lansdale, Joe
  Horror Writers of America and, 8
  key horror author, 9
  Retro Pulp Tales series, 135
Lasher (Rice), 107
The Last Man on Earth (film), 136
Last Things (Searcy), 97–98
The Last Vampire (Strieber), 72
Layman, John, 133
Laymon, Richard
  The Beast House, 96
  Dark Mountain, 105
  major horror author, 9
LeFanu, Joseph Sheridan, 3, 52
Lebbon, Tim, 79
LeBlanc, Deborah
  A House Divided, 44, 62
  major horror author of the 21st century, 10
  Water Witch, 105
Lee, Edward
  Brides of the Impaler, 68–69
  The Golem, 96
  major horror author, 10
  The Messenger, 116
  Slither, 87–88
The Legend of Sleepy Hollow (Irving), 51–52
Lee, Fritz, 106
Let Me In (Lindqvist), 69
Let the Right One In (Lindqvist), 69
Levin, Ira, 7, 53
Lewis, Matthew
  Gothic author, 3
  The Monk, 2
Library Journal, 127
Lilith’s Dream (Strieber), 72
Lindqvist, John Ajvide, 69, 79
Lindsay, Jeff, 129
lists, marketing and, 146
Little, Bentley
  major horror author, 9
  The Return, 96
  The Town, 116
  The Walking, 79–80
The Little Stranger (Waters), 129
Live Girls (Garton), 67
The Living Dead (Adams), 76
The Living Dead 2 (Adams), 76
Locke and Key series (Hill), 133
Long, Jeff, 116–117
Lovecraft, H. P.
  Cthulhu Mythos stories, 5
  The Dunwich Horror and Others, 53
  horror author, 7
  pulp era and, 6
  Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, 135
The Loveliest Dead (Garton), 60
Lugosi, Bela, 6
Lumley, Brian, 9
M
Maberry, Jonathan
  The Cryptopedia, 132
  Ghost Road Blues, 34, 96
  major horror author, 10
  new-generation horror, 34–35
  Rot and Ruin, 80
  The Wolfman, 88
Machen, Arthur, 5
Mack, Carol K., 132
The Magician (Maugham), 106
The Mall of Cthulhu (Cooper), 121
Mamatas, Nick, 60
Manitou Blood (Masterton), 69
March, William, 7, 53
marketing, autumn, 145
Marks, John, 69
Martinez, A. Lee, 123
Martyrs and Monsters (Dunbar), 42
Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness series (Layman), 133
Masello, Robert, 10, 131
Masters of Horror (television series), 136
Masterton, Graham
  Basilisk, 96–97
  Descendant, 69
  The 5th Witch, 106
  House of Bones, 62
  major horror author, 9
  Manitou Blood, 69
Matheson, Richard
  horror author, 7
  pulp-era author, 6
Mathews, Patricia O’Brien, 67
Maugham, W. Somerset, 106
Mayfair Witches series (Rice), 107
McCammon, Robert
  Horror Writers of America and, 8
  key horror author, 9
  The Wolf’s Hour, 88
McKinney, Joe
  Apocalypse of the Dead, 80

