

OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

BEST PLACES TO VISIT:

Cayuga County:

The Haunting in Finger Lakes Mall
Seward House Museum's Haunted History

Outside of Cayuga County:

The Trail of Terror
Tim's Pumpkin Patch
Fright Nights at the NYS Fairgrounds
Seneca Falls Haunted History Trail
Demon Acres Haunted House and Hayride
Grisamore Farms Hayrides



COSTUMES ON A BUDGET:

Need a quick costume idea but on a budget?
No problem, we got you... Take a look at a few of our ideas:

“Deviled” Egg: Take this little play on words and turn it into a hilarious costume!



Pac-Man and Friends: An easy way to include an entire friend group of any size.

An avocado: because who doesn't love guacamole?



But, if all else fails, you could always be a ghost...



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HORROR MOVIE RECOMMENDATIONS:

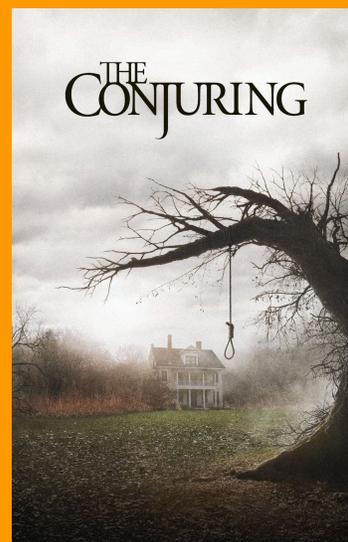
By Hailey Maloney and Rylee Sheehan

GET OUT the blankets, **CONJURE** up some snacks, and come watch a scary movie with **US**, this Halloween season.

Jordan Peele's 2017 psychological horror *Get Out* follows the story of what very well may be the worst outcome of a weekend trip to meet the parents. We recommend you to not watch this with your significant other if you haven't met their family yet. But if you're single and alone, this is the perfect movie for you!

Jordan Peele's 2019 psychological horror *Us* is probably the only movie that could make "I Got 5 On It" by Luniz a scary song. If you're in the mood to come to an existential revelation, laugh a lot, and fear anyone who looks similar to you for the next week, this is the perfect movie for you!

Micheal Chaves and James Wan's, *The Conjuring* (2013), is truly a modern day horror classic. Following a family that moves into a house with a haunting and violent past, you won't be able to look away from this paranormal classic. If you're looking for an on edge paranormal horror film that will make you second guess any noise you hear, or movement you see in your house, this movies for you!



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SCARY STORIES:

Written by Mitchell Homick and
Matthew Crouse

A Confession Long and Strange

Mr. Ei slowly smoked his cigar next to the fogged up window, squinting his eyes as he put his left hand on his lap and looked at me.

“You know, son, this day is *real* special around here,” he said, biting at his cigar.

“How so?” I asked.

Mr. Ei was a solemn man, about six-feet tall, and he had owned one of the largest properties in Cassius Falls. He had asked me two weeks prior to help out with some yard work one late-October afternoon. He would provide the dinner: chicken, greens, and a compliment of pumpkin pie.

Mr. Ei licked his teeth and inhaled. “Some years ago, some folks ‘round here went amiss. A bunch of teenagers in one group about your age, about, and a few young men. Hikers, particularly. The airhead kind, you know them Emersonians.”

I glanced out the bleak, foggy window and thought to myself the type of thoughts that you think long and hard about but mean nothing. I then looked at a picture of him and what I thought to be his wife, it must have been during their early twenties. Mr. Ei had been a macho, muscular man with great dark hair; his wife had piercingly blue eyes with even darker hair. Now, Mr. Ei was but a husk, a widowed chain-smoker.

With his cigar in hand, he glanced at me with his furled eyebrows. “Yeah, them folks went missing right about this land. Before I had bought it out, all of Cassius Falls went mad ‘tryin to figure it all out.” Mr. Ei paused to enjoy his cigar and scratch the bridge of his nose. “Mrs. Hyde said it was the work of Lucifer, she said, most certainly cause of the *things* she had heard.”

Mr. Ei laughed now. What a silly housewife, that Mrs. Hyde was.

“Right, you wouldn’t think such a thing, right?”

“Of course not,” I promptly said.

