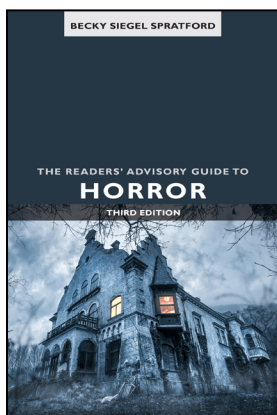


Kristin Briney and Becky Yoose have written an essential book that serves as a call to action, urging library workers to think critically about what we deem “patron data” and *how* and *why* we as library workers manage patron data. Though not required, reading this book in chapter order was extremely helpful. The fact that it can act as a “go-to-this-chapter-to-learn-X” guide allows readers to peruse the topics they are most interested in. If you seek a book that challenges your idea of patron data and *your* position in managing it while offering real-world, applicable examples as a guide, *Managing Data for Patron Privacy: Comprehensive Strategies for Libraries* is a must read. — *Jasmine Shumaker, University of Maryland, Baltimore County*

Siegel Spratford, Becky. (2021) *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror, Third Edition*. Chicago: ALA Editions, 2021, 182 p. \$64.99 (\$58.49 ALA members) ISBN: 978-0-8389-4876-7.



Becky Siegel Spratford’s third revised edition of *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror* is part of ALA Publishing’s Readers’ Advisory Series, which introduces librarians to various genres and associated media such as graphic novels, audiobooks, and more, to provide library users with horror genre resources. While the audience would be mostly public librarians, academic librarians may find this useful for several reasons. For instance, horror has academic value, and librarians who have a basis for recommending titles or horror subgenres such as gothic horror will help enhance student and faculty experience in their university libraries.

According to the author, there was a need for this third edition because “Horror has seen an explosion in the mainstream popularity” (ix), citing *The Walking Dead* television series, New York Times bestsellers who were not Stephen King, and other examples. Emerging authors who have written some groundbreaking horror in the last decade were of course not included in the previous edition, so the third edition is a valuable update.

The book is divided into three parts: a discussion of the horror genre, annotated lists of the most common or popular horror subgenres, and tips for libraries to grow and showcase their collection.

In her first chapter, “The Lure of the Dark Side,” Spratford covers the basics, such as defining horror, discussing the appeal of the genre, and preparing the reader for the contents of a book. Using Joyce Saricks’ framework for readers’ advisory, Spratford outlines the appeal of horror including tone and mood, characters, pacing, language and style, plot, and frame and setting, as well as horror themes. She also frames the chapter as a “cheat sheet” to help library workers “get into their heads and think in their terrorizing terms” (13). The second chapter covers a brief history of 21st-century horror from the Gothic novel to the present. Spratford goes well beyond the cishet white authors who still dominate the genre. In fact, she names and discusses the four “New Heads of Horror”: Stephen Graham Jones, Victor LaValle, Carmen Maria Machado, and Paul Tremblay (20). She includes the “Old Guard,” Tananarive Due, Christopher Golden, Brian Keene, and Caitlín R. Kiernan, who are established writers as well as advocates for the genre (25). Included in this chapter are a Top 20 of the 2010s, horror trends, and more.

Chapter 3, “Helping Your Scariest Readers,” eases the library worker into the RA conversation with horror-loving patrons. Spratford includes talking points, questions, and answers to help the library worker and patron engaged in the hunt for their next read.

Part 2 contains Spratford's brief introductions of subgenres and annotated lists of titles published since 2000, including ghosts and haunted houses, vampires, zombies, witches and the occult, monsters, killer flora and fauna, demonic and Satanic possession, psychological horror, cosmic horror, and body horror. She also provides a chapter on "horror adjacent" subgenres like suspense and dark fantasy, as well as horror in other formats including audiobooks, podcasts, graphic novels, and more. In part 3, Spratford offers advice on collection development, outreach, and promotion of the horror collection and horror programming beyond the month of October.

While this third edition includes plenty of valuable information, I do find her definition of horror rather rigid. Spratford focuses her definition on stories where "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" (3). Very human monsters can be just as frightening, if not more, than a shambling horror. In chapter 2 she suggests that folk horror "fizzled a bit" (32), failing to draw a broad readership. With existing publications on folk horror, such as *We Don't Go Back: A Watcher's Guide to Folk Horror* (2018), *A Walk in a Darker Wood* (2020), *The Mammoth Book of Folk Horror* (2021), *The Fiend in the Furrows* (2018), and the release of the documentary *Woodlands Dark and Days Bewitched: A History of Folk Horror* (2022), it can be argued that interest in folk horror has only grown in recent years. But these are small concerns.

Overall, Spratford provides a valuable resource for library workers in this guide through terror that she keeps up to date on her website, [RA for All: Horror](#). I highly recommend this book for those who need an introduction to horror as well as those who are familiar with the genre and strive to advise on the growing number of diverse authors. Academic librarians who need genre related works for their students and faculty, selectors for fiction and popular reading collections, and crave a way to highlight unique collections in a university or college library would benefit greatly from *The Readers' Advisory Guide to Horror, Third Edition*. — Lizzy Walker, Wichita State University