

Swoons and **SCREAMS**

A webinar 4 years in the making

Readers' Advisory: Ideas and Practice
March 14, 2024

Meet the Panelists



Robin Bradford
she/her
Adult Swoons



Becky Spratford
she/her
RA for All
Adult Screams

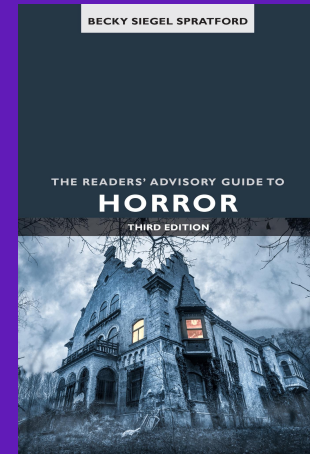
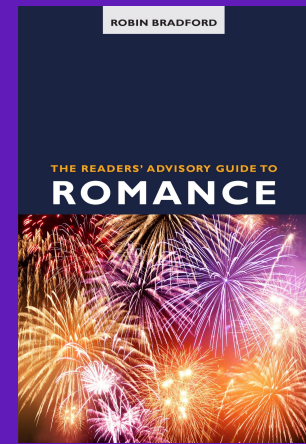


Alex Brown
they/them
High school librarian
Teen Swoon & Screams

Agenda

All topics are considered from the Adult and Teen perspectives:

- The Appeal of Romance AND Horror
 - Not the BookTok Horromance trend
- The RA conversation for the Romance and Horror Reader
- Can't miss titles
- Your Questions



10% off (both or either) BSRB24
exp. 3/31/24

But First... Let's Double Down On All the Feels

- Both genres are driven by how they make the reader feel
 - Different emotions yes, but the story must invoke real feelings
- Both genres use a lot of adjectives and call up 5 senses
- “Two basic elements comprise every Romance novel: A central love story and an emotionally satisfying and optimistic ending.”
- “Horror is a story in which 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.”
- YA is written for teens, marketed to teens, and is age appropriate for teens
 - Just because the protagonist is a teen, doesn't make it YA

The Appeal of Romance for Adult Readers

- Overall appeal – Main characters recognizing that they belong together in a romantic relationship (HEA *or* HFN)
- Characters: Everybody gets their HEA.
- Pacing: Words like “faced paced” and “slow burn” can apply to the narrative in general or to the romance specifically.
- A reader for romance and a romance for every reader
- No matter where (or when) you go, you know exactly what you’re getting.



The Appeal of Romance for Teen Readers

- A way to safely explore romance and sexual activity and accompanying emotions
 - Is it something they want to engage in or not? (Are they acespec/arospec?)
- Normalizes queer relationships - sexual, romantic, queerplatonic
- Relationship drama is a big part of teen life
 - Offer examples of consent, sex, and healthy relationships
 - Can also offer examples of toxic behavior, abuse, ignoring/violating consent, gaslighting, etc and other red flags and how to safely extricate yourself from that
- It's fun!
- It's wish fulfillment!
- Or, if you're me, it's all fantasy and weird and y'all don't really do that do you? You do? Ew. I mean, whatever floats your allo boat I guess.

The Appeal of Horror for Adult Readers

- Tone and Mood: provokes terror, gives voice to our fears, uneasy atmosphere
- Characters We Care About: rooting both for and against
- Pacing: steady build to frantic conclusion
- Style and Language
 - Lots of adjectives
 - Can be quirky to build unease
 - Flashbacks
- Storyline:
 - speculative, “coming-of-age,” open ended
 - Place where readers can face own fears/escape real life horrors
- Frame & Setting: anywhere and everywhere
 - But must enhance the dark tone and mood (“beach house” ex)



The Appeal of Horror for Teen Readers

- A way to safely explore difficult experiences
 - Processing trauma, grief, fear, abuse, violence, etc
 - Reminders that they can survive whatever terrible thing they're going through IRL, to ask for help, that they aren't the only ones who have been through this
- A gateway genre for “reluctant” readers - MG horror to YA horror pipeline
- Normalizes marginalized identities by letting everyone get chopped up by a serial killer stalking a summer camp or haunted to death by an evil spirit regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or class!
- It's fun!

