

CONCORD HALLOWEEN READS

Interested in reading something spooky, scary, or downright terrifying?
Give these books a try!

DRACULA

By Bram Stoker

When it comes to vampire novels, accept no substitutes. In Victorian London, a group of friends encounter an immortal evil that's hell bent on consuming the souls the innocent. Determined to save their loved ones, the men desperately search for a means to stop this seemingly invincible nightmare before it adds others to its army of the undead.

THE COMPLETE STORIES AND POEMS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

By Edgar Allen Poe

The Pit and the Pendulum. The Telltale Heart. The Raven. These are but a few examples of the stories of Edgar Allen Poe, America's first horror writer. His tales were often dark and macabre, and frightened readers not with ghosts or monsters but with the nightmarish atmosphere of the setting itself. It comes as no surprise that his prose helped inspire a generation of storytellers.

THE COMPLETE WORKS OF H.P. LOVECRAFT

By H.P. Lovecraft

Another literary great of American horror, Lovecraft was a firm believer in Cosmicism, the belief that humanity is utterly insignificant in the vast scheme of things. At best, we can only hope to live in our tiny corner of existence without attracting some unknowable being which could wipe us out in an instant. Lovecraft's stories are all about what happens with this goes wrong, and the protagonists come face to face with nightmares beyond the comprehension of the human psyche. *The Dunwich Horror, The Mountains of Madness, The Call of Cthulhu*, all are classic tales pertaining to the terror of the unknown, and what might happen if we go exploring in places that we shouldn't...

THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE

By Shirley Jackson

If Poe and Lovecraft are the fathers of American Horror, then Shirley Jackson is without a doubt its mother. *The Haunting of Hill House* is the ideal example of a great ghost story, combining supernatural terror with psychological thrills. Dr. Montague and his associates are wannabe ghost hunters, and decide to spend a couple nights at the infamous Hill House in the hopes of encountering an actual ghoul. At first, not much happens, but the longer they stay the more apparent it becomes that something unearthly walks the halls of Hill House....and it might just claim one of them as its own....

I AM LEGEND

By Richard Matterson

Though technically a vampire book, this novel was actually the inspiration for the zombie genre. Robert Neville is, as far as he can tell, the only survivor of a gruesome plague that turns its victims into bloodthirsty vampires. By night, he hides in his home, praying the barricades are enough to keep the monsters out. By day, he becomes the hunter, killing the vampires while they slumber. As the days go by, Neville is haunted by two questions: is he the last human alive? And if so, how long can he keep this up?

IT

By Stephen King

Perhaps the most famous horror writer alive today, Stephen King has written dozens of frightening stories, and IT is one of his darkest. Set in the town of Derry, Maine, the book takes place in two different time periods. The first is set in the 1950s, where a group of kids battle a horrific monster which preys on the fears of its victims, shapeshifting into whatever frightens them. The second time period, the 1980s, reunites the grown up children, who realize that, despite their best efforts, the monster is still kicking, and still very hungry....

HEART SHAPED BOX

By Joe Hill

The son of Stephen King, Mr. Hill has become a successful novelist in his own right, telling horror stories which both pay tribute to his father while being uniquely his own. Heart Shaped Box tells the story of Judas Coyne, an aging rock star who collects macabre items. One day though, he buys a suit that is supposedly haunted, only to discover that it's no joke. It's the real deal. What's more, this ghost has it personally out for Jude, and promises to kill him and everyone he loves. Now in a race against time, Jude must discover why the ghost is haunting him, before the specter makes good on its promise.

FRANKENSTEIN

By Mary Shelly

Perhaps the first science fiction novel ever created, Shelly's masterpiece takes a hard look at the arrogance of man, the dangers of disrupting the natural order. Victor Frankenstein is a brilliant if somewhat eccentric scientist who believes he has discovered a means to reanimate the dead. Stealing corpses from graves, he succeeds in bringing his creation to life....only to run from it screaming in terror. Soon, however, it becomes apparent that Victor cannot elude the creature so easily, and learns all too late that one should never summon what they cannot banish.

THE GRAVEYARD BOOK

By Neil Gaiman

A ghostly take on the Jungle Book, Gaiman's tale focuses on Nobody "Bod" Owens, a baby who survived a murderous attack on his family. Wandering into a nearby graveyard during the incident, he is adopted by the resident ghosts, who hide him from his would-be killer. Growing up in the graveyard, Bod is taught the secrets of the spirits, like how to turn invisible and walk through walls. As Bod gets older however, his curiosity grows, and he yearns see the world beyond the headstones. As he struggles with the duality of his identity, so too is his adopted family conflicted. For not only must they protect him from the killer (whose still out there, looking to finish what he started) but must also accept one day he must leave them and return to the land of the living.

SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES

By Ray Bradbury

Another American great, Bradbury's tale contributed another classic to the horror genre, which also explores the magic and wonder of the October season. It's nearly Halloween in a small Midwestern suburb, and best friends Will and Jim are getting ready for it. But this October won't be like the others, as a mysterious carnival appears in the middle of town. Its owner, Mr. Dark, claims he can make any wish come true....for a price. As Dark and his minions begin to corrupt the boys' neighborhood, Jim, Will, and Will's father Charles Halloway desperately try to discover the Carnival's true nature and put a stop to it, before succumbing to its temptations.

WORLD WAR Z

By Max Brooks

Everyone jokes about how they would survive the zombie apocalypse, but Mr. Brooks takes it a step further by showing the reader a world which endured such a crisis. It's been a decade since the dead rose from their graves, and though humanity as a whole was triumphant, the earth has being irrevocably changed. The author takes the role of an interviewer, talking to the survivors of World War Z, asking how they endured the horror of it all, and what was sacrificed to escape the undead. Through these interviews, we see how different countries reacted to the crisis, and which of them fell, survived or even prospered during the Zombie War.

THE TERROR

By Dan Simmons

The Arctic Circle, 1847. The HMS Terror has sailed from London with the intent of finding the legendary Northwest Passage, whose discovery would yield great rewards for European traders. Instead, however, they find nothing but a frigid wasteland whose freezing waters render the ship immobile. As the men face starvation, hypothermia, and mutiny, it becomes apparent that they are not alone. Something stalks them on the ice, an unseen monster that is as powerful as it is intelligent. As the body count begins to rise, the crew faces a grim choice; stay in the relative safety of the ship and starve, or brave the wastelands of the arctic in the slim chance of finding civilization?

GHOST STORY

By Peter Straub

It's been a tradition. On a regular basis, five life-long friends meet to reminisce on their childhoods and tell ghost stories like they've always done. However, when one of the men dies under mysterious circumstances, it becomes apparent that something supernatural has become involved in their lives. Together, the men will have to confront the sins of their past if they are to have any chance of surviving an all too real ghost story.

THE SHINING

By Stephen King

The book that inspired the movie, Jack Torrance is a writer who becomes the caretaker of the remote Overlook Hotel during its off season. Moving his family up there, Jack hopes to use the peace and quiet to write his novel. But the hotel has a dark history, and literal ghosts of the past have evil plans for Jack and his family. It's up to Danny, Jack's young son, to keep his family safe, as his latent psychic powers give him the ability to keep the spirits at bay. But the evil of Overlook Hotel won't be thwarted so easily, and if it can't beat Danny, it'll use other means...

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS

By Thomas Harris

You won't find any ghosts or goblins in this book, but chances are you'll check the door lock when you're done. Clarice Starling is an FBI trainee, tasked with helping her boss catch Buffalo Bill, a brutal serial killer stalking the American Southeast. Their best chance is consulting with the famous Dr. Hannibal Lecter, a renowned psychiatrist who specializes in the criminally insane. There's one small catch, however...Hannibal is an infamous murderer himself, and is serving a life sentence in Maryland. He agrees to help Clarice, on the condition that before he answers her questions, she will answer his. With the clock ticking on saving Bill's most recent captive, Clarice accepts. However, as the young agent discovers, there are consequences to exposing one's soul to the likes of Hannibal Lecter....

'SALEM'S LOT

By Stephen King

This book is King's version of Dracula, and it's a fine one at that. Jerusalem's Lot is a small town in Maine (this is a King book, after all!) where everyone minds their own business and keeps to themselves. Unfortunately, this makes it all the easier for a vampire to set up shop relatively undetected, and before you know it, half the town is either dead or undead. If Salem's Lot is to have a chance of surviving, it'll be up to Ben the writer, Matt the teacher, Johnny the doctor, a drunken priest named Callahan, and an unusually bright kid named Ralph to stop the monsters.

THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES

By Nathaniel Hawthorne

Perhaps not the scariest of stories, but it takes place in Salem and was written by a resident of Concord, so it works well with this list. In the late 17th century, Colonel Pyncheon accused Matthew Maule of witchcraft, hoping to buy his mansion (the titular House of the Seven Gables) after he is executed. The ploy succeeds, but before he was led to the gallows Maule cursed the colonel and his descendants, and ever since the Pyncheon family has suffered grief, misfortune, and untimely deaths. Fast forward to the mid-19th century, we are introduced the current members of the Pyncheon family. Some, like Judge Jaffrey, are just as heartless as their infamous ancestor. However, there are others, like Phoebe, who display kindness and generosity. Through these characters, the novel raises an important question: Are the sins of the past destined to echo through eternity? Or can they be put to rest by the decency of the present generation?

