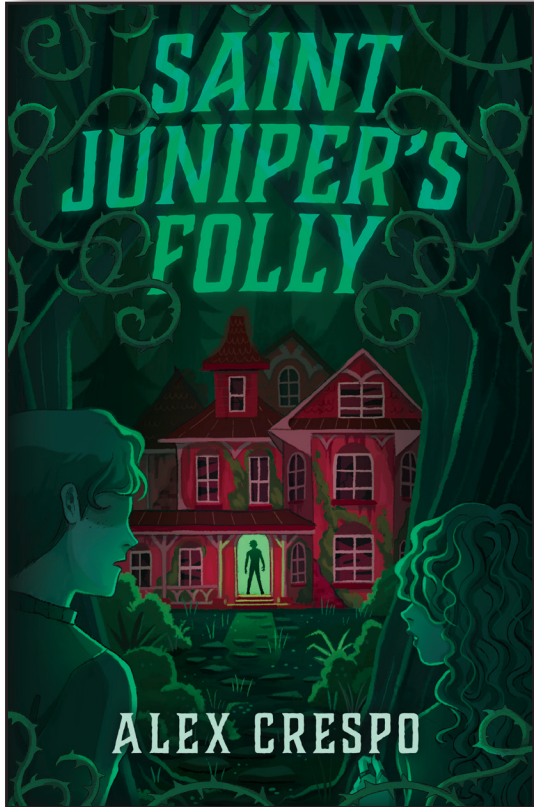


READING GROUP  
GUIDE



*Saint Juniper's Folly*  
by Alex Crespo

**ABOUT THE BOOK**

*Cemetery Boys* meets *The Haunting of Bly Manor* in this spellbinding debut!

For Jaime, returning to the Vermont town of Saint Juniper means returning to a past he's spent eight years trying to forget. But every gossip in town already knows his business, and with reminders of his past everywhere, he seeks out solitude in the nearby woods—Saint Juniper's Folly—and does not return. For Theo, Saint Juniper means being stuck. He knows there's more out there, but he's scared to go find it. That is, until he wanders into the Folly and stumbles on a haunted house with an acerbic yet handsome boy trapped—as in physically trapped—inside. For Taylor, Saint Juniper is a mystery. Then a wide-eyed teenager barges into her life, rambling about a haunted house and a trapped boy. He needs a witch. The Folly and its ghosts will draw these three teenagers together. But can they each face their demons to forge a bond strong enough to escape the Folly's shadows?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- Discuss the elements of horror, mystery, and realism in this novel. To which genre do you think this novel belongs?
- Horror fiction is written to scare, shock, or even repulse the reader. What do you think the scariest scenes in the novel are? What parts do you think are repulsive? Identify the elements of shock.
- What is the central theme of this novel? Identify the minor themes. When is the conflict established? What is the connection between the themes and the conflict? How is the conflict resolved?
- Describe Saint Juniper. Explain what Jaime means by, "The second I stepped foot onto Saint Juniper soil, I knew I was screwed" (p. 2). What goes wrong for Jaime? What is Saint Juniper's Folly? Discuss how the setting of the book contributes to the eeriness of the plot.
- Suspense, fear, violence, gore, and the supernatural are five essential elements in horror fiction. Describe the violence and gore in the novel. How does the violence evoke fear?
- Taylor says she grew up "smack-dab in the middle of magic" (p. 8). Why does Taylor's father try to protect her from the magic that consumed her mother's life? How does Taylor engage in magic despite her father's demands?
- Jaime, Taylor, and Theo all suffer from a degree of paranoia. Which character is the most paranoid? What is the basis for this paranoia?
- Explain why Jaime doesn't trust many people. At what point does he begin to trust Theo and Taylor? How is trusting them key to his survival? Trace the friendship that develops between Jaime, Theo, and Taylor.

HC: 9781682635773 · e-book: 9781682635780

- How does Jaime arrive at Blackwood Estate? Discuss how Taylor and Theo discover the house. What is Taylor's family connection to Blackwood?
- Why does Elias finally tell Taylor the story of the house? What does she learn about her mother?
- Explain what Alice means when she says, "Blackwood was meant to be a safe haven, but all it's ever been is a death sentence" (p. 279). Explain why Elias calls the sheriff to demolish the house.
- Discuss the secrets that Taylor's mom left behind and how Elias conceals the secrets. Describe Taylor's determination to uncover her mother's secret. How is she encouraged by Jaime and Theo?
- Why is Taylor so interested in her mother's grimoire? Explain why Elias has it hidden.
- Define blood magic. What is the blood magic in Taylor's mom's grimoire? When does Taylor learn her mother's biggest secret? How does uncovering this information change her relationship with Elias?
- Theo is attracted to Jaime. When is it clear that Jaime is interested in Theo? Explain why Theo wants to know when Jaime knew he liked guys. When does Taylor realize that Jaime and Theo are a couple? How does Theo think his parents will react to his romance with Jaime?

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo Credit: Micki Harris

Born and raised by the Great Lakes, **Alex Crespo** writes about queer love, magic, and all the ways they intersect. When not writing, you can find him making art or daydreaming about Mothman. He currently lives in Chicago with an endless anime watchlist and his black cat Hex. *Saint Juniper's Folly* is his debut novel. Find him on Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok @byalexcespo.