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Scary Tales #1: Home Sweet Horror

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Book Review

Title: Scary Tales #1: Home Sweet Horror
Author: James Preller
Illustrator: Iacopo Bruno
Reviewer: Cynthia Frazier
Publisher: R. R. Donnelley & Sons Company
Publication Year: 2013
ISBN: 9781250018878
Number of Pages: 97
Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate
Rating: Rating: Excellent



Review

Mr. Finn and his two children Liam and Kelly, and their dog Doolin have moved to upstate New York to start a new job. The family, still suffering the effects of the death of their wife and mother eighteen months before, has purchased an old house; a fixer-upper. The dilapidated house is full of weird creaks and groans, but that doesn't explain the screams, doors slamming shut by themselves, lights turning off and on, and words that appear on mirrors. No workmen will come to help Mr. Finn work on the house because it is haunted by the ghost of the previous owner. When Kelly's friend comes to visit and the kids play a game called 'Bloody Mary' things really start to get scary.

As a child, James Preller, created his own hand drawn comic book stories and sold them around the neighborhood to family and friends. Years later he is a prolific author of books for children that have sold millions of copies. His Scary Tales series was inspired by Twilight Zone reruns on TV. His first Scary Tale, Home Sweet Horror, won the 2013 Cybil Award in the Early Chapter Book category. Scary, but not too scary for grade school readers, the book is short, chapters are only a few pages long, and type is large and easily read. On top of good characterization and a fast moving, deliciously shivery plot are the wood-cut-like black and white drawings by Iacopo Bruno. A talented Italian graphic artist and illustrator, Bruno's detailed pictures appear every few pages and add greatly to the spooky atmosphere engendered by the story. Preller has written five other Scary Tales books.