



## Jeff's Beach Reads

*Horror for People Who Don't Like Horror*

*Creepy, mostly non-violent or gory stories that rely instead on mood, atmosphere, or twists to unsettle or scare you.*

Ajvide Lindqvist, John. *Let the right one in*, (2008). Twelve-year-old Oskar is obsessed by the murder that's taken place in his neighborhood. Then he meets the new girl from next door. She's a bit weird, though. And she only comes out at night. An atmospheric, unusual take on vampire stories that was made into both Swedish and American film versions.

Boyne, John. *This house is haunted*, (2013). One night in 1867 Eliza Caine arrives in Norfolk to take up her position as governess at Gaudlin Hall. Curiously, the two children she's supposed to care for live there all alone. Eliza realizes that if she and the children are to survive the house's violent attentions, she must uncover its long-buried secrets. A classic Victorian ghost story from the best-selling author of *The boy in the striped pajamas*.

Cullinan, Thomas. *The beguiled*, (1966). A wounded Union Army corporal is found in the woods of Virginia during the Civil War and brought to the nearby Miss Martha Farnsworth Seminary for Young Ladies. Then follows a slow dance of deception, seduction, and intrigue, making it hard to tell who is the beguiler, and who the beguiled. Made into a 2017 film with an all-star cast.

Danielewski, Mark Z.. *House of leaves*, (2000). A first novel that became a cult classic, this experimental novel is part puzzle, part graphic novel, part epic. It starts with the simple premise of a young family moving into an ordinary house, which they discover is just a tiny bit larger on the inside than it is on the outside.

Gilman, Charlotte Perkins. *The yellow wallpaper*, (1892). A classic short work by one of America's leading early feminist writers. A young woman is sent for the summer to an old mansion to recuperate after the birth of her child. Spending her time in a former nursery, she slowly descends into madness.

Ishiguro, Kazuo. *Never let me go*, (2005). Anderson is the author of several memoirs of introspection and self-discovery. This one is about an unexpected friendship that blooms when she heads to Cape Cod to spend a year by herself, but instead has a chance meeting with a wise woman who helps her find her own path.

Jackson, Shirley. *The haunting of Hill House*, (1959). The archetypal haunted house story by a 20<sup>th</sup> century master. A small group goes to a remote New England mansion to research supposed paranormal experiences that have been reported. Eleanor, one of the guests, finds herself more drawn to the house than is probably good for her. Made into two films, one a classic, one not.

Jackson, Shirley. *We have always lived in the castle*, (1962). Jackson deserves to be on this list twice. After several members of their family die from arsenic poisoning, Merricat Blackwood lives with her older sister Constance and their ailing uncle Julian in isolation on their New England estate, away from hostile local townspeople. The arrival of a cousin threatens to upset the delicate balance. Soon to be a 2018 film.



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Kostova, Elizabeth. *The historian*, (2005). A young woman is plunged into a terrifying mystery when she finds an ancient book in her father's study one night. With the book are a series of letters addressed to "My dear and unfortunate successor," which describe how her father came to have the book and the journey he undertook through Europe to try and unravel its mysterious origins. A mesmerizing and literary vampire read.

Lehane, Dennis. *Shutter Island*, (2003). In Boston Harbor, a U.S. Marshal and his partner come to Shutter Island's mental hospital in search of an escaped mental patient, but uncover a series of overlapping and spiraling mysteries that leave them wondering what is real and what is not.

Mitchell, David. *Slade House*, (2015). Down the road from a working-class British pub, along the brick wall of a narrow alley, if the conditions are exactly right, you'll find the entrance to Slade House: a surreal place where visitors see what they want to see, including some things that should be impossible. An off-beat haunted house story from an acclaimed author.

Olde Heuvelt, Thomas. *Hex*, (2016). Black Spring is a quarantined Hudson Valley town haunted by the Black Rock Witch, a 17<sup>th</sup> century woman whose eyes and mouth are sewn shut. Muzzled, she walks the streets and enters homes at will. Everybody knows that her eyes may never be opened or the consequences will be dire, but the town's teenagers decide to defy tradition.

Setterfield, Diane. *The thirteenth tale*, (2006). A dying writer bids a young bookshop assistant to write her biography. At Vida Winter's ruined mansion in the English countryside, Margaret Lea hears the story of who Vida really is in a tale complete with secret illegitimate children, a madwoman hidden in the attic and ghostly twin sisters. Creepy, compelling and perfect for the beach or a rainy day.

Straub, Peter. *Ghost story*, (1979). In upstate New York, four old men gather to tell each other creepy stories. But one story is coming back to haunt them and their small town. A true story of a mistake they made long ago. And they are about to learn that no one can bury the past forever.

Waters, Sarah. *The little stranger*, (2009). One post-war summer in rural Warwickshire, a country doctor is called to a patient at Hundreds Hall. Home to the Ayres family for over two centuries, the once grand Georgian house is now in decline. However something else is happening - something subtle, almost unnoticed, but definitely wrong.