

A Choose to Read Ohio Toolkit

Use this toolkit to plan book discussions, library programs, or classroom activities.

Meet Ohio author Laura Bickle and enter a world of faith and fear.

Select from a range of discussion questions and extension activities to deepen the experience of reading ***The Hallowed Ones***.

Discover websites and companion books to explore topics and themes in depth.

The Hallowed Ones

By Laura Bickle



About the Book

Katie is on the verge of her Rumspringa, the time in Amish life when teenagers are free to experience non-Amish culture before officially joining the church. But before Rumspringa arrives, Katie's safe world starts to crumble. It begins with a fiery helicopter crash in the cornfields, followed by rumors of massive unrest and the disappearance of huge numbers of people all over the world. Something is out there...and it is making a killing.

Unsure why they haven't yet been attacked, the Amish Elders make a decree: no one goes outside their community, and no one is allowed in. But when Katie finds a gravely injured young man lying just outside the boundary of their land, she can't leave him to die. She refuses to submit to the Elders' rule and secretly brings the stranger into her community—but what else is she bringing in with him?



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Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2012, ISBN 9780547859262.
Ages 12 and up.

<http://www.hmhco.com/shop/books/The-Hallowed-Ones/9780547859262>

Available as an ebook through the Ohio Digital Library:

<http://ohdbks.lib.overdrive.com>

Continuing Katie's terrifying story, ***The Outside*** was released in September 2013 as a companion to ***The Hallowed Ones***.

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2013, ISBN-9780544000131.

<http://www.hmhco.com/shop/books/The-Outside/9780544000131>

"This is a book to make you fear the shadows"

—Lauren DeStefano



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About the Author

Laura Bickle is the author of *The Hallowed Ones* and *The Outside*. Her professional background is in criminal justice and library science. When she's not patrolling the stacks at the public library, she's dreaming up stories about the monsters under the stairs, and writing contemporary fantasy novels under the name Alayna Williams. Laura lives in Ohio with her husband and five mostly-reformed feral cats.

Author Resources

Laura Bickle's Official Website

<http://www.laurabickle.com/>

Author page on Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company website

<http://www.hmhco.com/bookstore/authors/Laura-Bickle/10735376>

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Go Further

*Ideas for extending the experience of reading **The Hallowed Ones**.*

**“Now... we
have forgotten.
Become
complacent.
People saw no
Darkness and
no need to
teach the
means to
stop it...Now
it festers.”**

Did you know that the largest Amish community in the world is centered in Holmes County, Ohio? Touring “Amish Country” is a popular activity for many Ohioans. Even if you're not able to visit an Amish community, researching the customs and lifestyle of the Amish can still be rewarding. Study life in Amish communities, either in-person, or using online resources available to students through INFOhio (<http://www.infohio.org/>) and to all Ohio residents through Ohio Web Library (<http://www.ohioweblibrary.org/>). Are all Amish communities the same? If not, what are some differences? How do real Amish communities compare with the community described in *The Hallowed Ones* (apart from the absence or presence of vampires?)

(SL.9-12.1; W.9-12.7; Social Studies: High School – Contemporary World Issues– Civic Participation and Skills; Social Studies: High School – American Government – Ohio's State and Local Governments)

In *The Hallowed Ones*, the Hexenmeister is often shown as a painter, a potentially messy one: disheveled, odd, with flecks of paint even on his nicer clothes. Initially, Katie is taken aback by Alex's description of the Hexenmeister as a “wizard,” but she quickly sees that the description may be a good fit. For all his apparent haphazardness, it's clear that the Hexenmeister works in symbols and special signs, where every stroke and color has some special meaning– and purpose.

Choose a mythology, spirituality, or religion. Research the meanings of various symbols within that tradition (for example, the Ankh in Ancient Egypt, the Cross in Christianity, the Dharmachakra in Buddhism). How did the symbols come to have their meanings? Do they have more than one meaning? Could they be useful against the vampires found in *The Hallowed Ones*?

Are there any signs or symbols that have importance in your life? Are they common symbols many people would recognize, or are they significant mainly to you? *(SL.9-12.1; W.9-12.7; Visual Arts: High School—3PE)*

Talk About It

Topics to share when discussing **The Hallowed Ones** with teens.

Educators: Every CTRO book may be used to support Ohio's New Learning Standards (Common Core) English Language Arts reading, writing, and speaking and listening standards. Examples are listed below; other standards also apply. **The Hallowed Ones** may also support Social Studies standards (including Contemporary World Issues: Civic Participation and Skills).

Librarians, parents, and others: These discussion questions are also for library programs, family activities, and other projects. Learning Standards define what students should know and be able to do at each grade. They are included for teachers who want to use this book in school. For more information, see the Ohio Dept. of Education website, <http://education.ohio.gov>. Click on "Ohio's New Learning Standards" in the Teacher Resources section.

