

## **EGSM 8: Reader beware... (Horror books)**

### **Content Warnings**

- Brief sexual references
- Explicit language
- Discussions of: death, disease, grief & loss, nightmares, claustrophobia, torture, ghosts, zombies
- Mentions of: murder, vampires, dismemberment, blood, physical violence, food

**TAI**

Evil slime was a big thing for Goosebumps...

**HELEN**

(laughing) Yeah!

**TAI**

...I don't know why, I guess that was...maybe that's something children are often afraid of, that slime's just...

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**TAI**

They certainly are after reading Goosebumps!

**HELEN**

Rusty Quill – EGSM 008 - Horror Books

I think we like looking at goo...

(laughing)

**[SHOW THEME INTRO]**

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

Hello friends and fans and welcome to Enthusiasm, the show where we talk about a few of our favourite things. I am your host, Helen Gould, one of the best Rusty Quillers and today we're talking about horror fiction, specifically books, and I am overjoyed to be joined by Annie, Fay, Martyn and Tai. We are as usual going to introduce ourselves alphabetically. Sorry for putting you on the spot Annie, can you give us your pronouns and what you do?

**ANNIE**

No worries uh yeah, Annie Fitch, she/her pronouns, and I was one of the vocal editors for Magnus end of season four and all of season five, and sort of a general editor now. Also, the voice of Akteraks on Stellar Firma.

**HELEN**

Yes! Very good, excellent. Fay, can you give us your pronouns and tell us what you do?

**FAY**

Yes my name is Fay Roberts, my pronouns are ze/zir or they/them, don't mind whichever you get to, and I played Daisy in the Magnus Archives, Cressida in, er...

(laughs)

...just such a contrast...

**HELEN**

(laughing)

**FAY**

...in, oh crikey, Inexplicables, that's the word, and er, yeah just keep turning up to stuff I think.

**HELEN**

Fabulous. Martyn, what are your pronouns and who are you?

**MARTYN**

Hello, Martyn Pratt, he/him. I did some things with IT and Rusty Quill, job title's CTO, and I was also Robin Lennox on the Magnus Archives in...

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**MARTYN**

...episode 100, yeah.

**HELEN**

(laughing)

I always forget that. I should relisten to episode 100 just to hear all the friends.

**MARTYN**

It's a divisive one, some people hate that episode.

**HELEN**

(laughing)

**FAY**

Really? It's so joyful.

**HELEN**

Oh dear. And last but not least, Tai, can you give us your pronouns and let us know what you do.

**TAI**

Yes hello, I'm Tai Lawson, they/them pronouns, and I am in charge of all of Rusty Quill's money, so...

**HELEN**

Yes.

**TAI**

...so that's what I do. I make sure everybody gets paid. I make sure all the money that comes in goes where it's supposed to be. I do all the maths and all the stuff with abacuses, or – is that the plural of abacus? I don't know, moving on.

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**TAI**

So, that's, yeah, that's me, and I was Angry Vampire Number One in Inexplicables.

**FAY AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

Oh wonderful, excellent role that one. Right so, we're going to dive right in with a very big question that may well take us the whole hour to talk about. Which is, how do we define horror fiction, like what is a horror book?

**TAI**

I was having a think about this when you asked, er...

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**TAI**

...and I think that the difference for me about between like a thriller or even something like a speculative fiction, is that the focus of the book is fear...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...or the fear of the thing, and that it's something supernatural or superhuman, even if it is you know like a, you know, like the inverted commas 'crazed killer with a knife', it's still an element of humanity gone too far...

**HELEN AND FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

I think that's the idea, it's some kind of like you know people know the quote from Stephen King about the difference between horror and terror which is...

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**HELEN**

Yes.

**TAI**

Often quoted and I won't do it now, but I think one of the main differences is yeah if you are looking at a thriller, it's something that could within the realms of possibility actually happen in the real world, whereas a horror is maybe more there's a supernatural or paranormal thing.

**ANNIE**

There's a quote that stuck with me from, I read this ages ago, I don't even remember where, but I was reading somewhere because you often see science fiction and fantasy grouped together...

**TAI AND HELEN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...somebody was justifying that actually when you look at a lot of like publishers and a lot of the way that the people in 'the business' in massive air quotes, classify things, a lot of them would say sci-fi, fantasy, horror as three in one category...

**HELEN AND FAY**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...because the idea is, it's almost exactly like Tai said, it's the horror has to be, I mean I would use the word speculative, in one way or another horror has to be, has to ask a, what if this was different, and you can go...

**TAI**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...so far as to go 'Alien is horror', which is all the way sci-fi...

**HELEN**

Mm..

**ANNIE**

...too, or as you could as you said the crazed killer stuff is still just like, what if real life but there was this like, way exaggerated what if we took this like behaviour pattern or thing that can happen and took it to a totally unnatural extreme, I think that's what makes it horror versus a thriller.

**HELEN, FAY AND MARTYN**

Mm..

**HELEN**

Do we have any takers, Fay or Martyn?

**FAY**

Partly I was thinking about this earlier, remembering that I was going to be doing this, and I was thinking about you know early horror fiction and how I got into it and stuff like that, and I realised that a lot of the stuff I had been exposed to as a kid was actually pretty horrific and also about the unknown. And it got me thinking about how some of the really early, like really early primeval kind of stories that humanity tells us about what's happening in the dark. Why does this terrible thing happen? And you know coming up with, other supernatural, supernormal kind of explanations for it, that kind of populating the dark. Either as a way of controlling it or as just to give yourself a thrill or whatever but it's old and it is about what you can't see, to me that's like a prime thing of horror, it's about what you, you can't reason with necessarily unless you yourself change to be something that can communicate with this er, this supernormal thing.

**MARTYN**

I think with horror there's just the idea of like a monster and that monster is not necessarily like just you know, big scary like creature, physical monster, but like there's, there's something horrific about an entity that is being described or run away from, or exists within the work of that fiction and you are kind of exploring what that monster is, how it works, how you can get away from it possibly, or how to deal with it, and that's what the story is sort of about and that's what a horror book is to me I think.