www.alastore.ala.org
Dead City, 80
major horror author, 10
Melton, J. Gordon, 132
Meltzer, Brad, 17, 29
Memnoch the Devil (Rice), 70
Merrick (Rice), 71
The Messenger (Lee), 116
The Midnight Guardian (Stratford), 45
Midnight Mass (Wilson), 72
The Midnight Road (Piccirilli), 131
Midnight Walk (Morton), 135
Miéville, China, 130
Mignola, Mike, 133
Mischief (Clegg), 60
The Missing (Langan), 43, 79
The Mist (King), 134
Mitchell, Mary Ann, 106
The Monk (Lewis), 2
Monster (Peretti), 97
Monster Librarian (website), 141
monster revolt vs. horror, 16–17
Monster trilogy (Wellington), 81
monsters and ancient evil
characteristics of, 91–93
titles, 93–100
mood and tone, 18–19
Moore, Alan, 133
Moore, Christopher
comic horror, 119
A Dirty Job, 123
major horror author, 9
You Suck, 119
Morrell, David, 35, 131
Morton, Lisa, 44, 135
Mostert, Natasha, 106
Mr. Gaunt and Other Uneasy Encounters
(Langan), 135
The Mummy (pulp-era movie), 6
Murcheston: The Wolf’s Tale (Holland), 86
My Soul to Keep (Due), 94–95
Mysteries of Udolpho (Radcliffe), 3
Naomi (Clegg), 103
Nathaniel (Saul), 62
Nazareth Hill (Campbell), 37, 59–60
Neverwhere (Gaiman), 130
The New Dead (Golden), 77
The New Encyclopedia of the Occult
(Greer), 132
new-generation authors, 32–35
Newford books (de Lint), 9
Newman, Kim, 9, 50
Newsflesh series (Grant), 131
Niffenegger, Audrey, 130
Night of the Living Dead (pulp-era
movie), 6–7, 136
Night of the Living Trekkies (Anderson), 120
The Night of the Triffids (Clark), 85
Night Pleasures (Kenyon), ix
Nightmare on Elm Street, series (modern
horror movies), 8
Niles, Steve, 133
nonfiction horror
characteristics, 131–132
titles, 132
Norman, Michael, 132
Northanger Abbey (Austen), 3
Nosferatu (silent film), 65
NovelList (database), 142
The Nymphos of Rocky Flats (Acevedo), 120
Oates, Joyce Carol, 3, 129
occult. See witches and the occult
Ochse, Weston, 10, 80
Odd Thomas paranormal series
(Koontz), 38
100 Wicked Little Witch Stories
(Dziemianowicz, et al.), 104
Onions, Oliver, 5
pacing, horror and, 20
Pact of the Fathers (Campbell), 104
Paffenroth, Kim, 132
Pandemonium (Gregory), 115
paranormal vs. horror, 15–16
Pariah (Fingerman), 77
Partridge, Norman, 97
The Passage (Cronin), 16, 67
Passarella, J. G., 107
Paul is Undead (Goldsher), 122
Pawuk, Michael, 133
Pendle, George, 123–124
Penzler, Otto, 69
Peretti, Frank E., 97
Pendergast novels (Preston and Child), 131
Pet Sematary (King), 78
Phantom Nights (Farris), 60–61
phenomena, unexplainable (horror feature), 14
Piccirilli, Tom
A Choir of Ill Children, 107
major horror author, 9
The Midnight Road, 131
Pinborough, Sarah
Breeding Ground, 88
major horror author of the 21st century, 10
The Taken, 45, 62
Tower Hill, 112, 117
Pine Deep trilogy (Maberry), 34–35
The Pines (Dunbar), 42, 95
Poe, Edgar Allen
Edgar Allan Poe Audio Collection, 134
ghost story author, 5
key Gothic author, 3
“The Tell-Tale Heart,” 53
Poe’s Children (Straub), 135
Polidori, John
Gothic influence, 2
key Gothic author, 3
Pratt, Tim, 117
The Presence (Saul), 97
Preston, Douglas
Brimstone, 134
Pendergast novels, 131
Prey (Crichton), 131
Price, E. Hoffman, 7
Price, Vincent, 6
Pride and Prejudice (Austen), ix, 122–123
Pride and Prejudice and Zombies (Grahame-Smith), 119–120, 122–123
Prime Evil (Winter), 135
psychological suspense characteristics, 128–129
titles, 129
Pulliam, June Michele
Hooked on Horror III, 50, 140
Read On . . . Horror Fiction, 140
Q
Queen of Blood (Smith), 63
The Queen of the Damned (Rice), 70
Quirk Books, 119
R
RA for All: Horror (website), 141, 143
Radcliffe, Ann, 3
Ravenous (Garton), 86
The Reach (Kenyon), 116
Read On . . . Horror Fiction (Fonseca and Pulliam), 140
read-alike author pages, marketing and, 149–150
readers, matching books with, 27–29
readers’ advisory department, marketing and, 149
The Readers’ Advisory Guide to Graphic Novels (Goldsmith), 133
Readers’ Advisory Service in the Public Library (Saricks), 18
The Reapers Are the Angels (Bell), 77, 129
Rebecca (du Maurier), 51
The Red Tree (Kiernan), 45, 86
Rendell, Ruth, 129
resources, horror, 139–144
Retro Pulp Tales series (Lansdale), 135
The Return (Little), 96
Rice, Anne
ghost story author, 5
Interview with a Vampire, 8, 16, 66
key horror author, 9
Mayfair Witches series, 107
Vampire Chronicles, 70–71
The Witching Hour, 102
The Ring (film), 136
Rise Against (Tripp), 81
The Rising (Keene), 41, 77–78
Rod Serling’s Night Gallery (television series), 136

www.alastore.ala.org
Rollins, James, 35, 131
Rollo, Gord, 117
Romero, George, 6
*Rosemary's Baby* (film), 136
*Rosemary's Baby* (Levin)
  classic horror, 53
  pulp-era movie, 7
*Rot and Ruin* (Maberry), 80
*The Ruins* (Smith), 30, 88–89, 90, 147
Rule, Ann, 132