Katie nearly dies in her pursuit of a Coke. Why is "the syrupy taste of this small rebellion" (p. 110) so important to her? (RL.9-12.1)

The apocalyptic events in the novel force the characters to step outside their comfort zones. Who handles these uncomfortable situations best? How do they cope? Who doesn't adjust well? Why not? What about situations involving gory violence, such as the carnage at the Hersberger house? What enables some characters to cope, and not others? (RL.9-12.3; SL.9-12.1)

In a few instances, Katie is surprised to hear how her parents explored life during their Rumspringa, because her parents seem very traditional and reserved now. Is that a fair characterization? Are Katie's parents totally obedient and unquestioning as adults? (RL.9-12.3)

What are some reasons Amish teenagers would choose to stay in the community and get baptized, and what are some reasons they would choose to become English? How do these align with some of Katie's thoughts on her own baptism? What about Elijah and his baptism? (RL.9-12.1; RL.9-12.3)

Which character changes the most over the course of the story? (RL.9-12.1; RL.9-12.3)

Why won't the Bishop and the Elders acknowledge the unusual and unsettling nature of the events within the community? What might they have to gain from insisting that nothing similar to what's happened Outside can happen in the community? (RL.9-12.1; RL.9-12.3)

Katie steps out one night, and finds the ravens, normally solitary and non-migratory, flocking and leaving the area. At a glance, the event doesn't seem to drive the plot of the novel. What is the significance of the ravens flocking and leaving? Why do you think the author decided to include this event? (RL.9-12.5)

Compare and contrast Katie's romantic relationship with Elijah with her romantic relationship with Alex. What drew her to each? How are her feelings for Alex different? (RL.9-12.3; SL.9-12.1)

Alex calls the Hexenmeister "anthropologically bizarre" (p. 223). What does he mean? Why wouldn't an anthropologist expect to see someone like Herr Stoltz in a community like Katie's? (RL.9-12.1; SL.9-12.1)

Go Further (continued)

After learning about life in Amish communities, reflect on what it would be like to live as the Amish do for a day or week. In what ways would you have to adjust your current lifestyle, habits, and expectations to adapt to Amish ways? What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of Amish practices on the individual, the community, the larger economy, and the environment?

Try to go for a day without using conveniences, such as cars and electricity, that the Amish avoid. Share the experience afterward: What surprised you? What was easier or more difficult than you expected? How did you spend your time?

As a class, family, or group, research Amish food customs and recipes, then plan, prepare, and share an Amish-style meal.

(SL.9-12.1; Social Studies: High School—Contemporary World Issues: Sustainability)

Check It Out

Companion books for *The Hallowed Ones*.

Anna Dressed in Blood by Kendare Blake. Ages 12-18. ISBN 9780765328670.

Not everyone can be a ghost-killer, but after his father's mysterious death, Cas Lowood took up the family business of putting restless spirits to rest. It's amazing how even this profession can start to feel routine—until Cas comes up against Anna Korlov, better known as Anna Dressed in Blood. Wearing the dress she was murdered in, Anna has killed everyone foolish enough to enter her domain—except Cas. Part of the *Anna Dressed in Blood* series.

Angelfall by Susan Ee. Ages 14-up. ISBN 9780761463276.

The humans have killed the Archangel Gabriel, and the angels furiously descend onto humanity. Six weeks into the brutal angelic apocalypse, Penryn's world falls further apart when a band of warrior angels kidnap her wheelchair-bound sister Paige. Penryn makes a deal with wounded enemy angel Raffae in the hopes of saving her sister. Part of the *Penryn & the End of Days* series.

Alienated by Ohio author Melissa Landers. Ages 12-18. ISBN 9781423185253.

Cara Sweeny has been selected to host the most foreign exchange student ever. Aelyx, her L'eihr houseguest, is literally out-of-this-world good looking, thanks in part to humans and the alien L'eihr race having nearly identical DNA. But cultures couldn't be more different, and there's no shortage of xenophobia on both sides. As secrets come to light, it's soon apparent that intolerance is far from the only problem the colliding worlds have to face. Part of the *Alienated* series.

The Diviners by Libba Bray. Ages 14-17. ISBN 9780316126106.

Evie O'Neill is thrilled to leave small-town Ohio for the bustle of NYC in the Roaring Twenties. Though her secret supernatural talent fits with her occult-obsessed uncle Will, things take a dark turn when Will is called to consult on a series of brutal ritualistic murders. Prohibition can't stop the blood from flowing in this supernatural thriller.

Explore More

Additional ideas and resources to use with *The Hallowed Ones*.

PBS: The Amish

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/films/amish/>

PBS presents an intimate portrait of contemporary Amish faith and life. What does the future hold for a community whose existence is so rooted in the past?

A discussion guide for *The Amish* is available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/teachers-resources/amish-guide/>.

Smithsonian Magazine: The Great New England Vampire Panic

<http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/the-great-new-england-vampire-panic>

The story of Mercy "Lena" Brown, one of the last – and best publicized – cases of a vampire exhumation in 19th-century New England. A clipping describing the Lena Brown exhumation event was found among the papers of Bram Stoker.

WHO: Tuberculosis

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs104/en/>

Lena, like many suspected vampires, died of "consumption", as tuberculosis was then known. The World Health Organization provides a high-level review of TB symptoms, risks, and the current status of the fight against the deadly disease.

Choose to Read Ohio, a project of the State Library of Ohio, the Ohioana Library Association, and the Ohio Center for the Book, encourages public libraries, schools, families, and others to build a community of readers and an appreciation of Ohio authors and literature. CTRO is adaptable for use in classrooms, libraries, bookstores, by book discussion groups, families, and other community groups.

Explore Choose to Read Ohio resources & toolkits: <http://library.ohio.gov/ctro>.

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STATE  LIBRARY OF OHIO

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