**HELEN**

So then, is it fair to say that horror, then, explores the monstrous...

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...to the extreme? Rather than, a thriller can explore like monstrous things or people...

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...but horror is like a step further in...

**FAY**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...what it wants to tackle? What do we think?

**TAI**

I think it's partially the... what Fay was saying about how we're just trying to give shape and form to what we don't understand or what we... because we fear what we don't understand...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...and so, it's then that same thing of horror has to be something that there's a mental disconnect between yourself and connecting with whatever this antagonist is...

**HELEN**

Okay.

**TAI**

...because you don't understand its motivations or where it's come from or there's, you know, most monsters or, or kind of antagonising creatures I guess that appear in horror, can't speak with the protagonist or with the characters...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...it's more of the focus on yeah, of the yeah, it's the source of the fear and putting a face...

**FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

...on that or some kind of...

**HELEN AND FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

...name onto it and it's exactly not being able to reason with it, because the point at which you are able to rationalise fear, you can stop being afraid of it...

**HELEN, FAY, AND MARTYN**

Yeah.

**TAI**

...normally, but that doesn't work for everything, it's not completely ubiquitous, we all have things that we're afraid of, and I think at a certain point with fiction you're like, I have made something so horrible that nobody could not be afraid of it...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...to represent this underlying fear that exists, even when you know that there's nothing in the dark and...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...there isn't anybody, you know, lurking behind that door, you still like to freak yourself out a little bit and be like 'ooh what if there was!'

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**MARTYN**

(laughs)

Yeah.

**HELEN**

So, it's not just the monstrous, but specifically like the monstrous unknown...

**TAI**

Yes.

**HELEN**

...and that can be all manner of things.

**ANNIE AND MARTYN**

Mm.

**HELEN**

Excellent. Oh, you're all so clever.

**FAY**

(laughs)

**HELEN**

Okay, so now we know what we think horror fiction is.

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**HELEN**

How did we all get into the genre? I'll start, I'll start. I think probably the first horror book I read, gosh I should have got it out from my bookcase, it was a collection of short stories from maybe the 80s or 90s...

**FAY**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...it's a very tattered, falling apart old book, and it was all stories like, called like um, you know 'The Glove' and...

**FAY**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

...someone bought a pair of gloves and they had like a red stain in them, and it turned out that the gloves used to belong to someone who was in a train crash and their hands got chopped off.

**FAY**

Nice.

**HELEN**

...and the gloves each night like inched closer to the person who now owns them. Until eventually they wake up with the gloves attempting to strangle them and they sort of like, just throw them away...

**ANNIE AND FAY**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

(Laughing)

It was all that kind of...you know, 'what if this thing was alive', or 'what if you saw a person and they were weird.' You know?

(Group laughter)

**MARTYN**

A toaster, but haunted toaster.

**HELEN**

(laughing)

Yeah! What about all of you, would anybody like to start?

**ANNIE**

I think that my entry point at least as far as horror books goes, is probably pretty common because I would say...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...the first horror book I ever read would have been the, one of the Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark series.

**HELEN**

Ah.

**ANNIE**

Which in retrospect are...terrifying.

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

Those books are, are, I mean some of the content in them is, you know even to this day, like I sometimes sit back and think about the like, how many different stories in those books involved something wearing someone else's skin...

**MARTYN**

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

...and just think I read that when I was like eight...that's, that's weird...

**MARTYN**

Yeah.

**FAY**

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

...you know what I mean?

(laughs)

**MARTYN**

Yeah.

**ANNIE**

...but they're all so creepy and the illustrations are really what sells it in those.

They are incredible!

**HELEN**

Oh yeah. There's actually, I follow a YouTuber, I'm just looking her up now...but anyway the reason I bring her up is that she's rating all the Scary Stories To Tell In The Dark. She's like reading all of them and saying, um, which ones are most effective and what she thinks of each of them. Nyx Fears, Nyx Fears I think is her name.

**MARTYN**

Cool.

**HELEN**

Rusty Quill – EGSM 008 - Horror Books

Yes, yeah, 'The Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark Tier List Part One', and part one is 40 minutes long...

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

...SO...

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

Oh fantastic.

**HELEN**

But I've heard that like the Scary Stories To Tell In The Dark thing is very ubiquitous...

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...for people from the US, and we didn't have that here necessarily, I don't think.

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**FAY**

I don't recall them, certainly, but...

**ANNIE**

I wasn't sure if they'd ever yeah crossed the pond but the...

**HELEN**

No.

**ANNIE**

...nearly everyone I knew when I was in like late elementary or early middle school so that's like eight to 12ish.

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...nearly everyone I knew had a copy of that book. It was a trilogy, most people had the first one, but I had a copy...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...of one of those books on the shelves, and even if you don't look up to read the stories, you have to look up the drawings that accompanied...

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**ANNIE**

...the stuff in those books. They're still... it's still some of my favourite horror art because it just really like, no matter how much people can do these really crazy realistic things that really haunt you with digital art these days. There is something that just sticks in you about the art in those books...

**HELEN**

Mm. Yeah.

**ANNIE**

...that just I... it's never left me since. When I think of the standard of what looks scary, it's those books, top, you know, top of the list.

**HELEN**

Yeah, Nyx Fears puts it as being jump scared by a page.

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

Right.

**FAY**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

Like you'll turn the page and there will be one of the pictures and you'll be like...

**ANNIE**

(imitates sound of fear)

**HELEN**

...why? Why is this here?

(laughs)

**FAY**

Why would you do that?

**HELEN AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

I don't know if we've got like an equivalent here...

**MARTYN**

I was going to say the ones that I...it wasn't the first book, horror book that I read, but the ones that sort of carried it on were the Goosebumps series...

**TAI**

Uh mm.

**FAY**

I knew someone was going to say that.

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**MARTYN**

The R L Stine books, yeah.

**TAI**

Yeah, way more...

**HELEN**

We did have Goosebumps.