*S*
*Sacrifice* (Everson), 104
''Salem's Lot* (King), 68
Sandford, John, 38–39
Sandicks, Joyce, 18
Sarrantonio, Al, 135
Satan and demonic possession
  characteristics of, 111–113
  titles, 114–118
satirical frame, 26
Saul, John
  *Black Creek Crossing*, 107
  *The Devil's Labyrinth*, 117
  major horror author, 9
  *Nathaniel*, 62
  *The Presence*, 97
science, use in horror, 3–5
Scott, Beth, 132
*Scream* (comic horror movie), 119
Searcy, David, 97–98
Season of the Witch* (Mostert), 106
serial killers vs. horror, 16
setting and frame, 22–23
Shannon, Harry, 10
Shapeshifter* (Gonzalez), 86
shape-shifter stories
  characteristics of, 83–85
  titles, 85–90
*Sharp Teeth* (Barlow), 85
*Shaun of the Dead* (comic horror movie), 119
*She Wakes* (Ketchum), 95
Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft
  *Frankenstein*, 4, 53–54
  key Enlightenment author, 5
*The Shining* (King)
  classic horror, 36, 61
  film, 136
*The Shore* (Dunbar), 95
short story collections, 134–135
Sigler, Scott
  *Ancestor*, 98
  *Infected*, 134
  major horror author, 10
Simmons, Dan
  *Drood*, 134
  established horror authors, 39–40
  major horror author, 9
  *Song of Kali*, 62
Summer of Night* (Simmons), 62
*The Terror*, 40, 47, 98
A *Winter Haunting*, 62
Skipp, John, 10
Slade, Michael, 9
Slither* (Lee), 87–88
Smith, Bryan
  *Deathbringer*, 80
  *Depraved*, 98
  *House of Blood*, 63
  major horror author, 10
  *Queen of Blood*, 63
  *Soultaker*, 88
Smith, Scott, 30, 88, 90, 129, 147
Snyder, Scott, 133
Sokoloff, Alexandra
  *The Harrowing*, 44, 63
  key Gothic author, 3
  key horror author, 10
  *The Unseen*, 23–26
women horror writers, 43–44
Something Wicked This Way Comes* (Bradbury), 50–51
Somtow, S. P., 80–81
Song of Kali (Simmons), 62
Sookie Stackhouse series, 9, 66
Soultaker* (Smith), 88
Sparrow Rock* (Kenyon), 17, 47, 78
Stableford, Brian, 9, 89
*The Stand* (King), 36
Stevenson, Robert Louis
  key Enlightenment author, 5