“I’ll give you my two-cents on it, young man.” Mr. Ei, at this point, smashed his cigar into a little tray on the table we were sitting at. “What goes around in these woods, really, may very well be demonic, you know? But that’s some dribble, nonsense. I figured it’d be just a man.”

Mr. Ei pressed himself against the table and got up from his chair. He tamed his wild beard that wisped down his beaten face like a damned ghost.

“Pumpkin pie?” he asked, interrupting his own story.

My stomach was about to implode, but I had to be polite. “Certainly.”

He pulled an ornately designed knife from the kitchen drawer. “Usually I use this for when I go hunting, you know, but I haven’t used it since Mrs. Ei passed. God, it’s been twenty-four years.”

I looked at the blade shimmer next to the flickering kerosene lamp.

“I’m no fool, it’s clean,” he assured. He cut the freshly purchased pumpkin pie from Oscar’s and the smell permeated the air.

“Where was I?” he asked.

“You were going on about what *happens* in *these* woods,” I informed him.

“Yes, yes, right. It’s tradition, I’ve heard, ‘round here for the loony-bins, the dejects, the outcasts of Cassius Falls, to initiate themselves in a way.” Mr. Ei began to feed on the pie. “Dig in, I don’t want you going home with no dessert.”

I ate the slimy pie with contempt. I never liked Oscar and his little general store. He was an outsider himself, with platinum white hair and black bags under his sullen eyes.

“They’re called the mountain folk, you see. Not them typical cannibal stories you hear about. They went around ‘kidnappin anybody, and the things they did, we don’t know.” Mr. Ei wiped his mouth with a tan napkin. “My meemaw, back when I was probably no older than ten, told me how the mountain folk had taken her into the woods, you see, and she remembered their darkened appearance. Like shadows, you see, they knocked her out I guess. She woke up in the middle of the woods, no sign of anything wrong.”

“What did her parents think?” I asked.

“They summed it up to the locals not liking new folks walking around their neck of the woods,

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cause you see my family had just moved from Europe and all, long ago.” Mr. Ei got out another cigar and simply began to chew on it. “Now I’m getting all tied up. What I’m ‘sayin is that these woods, them mountain folk, they will do whatever they can this time of year to get what *they* want.”

The fog at the window was as dense as stone. You couldn’t see further than an inch outside. No way was I leaving anytime soon.

“I woulda asked my meemaw more about what happened, you see. But meemaw went for the hills one day. She left my mother alone with my grandpa, and he was a brute himself, that old bastard.” Mr. Ei chewed on his cigar with his molars.

I finished eating the moist pumpkin pie. It felt like oil was seeping down my throat.

“Looks like you could use some more pie, I’ll get that for ya, young man,” he insisted. I surmised that no amount of words could change his mind.

As soon as he reached for his knife once more, a hand bashed at the fogged up window. It was pale and the fingers were skinny like needles. Mr. Ei began to laugh.

A crooked face pressed itself against the thin glass window. It had warts and began to lick at the door, revealing its crooked fangs. Its other hand pressed itself into a fist, banging at the door.

“Silly boy, coming out to the woods on this day, and you didn’t know any better, hmm?” Mr. Ei said.

I was distracted from the rabid creature as I saw the other mountain folk come out from the woods. There were men and women, and they ran towards the window.

Mr. Ei sheathed his trusted knife into his belt and walked to the door. “Anne! Meemaw!” he screamed. “Come to the door!”

Mr. Ei unlocked the door and opened it up to the mountain wilderness. “Ever since Meemaw left for the *goddam* woods, I’ve been damned to this forsaken purgatory. Every year, little man, I’ve had to lure you *fools* into my home.”

The oldest hag walked through the door, the matriarch I thought. Next to it was who I saw at the window. They both ran towards me, and Mr. Ei pinned me to the wall.

“He’s so young and beautiful!” the hag said. She opened her jaws and clattered her slobber over my face as the other mountain folk began to feast over my weakened body.

As the hag hovered over me and I looked into her deep blue eyes, she devoured my entire existence whole. I had died. I felt my soul exit my body as the mountain folk began another cycle, they had fed, they adjourned, and returned to the woods to wait for next year.

As I looked away from the framed picture, my mind began to readapt to reality.

Mr. Ei slowly smoked his cigar next to the fogged up window as he counted up the money he owed me for the yard work.