**TAI**

...common here. I think I had tonnes of those, but I never found them scary, I just got them given because people were like 'oh these must be scary' and I think I needed like a...

(laughs)

**MARTYN**

Yeah.

**TAI**

Rusty Quill – EGSM 008 - Horror Books

...an older calibre of book maybe? But I do remember the first...I call it a horror book because of the subject matter, but I, and I read it when I was five and it was age appropriate. It was just that it was like a picture book with some words on each page, like simple words, but the idea was that you were following a ghost train like through like a haunted house and at the end...

**HELEN AND ANNIE**

Oooh.

**TAI**

...was you know the book opened up and it was death...

**HELEN**

Ooh!

(laughing)

**TAI**

...it was there to get you, and I was like fascinated with it and showing everybody it and like 'look!' and 'look at all these pictures of skeletons and bats' and I was the kid...

**ANNIE**

That's cool.

**TAI**

Rusty Quill – EGSM 008 - Horror Books

...that like loved creepy things all the time and then it kept, yeah kept going with other books and...there was a great series that I read when I was a teenager, the Point Horror series...

**HELEN AND FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

...they were really great. Some of those have stuck with me because they are just about being a teenager and sort of like weird things going off, like one about a cheerleader who makes a pact with a vampire to become the head cheerleader, and then notices all of her friends are really drained and...

**FAY**

Hmm.

**HELEN**

Oohh.

**TAI**

...and not acting themselves and have bite marks in their necks and all this kind of stuff. Yeah so, the vampire has been sort of killing off her friends slowly so that she can take over their lives, but there is a vivid description of like its skin being like mushrooms like...

**FAY**

Oh wow! Urgh.

**TAI**

...in, both in colour and in texture because it's so old, yeah...

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**TAI**

...I started in with the creepy books early.

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

Yeah. What about you Fay?

**FAY**

I have been trying to think about this, I think weirdly enough my folks were really into Russian and Scandinavian folk tales, and if you've ever read any of that...

(laughs)

**MARTYN**

I have.

**FAY**

...um yeah, some dark shit...

**TAI**

Scary.

**FAY**

...from really quite quickly, and I have a feeling I am significantly older than most of you so the Goosebumps and the rest of it and Point Horror were very much for people younger than me, I had already...

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...but I had already kind of got a bit too old for them by the time they started coming out...

**MARTYN**

Sure.

**FAY**

Yeah, so going from like quite dark folk lore and then the Scottish side of the family...

(laughs)

...Scottish ghost stories are a big thing, so like you know 'this castle has been haunted by this particular person who has been murdered and put in the walls' kind of thing, and then 'this other person is said to kind of glide along the

landing to tell of people coming to invade' or whatever, and you know, just that was, like, that's family upbringing and every time we used to go back to Scotland it would be another round of National Trust visits...

**MARTYN**

Mm hmm.

**FAY**

...and another, another little ghost book, True Ghost Stories of Scotland, to add to my collection, so...

**HELEN**

(laughing)

**FAY**

Yeah, so when you were saying about how it's, you know, it's an inconceivable thing, it you know, horror is something that can't happen because this was from when I was quite young. The idea that horror is something that can't happen, that took a lot longer to kick in...

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...because for me the idea that ghosts are real and that this happens was, kinda been inculcated from a bit younger I guess, so that was an interesting sort of tip over point maybe later I don't know, but um...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...yeah, so it was just that, that was how it kind of segued. So, going from true life hauntings and terrifying apparitions and all that kind of thing into, you know people writing fiction about it and classic horror fiction because you know you'd have the, I don't know not necessarily the Ladybird version of Dracula or whatever...

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

Mm.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAYA**

...but close enough, and your parents think 'oh it's a classic', you know, 'kids should be reading the classics'...

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

(laughs)

**FAY**

...so, you know reading these truncated versions of these stories, and then the local library, once you got to I think it was 13, you were able to read the adult books which I think was a wild notion...

**HELEN**

(Laughing)

**FAY**

...because we didn't have like a teen section, you either had kids books or you went straight to the adult books.

**HELEN**

Yes, that was the same with my local library too.

**FAY**

Right? So then I was graduating to Stephen King and Clive Barker and stuff like that in my early teens, but then I had already read A Clockwork Orange so I think everything else after...

**ANNIE**

Oh.

**FAY**

...that was kinda like oh alright, okay.

**HELEN**

(laughing)

**TAI**

Weirdly the same yeah, everything seems pretty tame...

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**TAI**

...by comparison to some of the stuff in that. I read that...

**FAY**

Right?!

(laughs)

**TAI**

The school library actually had A Clockwork Orange...

**FAY**

Mm hm.

**TAI**

...I think I read it when I was like 14 or something...

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

Wow!

**FAY**

(laughing)

My school library had, there was this big old... they just basically kept stuffing it with books and not paying much attention to what was there I think...

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**FAY**

...so, I managed to get hold of like really old horror, like Victorian...

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**FAY**

...and Georgian horror, so you know Mrs Gaskell and stuff like that, um, where a lot more of it is suggested. So of course when you are a kid you are not really sure what they are suggesting all the time...

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...but you know, oh goodness his name's fallen out of my head, that, the classic American horror author, ah...

**ANNIE**

Poe?

**FAY**

No no, not Poe. Oh I can't think, his name will come to me probably when we finish recording, but um...

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

Yeah.

**FAY**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Lovecraft?

**FAY**

No, and I was exposed to Lovecraft like through short story compilations way too early as well I suspect, but um, yeah er, no I can't remember the name, but the old stuff, the Victorian stuff there's a lot, like I say there's a lot more suggestion, there's a lot more, you know...the lurking horror is just kind of painted by what's not there kind of stuff, and it's all very...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

It's the turning of the screw.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

Oh, that yeah, all that kind of mmm suggestion stuff and it's yeah, it's for me that's much more, that's much more satisfying horror than straight up, you know, buckets of blood and all the rest of it...

