

The stranger

Slightly Creepy Stories for Fall



The nights are growing chilly and the leaves are starting to turn. All of the apple and pumpkin books have been checked out at least once and soon the Halloween shelves will be bare. If you are looking for something slightly creepy to fit the season, you may have to dig a little deeper. We have two booklists to help you suss out books that will give you the shivers. Preschool and early elementary book lovers will enjoy selections from [The Not-Too-Scary Stories](#) booklist. Older readers who have a high tolerance for terror should look for the [Horror](#) display and booklist.

If you like books that are not too scary but are weird and slightly off-kilter you will love the books of author/illustrator Chris Van Allsburg. His book [The Stranger](#) is perfect for October. The mystery begins when Farmer Bailey accidentally hits a man with his truck. The stranger isn't injured, but he doesn't speak and can't seem to remember who he is or where he is from. There are some clues to his identity. He is unusually fascinated by the steam that curls off a bowl of soup, his breath is like a chilly draft, and he exhibits a deep, supernatural connection with nature. Van Allsburg's illustrations are typically as sharp and realistic as photographs. The art in this book features that characteristic clarity glowing with the warm amber tones of high autumn.

Van Allsburg was awarded the Caldecott honorable mention for his deeply strange adventure [The Garden of Abdul Gasazi](#). A boy named Alan is dog sitting a bad mannered bulldog named Fritz. During their afternoon walk, Fritz leads Alan over a bridge and through a vine-covered wall into a shadowy garden owned by a retired magician named Abdul Gasazi. When that bad Fritz runs away, Alan must face the fearsome Gasazi to apologize and ask him to help find Fritz. Too late! The magician has already turned Fritz into a duck! Or has he?

Anyone who believes in magic will love the [The Widow's Broom](#). "Witches' brooms don't last forever. They grow old, and even the best of them, one day, lose the power of flight." When a witch crashes in Minna Shaw's garden, she leaves behind her flightless broom. But it turns out that a broom that can no longer fly may still have enough magic in it to help an old widow around the house, at least until the superstitious neighbors find out. And what would a witch's broom do when threatened by two bullies?

To learn more about this award winning author, visit [Chris Van Allsburg's website](#). And remember, if you are in the mood for something mysterious or just a little bit strange, look for our booklists or ask a librarian. We are happy to help you celebrate the season.

Posted by Mary F. on October 6, 2011

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[Fiction](#)

Reviews Titles:

The stranger

The garden of Abdul Gasazi

The widow's broom