www.alastore.ala.org
Stevenson, Robert Louis (cont.)
   *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, 4, 54
Stoker, Bram
   *Dracula*, 4, 54
   key Enlightenment author, 5
   vampire book examples, 65–66
Stoker, Dacre, 71
*The Stolen Child* (Donohue), 134
*The Stone Circle* (Goshgarian), 104
*Stories: All-New Tales* (Gaiman and Sarrantonio), 135
story line, horror and, 21–22
Strain series (del Toro and Hogan), 131
Strand, Jeff
   *Benjamin’s Parasite*, 124
   *Dweller*, 46, 98
   major horror author, 10
   pulp horror, 42
*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Stevenson), 4, 54
*The Stranger beside Me* (Rule), 132
Stratford, Sarah Jane
   *The Midnight Guardian*, 71
   women horror authors, 45
Straub, Peter
   *Black House*, 46
   *A Dark Matter*, 108
   *Floating Dragon*, 98
   *Ghost Story*, 36–37, 47, 63
   major horror author, 9
   *In the Night Room*, 63
   *Poe’s Children*, 135
   pulp horror, 36
   *The Talisman*, 47
Strieber, Whitley, 72, 89
style and language, horror and, 20–21
*Summer of Night* (Simmons), 62
supernatural thriller
   characteristics of, 130–131
   titles, 131
*Survivor* (television series), 41
Swamp Thing series (Moore), 133
*Sympathy for the Devil* (Pratt), 117
T
*The Taken* (Pinborough), 45, 62
*The Tale of the Body Thief* (Rice), 70
*Tales from the Crypt* (television series), 136
*Tales from the Darkside* (television series), 136
*Tales of Terror and Mystery* (Doyle), 51
*Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (Lovecraft), 135
*The Talisman* (King and Straub), 47
*Taltos* (Rice), 107
Taylor, Karen E., 31
Taylor, Terence, 72
television series and film, 136
“The Tell-Tale Heart” (Poe), 53
Templesmith, Ben, 133
terror (horror feature), 14
*The Terror* (Simmons), 40, 47, 98
themes, horror and, 21
*These Children Who Come at You with Knives* (Knipfel), 130
“Things That Go Bump in the Stacks,” 15
*13 Bullets: A Vampire Tale* (Wellington), 72
*13 Steps Down* (Rendell), 129
*30 Days of Night* (Niles), 133
*This Rage of Echoes* (Clark), 94
*The Tomb* (Wilson), 39, 47
*The Tommyknockers* (King), 61
tone and mood, 18–19
*Tower Hill* (Pinborough), 112, 117
*The Town* (Little), 116
*The Traveling Vampire Show* (Laymon), 68
trends in horror, 26–27
Tripp, Ben, 81
*The Turn of the Screw* (James), 52, 57, 129
Turner, Joan Frances, 81
*Twelve* (Kent), 68
*The Twilight Zone* (television series), 136
*Twin Peaks* (television series), 136
U
*The Ultimate Witch* (Preiss and Betancourt), 104
*The Unseen* (Sokoloff), 23–26, 63
V
The Vampire Archives (Penzler), 69
The Vampire Armand (Rice), 70
The Vampire Book (Melton), 132
The Vampire Lestat (Rice), 70
vampires
characteristics of, 65–67
titles, 67–74
The Vampyre (Polidori), 2
Vampyrhic (Clark), 67
VanderMeer, Jeff, 130
Vaughan, Brian K., ix, 133

W
To Wake the Dead (Laymon), 96
The Walking Dead (Kirkman)
graphic novels, 133
television series, 136
zombie novel, 78
Walpole, Horace
The Castle of Otranto, 2, 54, 57
key Gothic author, 3
Wandrei, Donald, 7
War for the Oaks (Bull), 130
Warner, Matthew, 140
Watchers (Koontz), 38, 47
Water Witch (LeBlanc), 105
Waters, Sarah, 129
Weinberg, Robert
major horror author, 10
100 Wicked Little Witch Stories, 104
“What You Are Meant to Know,” 50
Weird Tales (magazine), 53
Weird Times (magazine), 5
Wellington, David
13 Bullets: A Vampire Tale, 72
Frostbite, 89
Monster trilogy, 81
Wells, H. G.
ghost story author, 5
The Invisible Man, 54–55
The Island of Doctor Moreau, 4
key Enlightenment author, 5
The Werewolves of London (Stableford), 89
Wharton, Edith, 5

“What You Are Meant to Know” (Weinberg), 10, 50
Whitby Vampyrhic (Clark), 67
Whitehead, Henry S., 7
whole collection readers’ advisory, 127–128
Wildwood Road (Golden), 114–115
Wilson, F. Paul
established horror author, 39
major horror author, 9
Midnight Mass, 72
The Tomb, 39
Winter, Douglas, 13, 135
A Winter Haunting (Simmons), 62
The Witch (Mitchell), 106
Witch Wood (Buchan), 103
witches and the occult
characteristics of, 101–103
titles, 103–109
The Witching Hour (Rice), 102, 107
Wither (Passarella), 107
The Wolf Man (pulp-era movie), 6
The Wolfman (Maberry), 99
The Wolf’s Hour (McCammon), 88
Wolf’s Trap (Gagliani), 85–86
Women of the Otherworld series (Armstrong), 17, 130
Wong, David, 124
The Woods Are Dark (Laymon), 96
World War Z (Brooks), 77, 134
Wormwood: Gentleman Corpse series (Templesmith), 133
Wuthering Heights (Brontë), 3, 51, 57
Wyatt, Neal, 127

Y
Y: The Last Man series (Vaughn), 133
Yarbro, Chelsea Quinn, 9
You Come When I Call You (Clegg), 94
You Don’t Scare Me (Farris), 95
You Suck (Moore), 119

Z
Zeltserman, Dave, 89
Zombie (Oates), 129

www.alastore.ala.org
zombie books
characteristics of, 75–76
titles, 76–82
*The Zombies of Lake Woebegotten* (Geillor), 122
*The Zombie Survival Guide* (Brooks), 132
zombies vs. horror, 17
zombies vs. vampires, 26
zombify website, 76