The RA Conversation with Adult Romance Readers

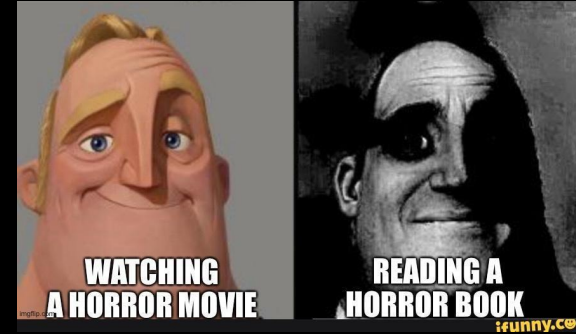
- Tropes – story identifiers. Can be used as search terms to narrow the field.
- Characterization – Sometimes, the “who” matters.
- Sex – including partnership groupings
- Writing Style
- Other intangibles – violence, language, religion, cultural background, historical context and accuracy

When someone tells me they don't read **ROMANCE NOVELS** because they're just too "unrealistic" ...



The RA Conversation with Adult Horror Readers

- Emotions = RA Complications
 - It's about made up stories sparking real feelings
 - Not everyone enjoys being scared
 - Address comfort level w/ review language or this Booklist article
- Assess their entry point using a multi-faceted approach
 - Traditional Appeal Factors
 - Themes or Tropes: revenge, body, clowns, evil kids, small town...
 - Subgenre: vampires, werewolves, cosmic, haunted house, possession...
 - Media: use a popular movie or tv show and look up readalikes
 - Use resources as you chat: my favs
 - 4 star and 2 star Goodreads are very helpful



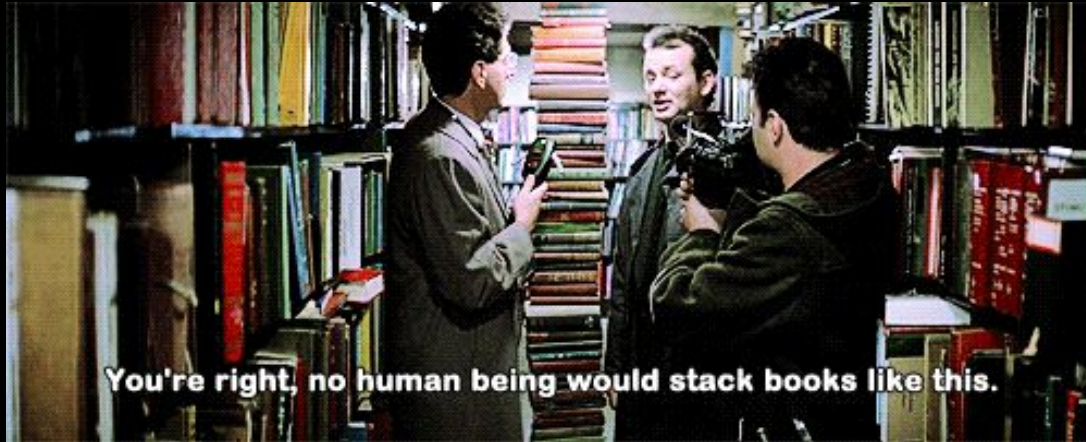
The RA Conversation with Teen Readers



The RA Conversation with Teen Readers



The RA Conversation with Teen Readers



The RA Conversation with Teen Readers

Book Bundles!

I am the Book Doctor, I have the cure for all your reading ills.

This form is automatically collecting emails from all respondents. [Change settings](#)

What would you like me to call you? *

Short answer text

What genres would you like recommendations in? Check as many as you want. *

- Literary fiction
- Science fiction
- Fantasy
- Horror
- Romance
- Contemporary
- Historical
- Nonfiction
- Biographies or autobiographies/memoirs
- Young adult
- Graphic novels or comic books
- Other...

Of the above list of genres, are there any that you don't usually read that you'd like to try?

