



Dark Delicacies

Del Howison (Editor/Contributor) , Richard Matheson (Contributor) , Ray Bradbury (Contributor) , Lisa Morton (Contributor) , Whitley Strieber (Contributor) , Robert Steven Rhine (Contributor) , D. Lynn Smith (Contributor) , F. Paul Wilson (Contributor) , more... Roberta Lannes (Contributor) , Brian Lumley (Contributor) , Nancy Holder (Contributor) , John Farris (Contributor) , Chelsea Quinn Yarbro (Contributor) , Ramsey Campbell (Contributor) , Gahan Wilson (Contributor) , William F. Nolan (Contributor) , David J. Schow (Contributor) , Steve Niles (Contributor) , Richard Laymon (Contributor) , Clive Barker (Contributor) , Rick Pickman (Contributor) , Geff Gelb (Editor) ...less

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In a truly distinguished collection of twenty superb, sublimely dark tales written especially for this volume, such acknowledged contemporary masters of horror fiction as Clive Barker, Ray Bradbury, Ramsey Campbell, Nancy Holder, Richard Laymon, Brian Lumley, Joe Lansdale, Whitley Streiber, F. Paul Wilson, and Chelsea Quinn Yarbro serve up a veritable feast of fear. For the first time ever, Dark Delicacies, the world's foremost horror bookstore, lends its famous name and imprimatur to an anthology designed to please the palate of the genre's most discriminating fans. Throughout, the editors—Del Howison (co-owner of Dark Delicacies) and leading horror anthologist Jeff Gelb—present perfectly crafted, freshly original horror-fiction fare that is as terrifying as it is chillingly delicious.

Dark Delicacies Details

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From Reader Review Dark Delicacies for online ebook

Salsabil H. says

When I was a thrill-seeking, horror fan way back in middle school, I was searching for some horror collection in the library and found this book. It seemed like the perfect thing I was looking for, a book with many short stories that actually bring out the vivid depths of horror unlike an attempt at a shot at "Look at this, it's scary." Not all of the stories gave me goosebumps, which is something that's quite hard to master, so I applaud the authors who tried. Tales about illusions, unexpected visitors and innocence are some of the subjects.

I don't quite remember the book to recall what each story is about, but I do know that there will be at least one that most of you horror-fans out there can enjoy. If you want to seek some thrill or scare somebody or just test how many goosebumps you can get, this book is quite alright for that. Most of all, it will make a great collection.

Marie Robinson says

My favorite stories were, "The Reincarnate" by Ray Bradbury, "The Announcement" by Ramsey Campbell, "Haeckle's Tale" by Clive Barker, and "The Pyre and Others" by David J. Show, an author I had not previously heard of!

Aaron says

Uneven collection to say the least. If not for a handful of exceptional tales this would be a complete waste. As it is I'll list the few worth reading so any daring adventurers can safely skip around without fear of encountering dreadful writing, of which this tome possesses much. (dreadful writing like that last sentence, only worse)

"Black Mill Cove" by Lisa Morton. Fun little romp through some well-trod turf, but enjoyable enough.

"Part of the Game" by F. Paul Wilson. Interesting concept, entertaining setup, middling execution. Still readable.

"The Outermost Borough" by Gahan Wilson. Evocative, odd, closer to 'dark fantastique' than actual horror, but the story stuck. Yay.

"The Pyre and Others" by David Schow. Easily the best story here, both for prose and plot. Schow has risen far from his splatterpunk days, creating The Crow and other gothy revenge stories. This is literate and insightful horror, and one of the better stories I've come across in awhile.

"The Diving Girl" by Richard Laymon. Another reasonably worthy entry. The dark undercurrent of sexuality keeps the tension simmering, and the clarity of language is welcome after so much of the poor word choices throughout the rest of the book. (EDIT: revisiting this review in 2017, having now experienced several more

of Laymon's stories, like "Mess Hall", it's almost hilarious that I was complimenting Laymon's writing. I have to wonder if my tastes have changed that much in the intervening years, or if the stories surrounding this one were just that bad. Unsurprisingly I've purged all memories of the really bad stories in this book, besides the Pickman monstrosity discussed below.)