“It’s ain’t much, but it’ll do. Fifty bucks,” he said. “Happy birthday, kid. Nice work out there.”

“Thanks, Mr. Ei. See you next week?” I inquired.

“Aye, next week I’ll have you clean the attic and get some decorations out. We’ll do seventy, a Halloween deal,” he said.

“It’s a deal,” I replied, counting my money.

I walked home in the dense fog, anticipating my next visit to Mr. Ei’s house in the woods. One day, I knew, I would come up as a mystery, and the aged man would never have to pay me again.

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A Visitation to Ms. Portia

By Mitchell Homick

It was the third week of October that I had a special visit to Ms. Portia. An esteemed woman, Ms. Portia was a star in Cassius Falls. In fact, she had gone to Cornell in her youth. She had taken up English literature and its deep grooves, and after school when I had to walk past her house, I never failed to see her reading a book outside.

By the start of my high school years, Ms. Portia began to invite me over for afternoon tea each Wednesday. It was routine. She was an antique woman with crimson-magenta fingernails that always embraced a book or cup delicately.

The third week, the third visitation of October, Ms. Portia was not waiting outside for me. This was peculiar, yet I understood that as an aged woman she could not perpetually live in such a way forever. We were friends, by now. It was a cordial relationship; in a way, Ms. Portia was like a mother. She truly helped me develop promptly into womanhood, for the time.

In this manner, it was only a prompt for me to knock on the front door gently on this cold Wednesday afternoon. As I knocked, the door pushed open from my weak force. A benignly discomfiting air crept outside like any fall wind.

I knew Ms. Portia often watched the television when she wasn't reading, so I tried to listen for the sounds of a transmission of sorts. All I could hear was a querulous hum coming from behind a wall. It had to have been Ms. Portia, as I knew she had a melodic timbre. My neighbors often called her an old siren as she had such an appealing voice. She hadn't sung for ages, though, and this was only a hum. A *low*, monotonous hum.

The windows helped cast rays of light onto the interior, revealing the endless amounts of dust that suffocatingly filled the air. This was helpful considering that Ms. Portia never had any lights on. As I walked towards the hum, I walked past an opened copy of the Bible on a table opened up to Revelations. I looked down to try and read it, but the darkness prevailed.

Tap, tap, tap. Whatever was humming began to press upon a hard surface. *Tap, tap.* I approached the supposed room, the only thing separating me between who I hoped was Ms. Portia was a thin wooden door.

I hesitated, contemplating my decisions to interlope inside this poor woman's house. I knew her too well to *not* care.

Swiftly, I pushed open the door, revealing a void of darkness. "Ms. Portia, it's Clarisse," I said in delirious abandonment. "I am worried about you."

I stepped just a little further into the void ahead of me and the door slammed shut. Someone had bluntly closed the door.

My eyes slowly adapted to the darkness as they tuned like an old instrument. There she was, the silhouette of an old woman lost in thought. She was sitting down, legs crossed, with her fingers gently twitching around. Her hum stopped at last as her voice began a subtle incantation.

I could not understand what she was saying. My heart was pounding and my brain was practically throbbing in my skull. Then, I could finally make out what she was saying.

"Sit, my love," she said in a voice of ruination. "I must admit I am more than you know."

My respect for Ms. Portia was quickly dwindling, yet I still felt obligated to follow her command.

"When I first arrived in America in 1626, I made a grievous mistake," she said. "The occult, it had found me."

I looked directly at her in the darkness. I felt lost in the whites of her eyes which consumed my soul repeatedly as she spoke.

"Women like you and me aren't made for this, this *life*. You can only go so long, Clarisse, until they *know* and that's when you are pushed to start anew," she added, moving her deteriorating body. "You cannot push it off forever, my love. You are young and fruitful, it's only a matter of time until you are going to be extorted and brutally juiced for what you are good for."

The veil of naivety, the serpent that coiled itself around my eyes, prevented me from listening to what Ms. Portia had to say.

"When I had to move to Cassius Falls when I was 322 years old, it was a difficult matter. I wanted

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to hide who I truly was, I wanted to shove it into a small cottage. All I have had to do in this life is *read, read, read*, to waste my *life* away day and night, for weeks and months, for years and decades, simply because of the forsaken nature of my body.”

Her haggard expression entranced me.