Long answer text

What were the last 3 books you read that you liked? *

Long answer text

What did you like about those books? *

Long answer text

What were the last 3 books you read that you did not like? *

Long answer text

What did you not like about those books? *

Long answer text

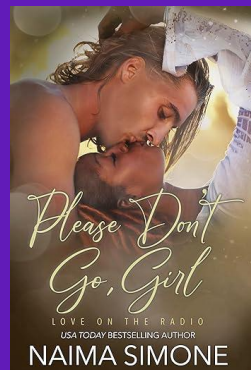
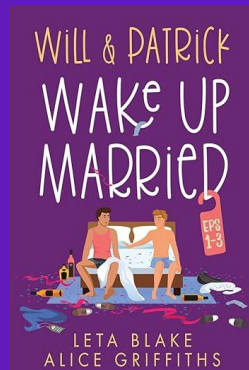
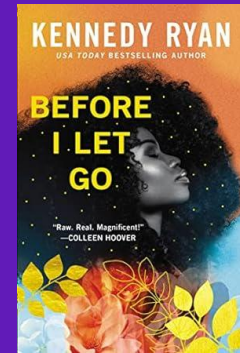
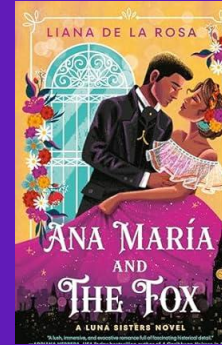
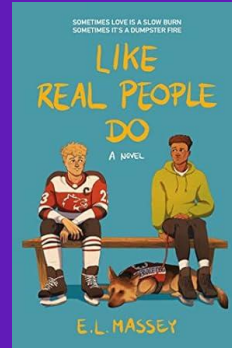
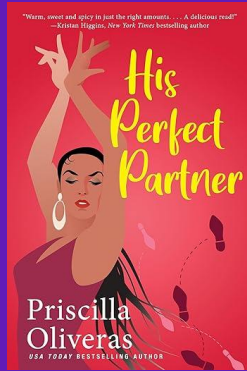
Do you prefer to read in a specific format? *

- Print
- Audiobook
- Digital/eReader
- No preference
- Other...

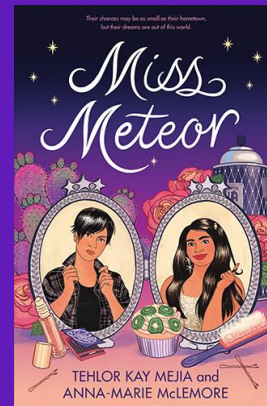
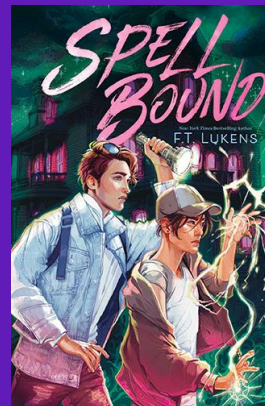
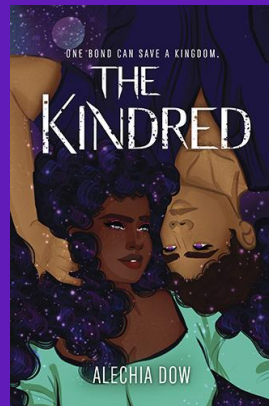
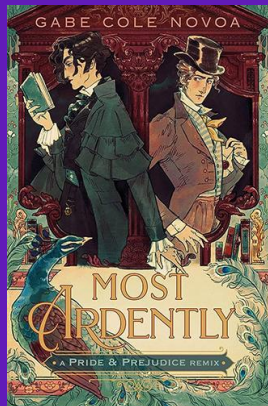
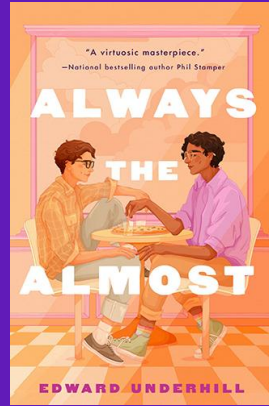
If you got a literary tattoo, what would it be of?