THE EXORCIST

By William Peter Blatty

The novel which inspired one of the most terrifying movies all time, *The Exorcist* is a frightening tale about ultimate good vs. ultimate evil. Something is wrong with young Reagan, and neither doctors nor therapists have any rational explanation, as the girl displays horrific acts that can only be described as supernatural. At her wit's end, Reagan's mother turns to the Catholic Church, hoping an exorcism may cure her child. As two priests battle pure evil, it becomes apparent they are not just fighting to save the girl's life, but her very soul.

HOUSE OF LEAVES

By Mark Z. Danielewski

Honestly, I can't summarize this book, or at least, not really. Suffice to say it is a well-written, creepy, make-you-question-the-nature-of-reality type of a novel, and it refuses to obey the normal format of a normal book. Nevertheless, I will try to give you a plot synopsis:

Johnny is a tattoo artist who moved into the apartment the recently deceased Zampanò, an elderly blind man who has lived there for years. He comes across the narrative of the film *The Navidson Record*, which is about Will Navidson and his family moving into a new home. Shortly after the move, Will makes a disturbing discovery. The house is bigger on the outside than it is on the inside. His family then begins to hear clawing from walls, growls from the closet, and find an abyss in the basement. And that's when things start to get weird....

Adding to all this is flashback to Johnny's own personal story, letters he gets from his mother at the hospital, and written commentary from Zampanò about *The Navidson Record*...well, you can understand how this move can be a little daunting. Nevertheless, if you wish to read a truly creepy story, as well as gain credit for reading one of the most bizarre novels ever, this may be for you.

THE KING IN YELLOW

By Robert W. Chambers

A collection of short stories, all of which are connected to a play entitled *the King in Yellow*. While script starts off innocently enough, those who read the play in its entirety are driven mad with vision both bizarre and terrifying. And Heaven forbid if someone actually tries to perform the play, lest they risk bringing the Yellow King himself to the stage. Frighteningly brutal, this collection is also responsible for inspiring the HBO series True Detective, which draws heavily from its text.

MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN

By Ransom Riggs

After suffering the loss of his grandfather, 16 year old Jacob heads for a remote isle off the coast of Wales, attempting to learn about his past and childhood. The longer he stays, however, the stranger things get. You see, Jacob's grandfather has always painted his childhood as a place of magic, where children possessed amazing powers and banded together to hide from monsters. Turns out not only was Jacob being told the truth about the children, but they're still alive and waiting for him on the island.

The catch? The monsters are also real, and they are *horrifying*.

HARRY POTTER

By J.K Rowling

Seriously? You don't know about the Harry Potter series? My dear friend, stop what you're doing and go talk to the circulation desk.

THE DRESDEN FILES

By Jim Butcher

If Harry Potter and Dirty Harry were merged into the same person, you'd get Harry Dresden. Both a wizard and a private eye, Harry walks the mean streets of Chicago, handling the cases that normal law enforcement can't solve and protecting the innocent from what goes bump in the night. Though powerful, Mr. Dresden's hero complex often puts him up against dark forces, ranging from bloodthirsty fairies to ancient gods. Thankfully, Harry's got some awesome friends to help him out, including Karin Murphy, a cop who is in the know, Michael Carpenter, an honest-to-goodness holy knight, and Thomas Raith, a vampire who isn't such a bad fellow.

LOCKE AND KEY

By Joe Hill

When tragedy strikes the Locke family, they move across the country to get a fresh start. Starting anew in Lovecraft, MA, (yes, bad sign right there) the Lockes find themselves the inheritors of an ancient estate, and it's got secrets. For throughout the mansion are keys which can do wondrous, downright magical feats. Keys that can separate a soul from the body, command the shadows, change someone's gender, even (quite literally) stealing someone's

memories. But in addition to these artifacts, something else resides in the Locke estate. A terrible evil with dark plans for the Locke family....

THROUGH THE WOODS

By Emily Carroll

Five dark tales can be found in this graphic novel, all pertaining to the unsettling nature of the forest, and what might await someone there. From an undead bride to a hunting trip gone terribly wrong, these tales are sure to keep you up at night, wondering what lies past the lamp light, waiting in the dark.