“You, Clarisse, instilled meaning and discovery. To find another kindred spirit, one of myself, was perhaps the most fond moment in my entire existence. Clarisse, join me in the occult forever. You need to accept it now or face the repercussions 200 years from now.”

I finally had to intercede. “What could you possibly mean!”

“Clarisse, *my child*, you are not a human. You are a witch. You must accept this fact, whether you have come to understand it or not. There will be a time before your maturity in which you understand it in truth.”

“I’m sorry Ms. Portia, I simply don’t agree—”

“You will *never* understand!” Ms. Portia screamed. My body curdled as her bony hands dug into my arms.

I tried to break free from the witch, but her crimson nails dug into my skin with forceful intent/

“Repeat after me!” she said.

I refused and tried to break away.

“Heavenly father, fallen I am, please forgive me now,” she recited. “Say it!”

“No!” I tore away my arms as her nails released a grueling scratch and tried to open the door. She lunged towards me and quickly stood up from her seance.

The door swiftly opened.

Two disgusting men stood right in front of me, and as I turned back, it was not Ms. Portia. It was a raggedy woman. The men wore black ski masks over their faces and the woman looked homeless.

I could still hear the querulous drone from the room; deep in the corner of that darkened room, I could still see a figure. The humming persisted, but I failed to pay attention as I had flown out of the house. The men were scrawnier than I was and were practically just bones.

As I ran faster than my body could physically allow, I screamed for help and then Mrs.

Whitefield came outside. She promptly called the police.

I continued to run home as my hair followed in wisps of terror. Tears had flooded my makeup as the Clarisse I had once known had been fragmented. I was broken.

The police had released a statement to the press. A doomsday cult of three had invaded Ms. Portia’s house looking to enlighten her on the ways of witchcraft and esoteric life. They left her unharmed.

As I sipped my afternoon tea on the fourth Wednesday of October with Ms. Portia, we both read this statement.

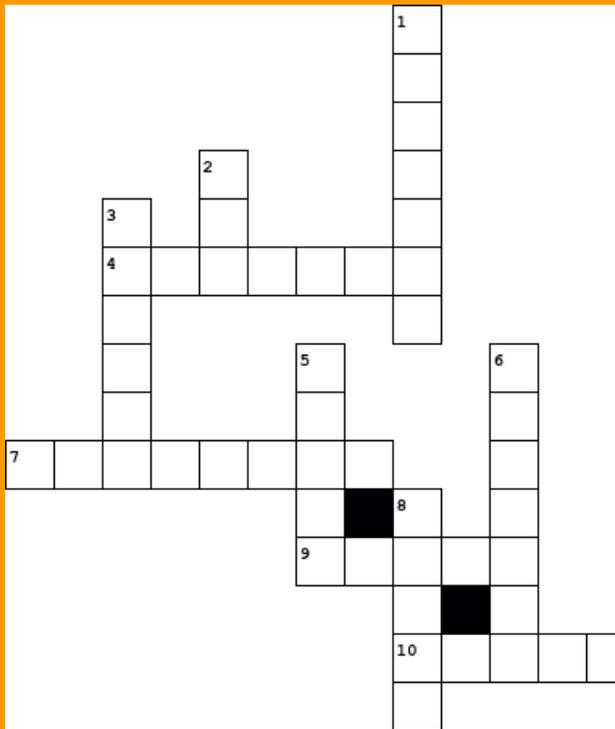
“It’s a miracle, isn’t it,” Ms. Portia said. She looked less aged than I had remembered.

“It truly is,” I said.

As the afternoon wended down and we finished our tea session, Ms. Portia took out her newest book, *Tomes and Spells of the Occult*. I glanced at the title and felt an emptiness in my stomach. However, I tried to fill this chasm.

“Seems like an interesting read,” I said. “Do you mind if I borrow it when you finish reading it?”

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TAKE THIS HALLOWEEN POLL!



HALLOWEEN CROSSWORD:

Across

4. Halloween is on _____ 31st.
7. Boney figure.
9. _____ or Treat.
10. Sweet food that you collect on Halloween.

Down

1. Eternal being who drinks blood.
2. A black _____ gives you bad luck.
3. Corpse that eats brains.
5. Entity that says boo!
6. Orange gourd that you carve.
8. Lady that rides on a broom.