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**FAY**

...as soon as an author has used the word 'it's horrific' or they talk about 'ooh it's eldritch' or it's...oh I don't feel spooky now because you've laid it out explicitly...

**HELEN**

(Laughing)

**ANNIE**

(chants) Show don't tell. Show don't tell.

**FAY**

Exactly, that one! Exactly that, yeah.

(laughs)

**ANNIE AND HELEN**

(laughs)

**HELEN**

I've just, um, briefly I will just mention that I have just been hit with the memory that I had a Goosebumps Bumper Slime edition...

**FAY**

(laughing) God.

**MARTYN**

Nice.

**HELEN**

And it was, and it was all of the stories about that blob thing?

**MARTYN**

Right, yeah yeah.

**ANNIE**

Oh yeah.

**TAI**

I remember that.

**HELEN**

Where the blob just eats everyone.

**TAI**

Was it the one, It Came From Under The Sink, was it that one?

**HELEN**

Something like that, I think. I remember that it was bright green...

**TAI**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

...and in the middle, it had a little plastic pocket full of goo that you could poke...

**ANNIE AND HELEN**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

Yes, I remember that, yeah.

**TAI**

Evil slime was a big thing for Goosebumps...

**HELEN**

(laughing) Yeah.

**TAI**

...I don't know why, I guess that was...maybe that's something children are often afraid of, that slime's just...

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**TAI**

...they certainly are after reading Goosebumps!

**FAY**

Or maybe the, maybe the author just had a weird phobia.

**HELEN**

I think we like looking at goo, thinking about goo...

(laughing)

**FAY AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

...and gooey substances. It's fun. Okay, so we've talked a bit about the, like the first horror books we looked at, and this might be like, this is a slightly similar

question but I'd be interested, what's the first book that actually like scared you, because that might not be the same thing, like you might have read a Goosebumps book and just been like 'oh that was fun'. And that's technically a horror but it may not have actually scared you.

**TAI**

Mm.

**HELEN**

And also, it doesn't have to be a horror book to be frightening.

**TAI**

I thought about this, I think the first book I remember scaring me was Beyond the Deepwoods by Paul Stewart which is from the...

**HELEN**

Ooh.

**TAI**

...Edge Chronicles. I don't know if anyone knows them, they're great, they're illustrated by Chris Riddell and it's about...

**FAY**

Oh wow.

**TAI**

...it's complete fantasy about a different world, you know, all different races there's sky pirates, there's, you know, there's interestingly named things that appear...it's really fascinating. It's not even ba- most of it is not even based in like regular fantasy, it's all completely original...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...but in Beyond the Deepwoods we hear about a twig who is a sort of humanoid who lives with more kind of kobold-like creatures who have raised him, but then say 'you are too big, you need to leave'. And there's a couple of bits in the book that genuinely scared me, and one of them was about Twig's ostracization from the other...from the people that he lives with. In that there's a point where they play some kind of sport together and although they've never ever discussed the rules, Twig sort of goes off the field and like picks up the ball, or he goes off and like kicks it back, and they all turn on him immediately because they know that's the rule...

**FAY**

Oh wow...

**TAI**

...and he doesn't.

**HELEN**

Oh no.

**TAI**

...and like, I can't imagine why that spoke to me as a kid...

**HELEN AND ANNIE**

Hmm.

**TAI**

...maybe there's something there...no.

(laughs)

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**TAI**

Let's not talk about that. But that was, that scared me and then in a later part he meets a friendly creature called a Banderbear, and it's a big like huge bear with big tusks but they're big softies. And the Banderbear is, doesn't make it unfortunately, but the things that get the Banderbear it's not some awful big creature. It's these little orange balls of fluff, and they just come along and like piranhas, basically, but on land...

**HELEN**

Oh.

**TAI**

...and I remember that scaring me, but I remember my dad who was reading it to me telling me that that part had scared my sister so much, she wouldn't let him finish the book.

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**HELEN**

Oh my god.

**FAY**

Wow.

**TAI**

...so yeah, it's just meant to be like this fantasy but again one with the illustrations. Chris Riddell knows how to draw some really scary things with just...

**FAY**

God, yeah.

**TAI**

...points in a black page.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

Really great.

**HELEN**

Right, any other takers for first book that actually scared you?

**MARTYN**

I've got one. It was a book called The Ghost Dog by Pete Johnson...

**HELEN**

Uh huh.

**MARTYN**

...which was, it's one of those ghost stories that starts with a ghost story in it...

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**HELEN**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

...about this dog that has died, but then it starts haunting the protagonist's dreams, and everyone who kind of told the story also starts getting haunted dreams. And it was kind of like, in a similar way to like the, oh what's the movie series? Friday, is it...Nightmare on Elm Street!

**ANNIE**

Mm.

**MARTYN**

Just like that idea of nightmares and having a shared nightmare. This was at a time when I would like, as a kid have nightmares as well so like, and them becoming real and them having like, effects in the real world. That really kind of scared me, because...my parents were always trying to tell me like 'nightmares aren't real they can't get you', and yet I am reading this book where nightmares are like affecting these people's lives...

**FAY AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

'Well, if you read this book, mother, then I think you'll find it is very real!'

**ANNIE, FAY AND HELEN**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

...so yeah, that was very scary, yeah.

**HELEN**

Wow.

**ANNIE**

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Mine would be Fellowship of the Ring.

**TAI**

(gasp)

**FAY**

Okay.

**HELEN**

Really?

**ANNIE**

The Barrow-wights.

**TAI AND FAY**

Oh yes, yes.

**ANNIE**

The Barrow-wights scared me so much...

**FAY**

Absolutely.

**ANNIE**

...because, you know, it was on one of the other earlier Lord of the Rings  
Enthusigasms and I mentioned this there.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

My dad read me The Hobbit starting when I was six and read all of the books straight through so I was done with them by the time I was eight, eight and a half, something like that. So I was probably seven having the Fellowship read to me and yeah when they were in the crypt with the Barrow-wights, and just before Tom Bombadil showed up, I think that was the first time a book ever really, really scared me.

