

Literary Genre Bibliography: Scary Fiction

Grades K-2

Cuyler, Margery. **Bonaparte Falls Apart**. Dragonfly Books, 2020. ISBN: 9781725498808.

Summary: The duo behind *Skeleton for Dinner* returns with the story of Bonaparte, a young skeleton who "was falling to pieces, and this really shook him up." With Bonaparte's limbs detaching at inopportune moments, his friends devise plans to help him keep it together. The eventual solution: a puglike puppy, whose bone-retrieving skills are just what the cadaver ordered. Cuyler's read aloud-friendly narration is loaded with bone puns and makes good use of repetition and rhyme, and Terry creates an impish monster cast in moody scenes textured with intricate cross-hatching. With pratfalls aplenty, it's an amusing reminder that small accommodations and the support of friends can help any kid succeed. (Publisher Info).

Curricular use: RL.2.7 Use information gained from the illustrations and words in a print or digital text to demonstrate understanding of its characters, setting, or plot.

Audience: Kindergarten to second grade.

Drago, Flavia Z. **Gustavo, the shy ghost**. Candlewick Press, 2020. ISBN:9781536211146.

Summary: This winning debut picture book from Mexican artist Flavia Z. Drago about finding the courage to make friends is perfect for the spooky season — or anytime. Gustavo is good at doing all sorts of ghostly things: walking through walls, making objects fly, and glowing in the dark. And he loves almost nothing more than playing beautiful music on his violin. But Gustavo is shy, and some things are harder for him to do, like getting in a line to buy eye scream or making friends with other monsters. Whenever he tries getting close to them, he realizes they just can't see him. Now that the Day of the Dead is fast approaching, what can he do to make them notice him and to share with them something he loves? (Publisher Info)

Curricular use: RL.2.1 Ask and answer such questions as who, what, where, when, why, and how to demonstrate understanding of key details in a text.

Audience: Kindergarten to second grade.

Grades 3-4

Hahn, Mary Downing. **The puppet's payoff and other chilling tales**. Clarion Books, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020. ISBN: 9780358067320

Summary: Hahn returns with more chilling tales for young readers, this time in short story form. This collection of 10 stories ranges from ghosts to witches and everything in between. Hahn's tales are typically gut-wrenchingly terrifying, often with grotesque monsters and an abundance of horrifying detail; but the stories included in this selection tend more on the side of creepy, eerie incidents. These stories are more accessible for sensitive readers who are still looking for a scare, but are not ready to delve into more ghastly selections. The format would work well for read-alouds, as many of the stories are short enough that they could be shared in a group. Hahn also includes a non-horror

story that explains how she became a writer, particularly one of ghost stories, which will be of interest to young readers and could be used to inspire young writers in a classroom setting. (SLJ)

Curricular use: RL.4.7 Make connections between the text of a story or drama and a visual or oral presentation of the text, identifying where each version reflects specific descriptions and directions in the text.

Audience: Third grade and up.

Mejia, Tehlor Kay. **Paola Santiago and the river of tears**. Disney-Hyperion, 2020. ISBN: 9781368049177.

Summary: Space-obsessed 12-year-old Paola Santiago and her two best friends, Emma and Dante, know the rule: Stay away from the river. It's all they've heard since a schoolmate of theirs drowned a year ago. Pao is embarrassed to admit that she has been told to stay away for even longer than that, because her mother is constantly warning her about La Llorona, the wailing ghost woman who wanders the banks of the Gila at night, looking for young people to drag into its murky depths. Hating her mother's humiliating superstitions and knowing that she and her friends would never venture into the water, Pao organizes a meet-up to test out her new telescope near the Gila, since it's the best stargazing spot. But when Emma never arrives and Pao sees a shadowy figure in the reeds, it seems like maybe her mom was right. Pao has always relied on hard science to make sense of the world, but to find her friend she will have to enter the world of her nightmares, which includes unnatural mist, mind-bending monsters, and relentless spirits controlled by a terrifying force that defies both logic and legend. (Publisher Info)

Curricular use: RL.4.3 Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., a character's thoughts, words, or actions).

Audience: Third grade and up.

Grades 5-6

Poblocki, Dan. **Ghost hunter's daughter**. Scholastic Press, 2020. ISBN: 9780545830041.

Summary: A spooky stand-alone middle-grade novel from Dan Poblocki, perfect for fans of John Bellairs and Mary Downing Hahn. "They say if you see him, it's already too late." Claire doesn't believe in ghosts, even though her dad is a ghost hunter on TV. But then her dad disappears. And a strange boy in her class, Lucas, knows something about ghosts. One of them has a message for her: Her dad has been taken, and he's in grave danger. Together, Claire and Lucas set out for the town of Hush Falls, where her dad was last seen. Legend says that a tall man in a dark tattered coat lurks near the local reservoir, and anyone who gets too close to old Lemuel Hush is never heard from again. Claire and Lucas are determined to rescue her father. But how can they save him from the ghost of Hush when everyone knows that seeing the ghost means that you're destined to die

Curricular use: RL.5.2 Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize the text.

Audience: Grade 5 and up.

Oppel, Kenneth. **Bloom**. Alfred A. Knopf, 2020. ISBN: 9781524773014.

Summary: The invasion begins--but not as you'd expect. It begins with rain. Rain that carries seeds. Seeds that sprout--overnight, everywhere. These new plants take over crop fields, twine up houses, and burrow below streets. They bloom--and release toxic pollen. They bloom--and form Venus flytrap-like pods that swallow animals and people. They bloom--everywhere, unstoppable. Or are they? Three kids on a remote island seem immune to the toxic plants. Anaya, Petra, Seth. They each have strange allergies--and yet not to these plants. What's their secret? Can they somehow be the key to beating back this invasion? They'd better figure it out fast, because it's starting to rain again. (Publisher Info)

Curricular use: RL.5.3 Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).

Audience: Grade 5 and up.