Long answer text

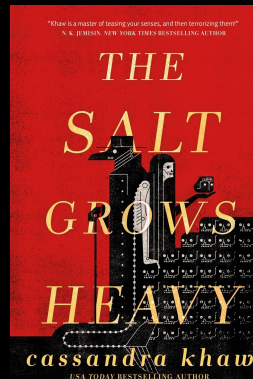
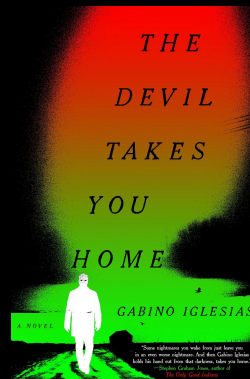
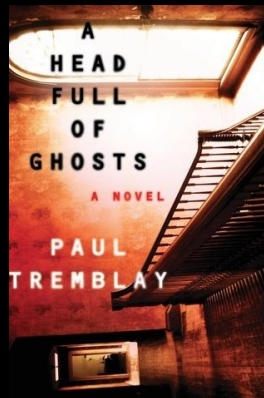
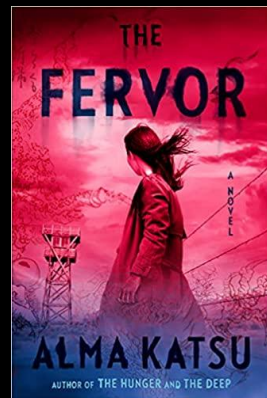
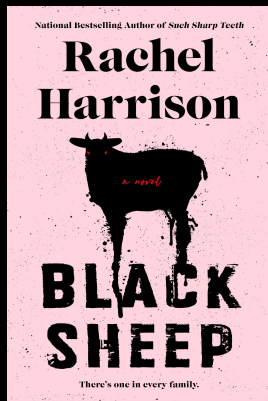
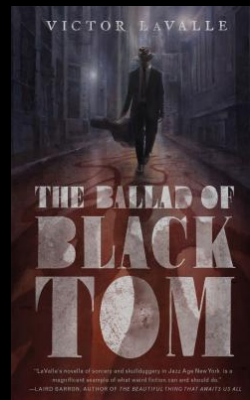
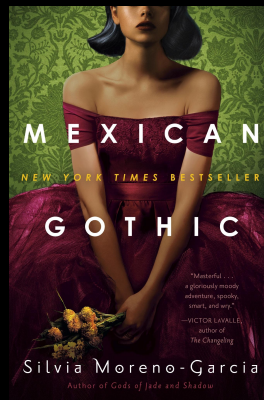
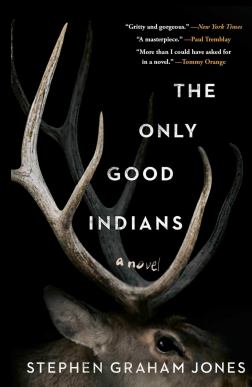
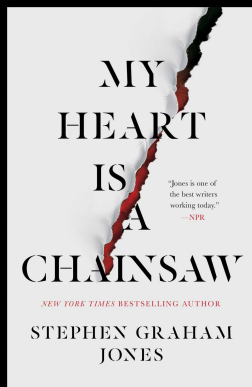
Can't Miss Romance Titles for Adult Readers



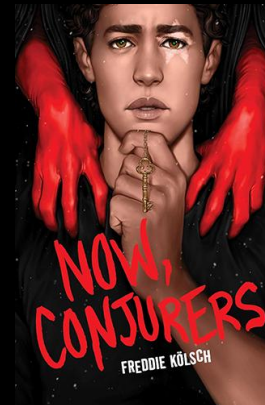
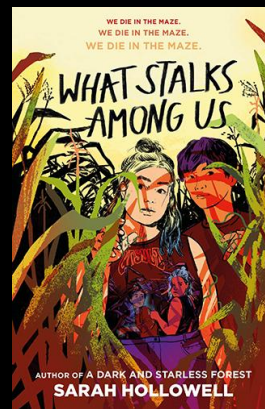
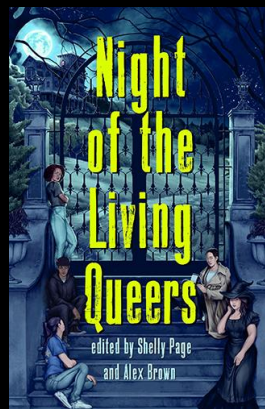
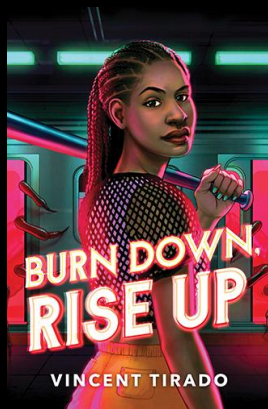
Can't Miss Romance Titles for Teen Readers



Can't Miss Horror Titles for Adult Readers



Can't Miss Horror Titles for Teen Readers



Questions: Now and Later



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