**HELEN**

How about you Fay?

**FAY**

(sighs) I've been trying to think this whole time, and I know things must have scared me as a kid, but I can't think of any of those. I remember the first book that the book itself was something that was scary, and I just kind of had to get away from, it was probably The Shining.

**HELEN**

Oooh.

**FAY**

Like, I couldn't, it, I even, I think there's actually a trope about this probably in Friends or something like that? But I remember reading it and had to just, I just

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had to put it in the middle of my floor, so it was very visible and nowhere near me at night kind of thing, it properly got to me...

**TAI**

Yes! On Friends they put it in the freezer.

**HELEN AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**FAY**

(laughing) That's right yes. So yeah, and it was like most of these horror books they were all ones I'd borrowed from the library and I had to keep renewing it because I couldn't, I couldn't possibly give it back without finishing it but I couldn't bring myself to finish it...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...and it just, yeah, it just sat in the middle of my bedroom floor just kind of looking at me for ages. I did get it finished. You were saying about your sister not wanting to finish the story and I just kind of went no you have to, you always have to finish the scary story, you have to. You have to get that resolution.

**TAI**

I agree.

**FAY**

It's something you...yeah.

**MARTYN**

I think that's the kind of, that's one of the interesting things about horror books is that like...it's only like, while you're progressing the story you choose to keep going, like you choose to kind of like, and you have to kind of you have to get to the safe spaces in between to be like, okay right we got away from that creature that time. Now we're just...

**HELEN**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

...now we're just chilling in the living room or in the kitchen right, I can stop reading now and then we can go back and have another adventure. But like, yeah...

**FAY**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

I'd hate it in class when you'd have like dedicated reading time and you're like 'okay that's reading time done', you're like 'no, no I am still like, being chased right now, I need to...'

(laughs)

**FAY**

I'm still in, I am suspended in that reality, yeah.

**HELEN**

In which case I will say mine.

**FAY**

Mm.

**HELEN**

I have just tried to do a quick Google and I can't find what I am thinking of, but I think, I think it may have been one of The Dark is Rising books...

**FAY**

Oooh.

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...and if other people have read them, you'll have to tell me if this is actually the thing that happens, because it could have been...

**FAY**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

...any of the other weird fantasy books that I read. There's a bit where there's a boy and a girl protagonist, and they end up with some dwarves and they're down in like, underground with the dwarfs and like hanging around...

**FAY**

I, no, I think you're thinking of the Brisingamen, not The Dark is Rising.

**HELEN**

Oooh maybe. Maybe, because they go on holiday?

**FAY**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

...and like, and there's still magic in the woods there, and they meet dwarves?

**FAY**

Yeah, it's that, it's the Alan Garner books you're thinking of, rather than Susan Cooper.

**HELEN**

YES! Alan Garner, what a life saver, thank you.

**FAY AND ANNIE**

(Laughing)

**HELEN**

Yes.

**MARTYN**

Nice.

**HELEN**

...that's what I mean. They go down and they meet all these dwarves and then they have to escape because someone's coming after them, and the only way to escape is through some really narrow tunnels...

**FAY**

Yeah, yeah.

**MARTYN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

...and that was so, but like I'm claustrophobic anyway. But it was so visceral to me, reading that, and I would have been...maybe pre-teen at that point.

**FAY**

Yeah, I was nine when I read that and it was...Alan Garner doesn't hold back. All of his books...

**HELEN AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**FAY**

...people suffer and they stay scarred, it's not like those things where 'well, they went through the trauma, no PTSD here' and they were fine.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

With Alan Garner books...

**HELEN**

And death is very real in those books.

**FAY**

...oh god yeah, you mourn the people who have died, and they are not coming back, not like 'ta-da!' it's, yeah, it's very very real.

**HELEN**

I have a horrible feeling though that I only read that one book and didn't read any of the others...

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

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(laughing)

I think, because I don't remember anything else other than that one book!

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**FAY**

He also wrote The Owl Service...

**HELEN**

Ahh.

**FAY**

...if you want something that's kind of claustrophobic teen horror kind of stuff.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

Which was just, that one was odd to me because to actually read something that was, that was set in Wales with Welsh people...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...usually if something is set in Wales it's like 'a bunch of jolly English kids go off and they have, you know, tea and crumpets and these amusing Welsh people are around them' and for once it was actually from the point of view of Welsh folk, and that was quite novel, I ate that up.

**HELEN**

Gosh, yeah I forgot it was set in Wales, for some reason in my head it was Cornwall but that's The Dark is Rising books...

**MARTYN**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

...where they go to Cornwall.

**FAY**

It's, mm, The Dark is Rising, some of them are set in Cornwall and some of them are set in Wales.

**HELEN**

Yeah. Oh, well there's, there's the confusion...

(laughing)

**FAY**

(Laughing)

**HELEN**

...but on that I think we will take a break.

**HELEN**

And welcome back! We've talked about the definition of horror books, we've talked about our first forays into horror books, and now I want to hear about our favourites, because I am sure that we have many diverse favourite horror stories or books. Would anybody else like to go first because I didn't think about this question before I asked it.

**FAY, ANNIE AND HELEN**

(laughing)

**TAI**

I think I know what my favourite is and it's not necessarily the one that I've read the most often, but it's the one that I keep coming back to when I am like I want...

**FAY**

Mmm.

**TAI**

...a really good bit of, not just horror but human drama...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...and it's by a queer Canadian author called Joey Comeau, and the book is called One Bloody Thing after Another. And it's...

**HELEN**

Yes, I remember this, I remember this.

**TAI**

...yeah, and it basically follows three different stories and one of them is a teenager who can go invisible but when she does, she sees her dead mother before she died...

**HELEN**

Ooh.

**FAY**

Oof.

**TAI**

...and there's a couple of girls whose mother has started to become something not human, and they keep having to find animals and then bigger animals and then maybe actually animals won't be enough to keep her fed...

**FAY**

Oh...enough fuel...

