Finished binging Netflix's Stranger Things? Pick up these 12 books next

Netflix's *Stranger Things* has captivated audiences with its sense of nostalgia, drawing from the works of Steven Spielberg, John Carpenter, and Stephen King. With the first season out and finished, we've been itching for our next hit of horror fiction that we can obsess over.

Books were a major influence for the show's creators, brothers Matt and Ross Duffer, who have spoken at length about what has influenced their show. Authors like Stephen King were a formative influence on each brother, who worked to weave the style of horror fiction for which King was known for into their show.

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Now that the most recent season is over, there are plenty of other authors and novels out there that can help fill that void. In the last year, Del Rey published a pair of official tie-in novels, *Suspicious Minds*, by Gwenda Bond, which delves into MKUltra and explores the story behind Eleven's mother; and *Darkness on the Edge of Town*, by Adam Christopher, which is about Chief Hopper's time as in the NYPD and service during the Vietnam War. There's also a YA novel by Brenna Yovanoff called *Runaway Max*, about Max Mayfield's past, and a pair of graphic novels, *The Other Side*, and *SIX* (which is due out later this year), written by Jody Houser. The stories help expand the story beyond the TV show.

If you're looking for some additional reads in the vein of *Stranger Things*, here are some additional suggestions.

***Broken Monsters*, Lauren Beukes**

Broken Monsters by Lauren Beaukes is a book that sprang to mind while we were watching *Stranger Things:* it matches the atmosphere and weirdness of the television show. Set in Detroit, a police detective comes across a body of a boy and a deer, fused together. The people of the city cope in their own ways: Detective Versado's daughter talks with a predator online; a journalist goes to extreme lengths for a horrifying story and a homeless man tries to keep his city safe from a violent monster that's trying to change the world.

***Something Wicked This Way Comes*, Ray Bradbury**

Almost anything of Ray Bradbury's is a perfect fit. His works are deeply seeped in mid-Western Americana, and his 1962 novel *Something Wicked This Way Comes* is a great read after you finish the show. In this book, Cooger & Dark's Pandemonium Shadow Show arrives in Green Town. It's a mysterious and sinister event, one that will change the lives of two friends who are drawn in by the lights and mirrors.

***The Boys of Summer*, by Richard Cox**

Set in 1983, Richard Cox's novel *The Boys of Summer* captures the nostalgia that was present in the show: a group of boys bonding during a summer in a fantastic coming-of-age story. Nine-year-old Todd had been in a coma after a tornado tore through his Texas down, and when he woke up, the world feels slightly different. A quarter of a century later, the group reunites and tries to come to terms with that summer that had changed the world.

***The Ocean at the End of the Lane*, Neil Gaiman**

This short novel is a strange, quiet fantasy that deals with a

being from another world coming into our own, with a young boy using his wits and help from friends to help fend it off. The story opens with an unnamed narrator returning home for a funeral, where he recalls a strange neighbor that he encountered in the 1970s as a young boy. A tenant at his house had stolen a car and committed suicide, which allowed a supernatural presence to enter our world. This being inserts itself into his world and his life, and a struggle ensures to save himself and our world.

***It*, Stephen King**

To be fair, there's a ton of Stephen King's books that could be included in this list: *The Body*, *Salem's Lot*, and so on. The Duffer Brothers noted in particular that *It* is one of the more formative novels in their childhood, and they've certainly worked some references to King into their series. A group of teenagers came across a monster, and 28 years later, they're called back to deal with it once and for all.

***We Have Always Lived in the Castle*, Shirley Jackson**

Shirley Jackson is the queen of American small-town horror, and her final novel *We Have Always Lived in the Castle,* looks at a horrifying crime that occurred in such a town. *Stranger Things* certainly looked at the workings of a relatively close community, and deals with a certain amount of isolation that Jackson's works play with.

***A Wrinkle in Time*, Madeleine L'Engle**

One of the neat elements about *Stranger Things* was how it dealt with space and time, something that Madeleine L'Engle did excellently with her novel *A Wrinkle in Time*. In it, Meg Murry's father is kidnapped and taken away to another world, and she, her gifted brother and friend Calvin set off on an adventure in space and time to try and bring him back home. The story of a family and friends trying to recover a lost one from somewhere far beyond their reach should be immediately

familiar to any fans of the show.

***Signal to Noise*, Silvia Moreno-Garcia**

Three teenagers, Meche, Sebastian, and Daniela, come together in Mexico City in the late 1980s and learn how to use magic to cast spells. They're working to navigate the complicated web of high school and family. When Meche comes back in 2009 after her father dies, she comes face to face with the friends she had left behind, and comes to terms with the decisions that led to their falling out when they were children. *Signal to Noise* deals with the mystery of power during the turbulent years of teenagers, something the show did pretty well.

***Rooms*, Lauren Oliver**

Richard Walker dies and leaves behind a huge house of rooms packed with memories of his life. *Rooms* is a book that feels very close to the mood that *Stranger Things* went for: dark, mysterious, and unexplainable happenings in small town America. When his ex-wife and estranged children come to the home to pack it up, they're not alone: a pair of ghosts watch as they go through the remains of their former lives. When a new ghost joins the house and begins talking to Trenton, Walker's teenage son, it sets off a chain of events that has everyone examining their pasts and everything that brought them to the present.

***The Hobbit*, J.R.R. Tolkien**

We have to include J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* on this list. Any teenage boy playing *D&D* in the '80s would have read the book, and indeed, the boys in the show referenced Tolkien on more than one occasion. There's something to be said for the epic adventure that Tolkien's debut novel provides, especially because it's clearly part of the show's DNA.

***Disappearance at Devil's Rock*, Paul Tremblay**

The premise of Paul Tremblay’s latest novel should be familiar to anyone who’s watched *Stranger Things*: teenager Tommy Sanderson vanishes under mysterious circumstances. His mother Elizabeth is frantic with worry, especially when messages from her boy begin appearing in her house. As she and the police look for him, they learn more about her son and his friends, who had been hanging out at a place called Devil’s Rock, deep in the forest.

***Annihilation*, Jeff Vandermeer**

When you’re talking about strange things from beyond our comprehension and a secret government program that’s investigating them, look no further than Jeff Vandermeer’s *Southern Reach* trilogy. *Annihilation* is about a team of women that enter Area X to try and record their observations of a mysteriously cut-off region of the country. It’s a spooky and quietly horrifying novel, one that deals with terrors from other worlds breaking into our own for unknown reasons.

https://www.theverge.com/2016/8/4/12337722/stranger-things-reading-list-stephen-king-the-hobbit-neil-gaiman