

HWA Announces Jennifer McMahon as Spokesperson for 'Summer Scares' 2026 Reading Program

The annual horror reading initiative returns with a new spokesperson, program timeline, and expanded library resources.

COLUMBUS, OH, UNITED STATES, November 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Horror Writers Association (HWA), in partnership with Booklist, Book Riot, iREAD, and NoveList®, a division of EBSCO Information Services, announces the eighth annual "Summer Scares," a reading initiative that provides libraries and schools with a curated list of horror recommendations for adults, teens, and middle-grade readers.

"Summer Scares" is thrilled to introduce the 2026 spokesperson: New York Times bestselling author Jennifer McMahon.



Jennifer McMahon

"When I was a kid, I checked a book out of my local library that had a spell in the back to become a werewolf... I thought it would be easier to grow fangs and claws than to deal with all the messy human stuff. I cast the spell... and was profoundly disappointed when it didn't work. But there was other magic on those library shelves... doors to other worlds; worlds where ghosts and monsters and terrible things waited for me and taught me not just to face my own fears, but to come out on the other side stronger. Turns out I don't need to go full-on werewolf to feel changed—I just need to lose myself in a great spooky story. So I'm thrilled to be here with 'Summer Scares,' inviting you to come on this reading journey with me—transformation into a werewolf not guaranteed!"

McMahon joins a committee of six library professionals to select three fiction titles in each of the

three age categories—totaling nine official “Summer Scares” recommendations. The goal is to spark conversations around horror and dark fiction in libraries of all types, and to attract readers of all ages to explore the genre.

The official selections will be announced on Library Lover’s Day, February 14, 2026. McMahon and select featured authors will help launch the program during the 10th Annual HWA Librarians’ Day, taking place Friday, June 5, 2026, [at StokerCon® 2026](#), hosted at the Westin Pittsburgh.

The program also includes additional resources such as:

- Free webinars in collaboration with Booklist
- Podcast appearances by authors and librarians
- Suggested reading lists for all age groups
- A downloadable “Summer Scares Programming Guide,” launching March 1, 2026

Developed by HWA Library Committee Co-Chair Konrad Stump, the 2026 Programming Guide will include event ideas, author connections, reading group suggestions, and partnerships with institutions like the University of Pittsburgh Library System. The guide will include one iREAD partner title per age category.

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From ideas for author events, book discussion groups, and more, this guide is the library worker’s roadmap to creating exciting and meaningful experiences for their patrons”

Konrad Stump

“From ideas for author events, book discussion groups, and more, this guide is the library worker’s roadmap to creating exciting and meaningful experiences for their patrons,” says Stump.

Past years’ “Summer Scares” titles, programming guides, and spokespeople can be found on the [RA for All Horror](#)

[blog](#). Additional updates will be shared through Booklist, Book Riot, iREAD, and NoveList®, as well



Summer Scares 2024 Logo



Horror Writers Association

as the HWA's website.

For questions, contact the HWA Library Committee Co-Chairs Becky Spratford and Konrad Stump through the [HWA website](#).

About the Horror Writers Association:

The Horror Writers Association (HWA) is a nonprofit organization of writers and publishing professionals around the world, dedicated to promoting dark literature and the interests of those who write it. Founded in the late 1980s, it now has more than 2,000 members around the world and is the oldest and most respected professional organization for creators of horror fiction. The HWA encourages public interest in and appreciation of horror and dark fantasy literature and hosts an annual professional conference, StokerCon. HWA is also dedicated to recognizing and promoting diversity in the horror genre and practices a strict anti-harassment policy at all of its events. Learn more on the HWA website.

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