**TAI**

...and locked in their basement and then there's an elderly man who lives with his dog and he can see ghosts, and every day he's followed by a woman and he can't hear what she's saying but she keeps trying to get him to go to a certain apartment, and their stories just intersect but you've got these two girls, their mum before she got this sickness, you know, she was just trying to get a job to support them. The teenager, her mum's not around, her dad's doing his best, and the guy he's old, he's cantankerous, he's not in touch with his daughter he just lives with...

**FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

...his dog, and so it's this, each one of them has this like horror going on around them...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...and it is scary as well, the descriptions of Jackie the character going invisible, but at the same time there's such beautiful things like...the lead up we get for her story is that she's gone to see a tree that has a specific memory attached to it, and someone's cut it down...

**HELEN**

Ooh.

**TAI**

...because it was just in their garden, it just happened to be where a childhood friend lived and yeah, it's just little things...

**HELEN**

That's so sad.

**TAI**

It is, it's really sad. It's a very sad book but, also it comes to a satisfying but unusual conclusion. Yeah, and it's scary and it's sad but it's one of those ones that kind of, in each of them there is a very relatable sort of point of personality, I think...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...that most people could find like the isolation, or being a teenager who's confused about their place in the world and so on and so forth, and yeah I just think it's really well-crafted and it's not very long and the horror is in the things that you don't know, rather than what you do...

**FAY**

Mm.

**HELEN**

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Gosh. I don't know how to follow that.

**TAI, FAY AND ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

Because that's a very, very good explanation of...

**TAI**

(Laughing)

**HELEN**

...of a horror book. I think that mine though is, it's called The Little Stranger, it's by Sarah Waters.

**FAY**

(gasps excitedly)

Oh yeah.

**TAI**

Oh yeah.

**HELEN**

Sarah Waters is the author who did all those Victorian lesbian books...

**FAY**

Mm hm.

**TAI**

Yes.

**HELEN**

...but I feel like it does a disservice to them to describe them as that, because they're all incredibly complex stories...

**FAY**

Yeah, yeah.

**HELEN**

...about a lot more than that and it's just, it's one of those things where like, they just happened to be lesbians in them. Anyway, *The Little Stranger* is another period thing that Sarah Waters wrote and it's about, it's about the fall of the aristocracy...

**FAY**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...after World War II...

**FAY**

Two.

**HELEN**

...and it's about a doctor who coincidentally is called out to this old aristocratic family to, I think it's a routine check on, oh their maid is having stomach issues, but it turns out that actually she thinks the house is haunted and she wants to be sent home.

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

(laughs)

**HELEN**

Anyway he gets to know the family and then the more time he spends there the more weird things start happening around the house, and it's very much focused on how the house is like decaying and the roof of this room is falling in, they have had to shut this up and they don't have money to heat x room or y room, and he sees it as such a shame, and basically it's um, the little stranger is what they start calling the ghost inside the house.

**FAY**

Mm.

**HELEN**

But may also be: the doctor.

**FAY**

Hm.

**HELEN**

It's really excellently done, and I could reread it over and over again, and it's all very much about...to my eye, it's about the fall of aristocracy and also about toxic male possessiveness...

**FAY**

Oh, very much so, yeah.

**HELEN**

...over, yeah. Oh! Excellent, someone else has read it!

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**HELEN**

...but it's like possessiveness not only over property but over other people, especially women. And the sense of feeling owed something, and taking it even if you don't realise that that's what you are doing? And it's, it's all very deep and very intellectual...

(laughing)

**TAI**

Yes, I've just remembered now that you're talking about it that I've watched the film. So, I need to definitely...

**HELEN**

Yes, the film is really faithful!

**TAI**

It was. I really enjoyed it, so I am definitely going to read the book now that I know it was based on a book.

**HELEN**

Yes, The Little Stranger film with Domhnall Gleeson and some...

**TAI**

Ruth Wilson.

**HELEN**

Yes. Yes, that's the one, just some really great actors and actresses in that...

**TAI**

Yes.

**HELEN**

...um, yeah that's my favourite horror book.

**ANNIE**

I sort of have two answers. I'll go with the number one first and then if we have time later I can get onto the second, it might also fit a different subject, but...

**HELEN**

Okay.

(laughs)

**ANNIE**

...this is one where I imagine a lot of people have seen the movie adaptation, and that would be Annihilation slash The Area X series by Jeff VanderMeer.

**HELEN**

Yes, yes, I've seen the film but not read the book.

**ANNIE**

Yeah so, the interesting thing about that one is that the movie, while technically based off the book and it features certain things from the story that's in the book, it's not remotely a faithful adaptation I guess you would say? Because the thing about those books and one of the things that I love about them so much, is that it's deliberately written in a way that you couldn't really sell in a movie.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

You couldn't do this book on film so they had to take elements of the story and tell a film version of it, which I also appreciate that they did instead of trying to be faithful because it would have come out quite badly, I think.

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**FAY**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

But the entire first book, so it's a three-book series, Annihilation, Authority, and Acceptance. Annihilation is a first person...it's just supposed to be the written journals of Natalie Portman's character from the movie.

**HELEN**

Mm hm.

**ANNIE**

Which means that it's all, whereas you get some of this in the movie, it is 100 per cent internal thoughts and internal, you know, impressions of scenes. It's interpreted it's not omniscient, so it's very much describing things the way that a character would rather than the way that an author would, which lends a different element of like it being unknown to...and there's all kind of fun gimmicky bits to it, like the fact that there are no names in that book. No one ever receives a name, which is I know they also kind of did in the movie. Nobody ever gets a name in the first book.

**HELEN**

Mm hm.

**ANNIE**

Nobody ever gets anything more than a title. And the protagonist even complains about this fact, goes 'this is ridiculous but whatever, this is what they want us to do', you know.

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**FAY**

Hmm.

**ANNIE**

...and I just, I remember I was reading them as they were coming out because they were all three written at the same time, but they were released a couple of months apart in the same year. All three of the books.

**HELEN**

Mm hm.

