



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Hereford and Parkville middle School students earn second, third places in county library's short horror story contest**

Towson, MD – Baltimore County Public Schools' students earned second and third places in the Under 21 category of the Baltimore County Public Library's Tales of the Dead Short Horror Story Contest.

The BCPS student winners are:

- Ella Dengler, a Grade 8 student at Hereford Middle School, who won second place for "Estranged," about a young woman seeking refuge from a storm at an abandoned, possibly haunted rest stop.
- Maaz Ijaz, a Grade 8 student at Parkville Middle School, who took third place for "Whispers of the Netherrealm: The Haunting of Ravenshade Mansion," which recounts a young man's exploration of a haunted mansion.

Baltimore County Public Library challenged writers of all ages to write original horror stories with a "Petrifying Poe" theme. First, second, and third place winners in the Over 21 and Under 21 categories were selected by a panel of judges including local civic leaders, librarians, and published authors. Criteria for judging included originality, fear factor, quality of writing, and incorporation of the theme.

Dengler and Ijaz will read their stories at a private reception on Friday, October 6, at the library's Reisterstown Branch. The young winners also receive a prize package including a certificate and gift card.

The Tales of the Dead Short Horror Story Contest started in 2016, inspired by the 1816 ghost story challenge that led to the creation of Frankenstein's monster and the first modern vampire story. The contest is held in conjunction with A Toast Among Ghosts, the Foundation for Baltimore County Public Library's annual Poe-themed outdoor festival. The winning stories

will be published on the [Foundation's website](#) later this month.

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