**ANNIE**

And I had them all on, once I read the first one I put the other two on pre-order, so that when they came out they would get shipped straight to me and I could just plough through them, and they're all three really, really fantastic and they tell a really lasting and sort of...I think one of the things that makes horror work for me. That puts horror stories over the top is that there is some kind of like, there's almost like a beauty to it, there's like a lasting something about it that's like...

**FAY**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...even though it's like scary and all this stuff there's like something very, it has to be very like poetic and almost romantic in that way, some part of it that sticks with you, and these books are heavy in that. There is a lot of this sense of just greater-ness than you and than what's going on and...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**ANNIE**

...it just leaves you, yeah. It's hard to stop thinking about it once you finish them, so. Those are, that's one of the two answers I would have as easily one of my favourite horror anything of all time.

**HELEN**

Excellent. Martyn, what about you?

**MARTYN**

Um, it might be a bit cheesy, but Dracula was one that really stuck with me, like really stayed with me...

**HELEN**

Oh that's not cheesy.

**TAI**

No.

**MARTYN**

...because it's just like...

**HELEN**

It's a classic!

**MARTYN**

...it's yeah, that classic and I read it a while ago but like it just really stuck with me like the way it's written in terms of just like entries in like a diary and stuff like that...

**FAY**

Yeah.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**MARTYN**

...and just the story and how, like, epic it is? And yeah, I just really enjoy that period and that setting. I always really just like settings and just hearing about just like the day-to-day things that people do...

**FAY**

Mm.

**MARTYN**

...around that...

**HELEN**

Yeah.

**MARTYN**

...around the period. So yeah, that's, that's the one that stuck with me. I remember just being young and having heard so much about it, I was just like right I am going to sit down and I'm gonna read this thing and it's dense...

**HELEN**

(laughing)

Yes it is.

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**MARTYN**

...and I remember it took a while to do, but yeah, that's the one.

**HELEN**

I think one of the things that I like about Dracula is that there's a cowboy that turns up. That's always fun!

**TAI**

Yes.

**FAY**

Yep.

(Group laughter)

**HELEN**

Fay, how about you?

**FAY**

Uh, tricky one, because a lot of, a lot of the horror that I come back to, I am going to take basically Tai's approach and go what do I keep going back to...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...whether in my head, or just going and picking the thing up again, and they tend to be things that kind of straddle genres, so they're not pure horror. Like, I'll read a pure horror book once and then I'll go okay I...it's like, a good detective novel even when you know whodunnit you want to read it again, but a bad one or a medium one you just go 'well I know the solution, I don't need to read this, there's no suspense anymore'. And most, like a lot of horror is like that, where you just go 'oh well I know the solution, I know how it works', it doesn't... the mystery is solved or whatever, but...Mm, I guess the one that I keep coming back to the most is by Clive Barker, and it's not...Clive Barker is

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well known for especially his early stuff, which was just really schlocky body horror stuff, like...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...lovingly describes horrendous things happening to, to bodies and the rest of it.

**HELEN**

(Laughing)

**FAY**

But he has this joy of transformation, and the whole idea...

**HELEN**

Mmm.

**FAY**

...of the ownership of monster-hood kind of thing is huge for him. So, a lot of his, some of his earlier- not just, you know, the latest stuff where he'd kind of worked through, he'd had to do that, but the early stuff is always this idea of becoming the monster and really kind of owning that, which is...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...I mean there's a queer writer, writing about owning your societal monsterhood, and I wonder why that kind of gelled with me so well...

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**FAY**

(laughs)

Yeah, but the one that I keep coming back to is Imajica, and it's huge. It's the physical version of it is a proper doorstep of a book, and unfortunately the Kindle version has lots of typos which, really spoils the flow when you try and go back to it but, it's not just horror and it's not just fantasy and it's not just... and it's really compellingly normal fantasy. I don't really know how to put it and...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...if you don't know what the book is, the idea is it's, it's like a, it's somewhere between an epic romance told over 200 and something years, and also

religious, and also spiritual and magical and horrific and just all of the things he really likes including transformation, including a lot of sex...

(laughs)

### **ANNIE AND HELEN**

(laughs)

### **FAY**

...and just put them all in, just put all of them in and just keep going. And it almost feels like it's several books at once and in the hands of someone who wasn't really thinking about it, it wouldn't be as syncretic as it is, but it manages to be all of those things woven in. It's him absolutely at his height as far as I'm concerned, because a part of why I love it is that the mystery isn't really solved.

### **HELEN AND ANNIE**

Mm.

### **FAY**

The deliberate, I'm trying to say this without spoiling it, it's fantasy in that there's lots of interjoined worlds and people can move between them if they have the way of knowing how to do it, but Earth is kind of like the last domain, the last dominion, which isn't easily joined. The others are kind of contiguous but Earth you have to expend a lot of energy, a lot of power to kind of breach that boundary kind of thing? And so there's all sorts of stuff about you know, generations of people keeping that mystery and you know either protecting or exploiting it. But there's also, it's just, it's really hard to explain because it is so

many things in one, and because he's a visual artist as well it absolutely brings these incredibly vividly painted images to your mind. Oh, the main character is a visual artist as well, so he just kind of...

**HELEN**

(laughs)

**FAY**

...really inserts everything in there, including himself. But it's just gorgeous and horrible and it works. But because the horror isn't properly solved and because redemption comes in really weird ways in that deliberately cyclical kind of fashion, you never get to the heart of the mystery and that's why you kind of want to go back and read it again and kind of re-engage...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...with the mystery, and some of it, you know, almost tawdry horror encircling this much richer thing.

**HELEN**

So, we're coming to time. I have one final question which is: are there any upcoming books that you're keeping an eye out or that you are interested in seeing? Or are there any books that you've read recently, that you'd like to talk about or recommend?

**TAI**

I don't think I have anything I'm waiting to come up on...

**HELEN**

Mm.

**TAI**

...but I did read a good one recently which was The Lamb will Slaughter the Lion by Margaret Killjoy.

**HELEN AND FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

Which is...our main character, I'm gonna, I'm gonna use they as I am not 100 per cent sure on the character's pronouns, but they travel to, we don't get any information on who they are or why they're travelling or where they've come from, just that they are moving around and they stop in a community, like an anarchist community, that's been built around like an abandoned town. And every night a stag made of blood comes out of the woods to seek sort of justice or retribution against somebody who a couple of members of the community have decided has wronged them, or...

**HELEN**

Ooh.

**TAI**

...has done something unacceptable. Basically, the idea is that there is a personal dispute that then two people sort of summon this creature of anger and vengeance and then can no longer control it, but don't want to? Because they're like 'well, it's only going after the people we don't like'. And it's very much a sort of yeah, leftist infighting kind of allegory there!

**HELEN**

(Laughing)

**TAI**

But it was also just a very good book and features an entirely...all the named characters are queer, most of them are trans, and I think all of them are polyamorous as well. So it's a really good book and it also just features some really nice emotional interactions between the characters as they're waiting for sunset or talking about what's led to this in the first place.

**FAY**

Oh wow.

**HELEN**

Anyone else?

**MARTYN**

I've got Jonny's book sat on my shelf...

**FAY**

Yeah, I was going to say Jonny's...

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**FAY**

Jonny's the next horror book on my list...

**HELEN**

Yeah, I've only just started reading it.

**MARTYN**

Yeah, so that's Thirteen Storeys by Jonathan Sims.

**TAI**

Available where all bo- you know, where all good book stores and Amazon, whatever.

(group laughter)

**HELEN**

He is not paying us to do this.

(laughing)

**TAI**

(laughing)

No, he's absolutely not.

**FAY**

We genuinely want to read it, yeah.

**HELEN**

No, this is not an advert, that's not what's happening here.

**TAI**

We'll cut that bit out.

**MARTYN**

I do- yeah.

(Group laughter)

I do wonder when he was recording The Magnus Archives in my flat which was on the thirteenth floor, whether he thought of that idea...

**FAY**

Oh.

**HELEN**

Oh.

**MARTYN**

I don't think he did.

**TAI**

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You'll have to check the acknowledgments and see if you're in there Martyn.  
And then personally message him if you're not.

**HELEN**

(Laughing)

**FAY**

Yeah, there might be.

**MARTYN**

That was the first place I checked when I got...  
(laughs)

**TAI AND HELEN**

(laughing)

**ANNIE**

I have an eternal recommendation that's relatively recent, and also kind of fits the category of looking forward to because I know there's a couple books in the series that I haven't got to. The Newsflesh series by Mira Grant. Now when I tell you...

**HELEN**

Oooh.

**ANNIE**

...that the pitch for this series sounds not as appealing as the series actually is, I will warn you of that upfront, but it's literally, it's a zombie apocalypse book but it's two young adults like early twenties I think they are, adopted brother and sister who are post zombie apocalypse running news blogs, because effectively internet blogging, internet decentralised news has taken over how we do news.

**FAY**

Mm hm.

**ANNIE**

Society after the zombie apocalypse has effectively carried on, the zombies are very real and very dangerous and there's places we do not go, but humanity was not wiped out by it, it was not even halved in population...

**HELEN AND FAY**

Mm.

**TAI**

Ohh.

**ANNIE**

...we didn't lose everything, we just lost certain rural areas, and everything is now very secure and things like this. They are following, they get hired to follow a presidential campaign in the United States as the official journalists for that. And there is a big kind of like government conspiracy type thing that breaks out, and it is a very, very fascinating book or series. The first one is

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called Feed, Deadline, and I don't remember what the third one's called, Blackout, maybe.

**FAY**

Oh clever, oh clever!

**ANNIE**

And then there's also Feedback and like a couple other peripheral books in it. When I tell you it is easily the most fascinating piece of zombie anything I've ever consumed, they are so so so good. Highly recommend.

**HELEN**

I really like, I like it when someone manages to make zombies interesting again.

**ANNIE**

Yes! Exactly.

**HELEN**

And Fay?

**FAY**

Um, like Martyn I'm, I'm looking forward to Jonny's book, like I think like a lot of...

**ANNIE**

(laughing)

**FAY**

...well no, like a lot of people at the moment, I have not really been engaging with much new media.

**HELEN**

Mm.

**FAY**

They, they've been finding people just haven't been reading or watching much new stuff, but I'm kind of, I'm feeling like I can do that a bit more now...

**MARTYN**

Mm.

**FAY**

...it's like 'oh look a new thing that isn't fanfic, let's go here...'

(laughing)

**MARTYN AND HELEN**

(Laughing)

**HELEN**

I would also like to say, something that I have just finished reading is an entry on the SCP Foundation...

**ANNIE**

Okay.

**TAI**

Mm.

**HELEN**

...and it's SCP five zero three one. And, um, it's a weirdly wholesome story about, it's about the potential of sentient living beings and how you can realise that if you try.

**FAY**

Okay.

**HELEN**

And like, the horror of it is partly from, you know, what the, like the description of what the creature is and partly from its containment procedures, but...

**FAY**

Oh.

**HELEN**

...it's got like a happy ending! And I would really suggest that you read it for yourself, it's heart-warming horror that one, in a weird, twisted way. And I think, that's your lot!

(laughs)

**TAI AND FAY**

(laughs)

**MARTYN**

Nice.

**HELEN**

Um, thank you listeners for coming along with us as we talk about our favourite horror books and stories and fiction. Thank you as well to all of the participants. I extremely appreciate these conversations and, um, thank you so much for coming on the show.

**TAI**

Ah, thanks for having me.

**FAY**

Thank you.

**ANNIE**

Yeah, it was a blast.

**MARTYN**

Yeah, it's sweet.

**FAY**

Oh, it's been lush.

**HELEN**

Ah! So with that, it's goodbye from me. Goodbye. And it's goodbye from them! Do you want to say goodbye everyone?

**ALL**

Goodbye!

**[Show Theme - Outro]**

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**[Show Theme – Outro Ends]**

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