"Haeckel's Tale" by Clive Barker. More proof that Barker truly is one of the greats, this is second only to "The Pyre...". Compared to Barker's best work, this might feel a bit stiff, but the endlessly perverse depth of creation still drips from Barker's virile pen, spurting obscenity onto the page and into your mind. This could have been titled "I Fuck the Dead", but Clive knows how to keep it respectable. At least for a page or two.

And on the awful side of things, I'll spare a few words for the worst offenders:

"A Gentleman of the Old School", by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, is an unmitigated bore. Twilight looks scary in comparison. It's a mystery with only one potential suspect who, guess what? He did it. And no one cares, least of all me.

And possibly the worst story I've ever read: "Dark Delicacies of the Dead" by Rick Pickman. Abysmal attempt at satire. It's an extended inside joke riffing on the various authors in the book, and a number of others. Sadly, I was able to recognize most of them, but the humor was painfully awkward. If the writers of Epic Movie ever die in a fire and they need a pinch hitter, this guy could step in admirably, delivering a solid two hours without a single laugh. This story is more than a waste of paper, it's an insult to publication. (EDIT: again revisiting this in 2017, I'm struggling to remember the finer points of this story, other than that it was an exercise in barely-veiled namedropping, probably meant for "the community" more than casual readers. I rarely write reviews this derogatory; this one must have really struck a nerve.)

Overall, I'd skip this book, but if you're braver than me at least skip to the good parts.

Dorothy (D. J.) Emry says

Great anthology. I read it last year and really need to get the others that Dell Howison has put together. ever since reading it, the story that has stayed in my mind is "The Diving Girl" by Richard Laymon, a hauntingly romantic tale that I'll always be trying to write up to whenever working on my own ideas. Another that serves up images that liner long after the last word's read is "All My Bloody Things" by Steve Niles. That one's purely nightmare. And for zombie fans like me, Ray Bradbury's take on the undead in "The Reincarnate" can't be beat.

Mike Kazmierczak says

Del has done an excellent job of collecting a great set of stories. Generally when I finish a collection of stories, the book can fit into one of three categories: not so good with only a couple of good stories, pretty good with around five stories that qualify as favorites, and really good where almost every story is good and choosing the top favorites is difficult. This book fit in between the last two categories; I was able to pick favorites but the overall feel was that all the stories were good. I've already enjoyed the follow-up second book and look forward to reading the third. And hopefully even more.

"The Seer" by Robert Steven Rhine - A watchmaker is able to see the future in addition to his own death.

"Part of the Game" by F. Paul Wilson - An old fashioned, hard-boiled detective story set in San Francisco's Chinatown in the 1930s.

"Dark Delicacies of the Dead" by Rick Pickman - A fun mix of real and the unreal as a massive book signing at a horror store goes awry. By the way, Del Howison owns a store in Burbank dedicated to Horror; it's called Dark Delicacies.

"The Diving Girl" by Richard Laymon - A man obsesses over a woman performing dives into a pool.

"Haeckel's Tale" by Clive Barker - A man tells the story of being trapped in a cottage near a cemetery with a old man and his younger wife.

A. W. Gifford says

This was one of the worst, if not the worst collection of horror short stories I have read. The best story in the whole collection was written by a dead guy. Paper thin characters and TONS of bad averbs abound in this collection. The back cover claims that all the stories in this collection were commissioned just for this anthology--how they commissioned a story from Richard Laymon four years after his death, I have no idea. It is clear that the authors of these works just sent in anything they had ready to go and couldn't sell anywhere else, or perhaps they just aren't good writers. This anthology is a collection of names, not good stories. My recomendation is to avoid this anthology at all cost especially if your a writer, as it may suck the creative juice right out of you.

Cynthia says

If you are looking for some really great short stories, Dark Delicacies is the book you need to buy. Out of the 19 short stories in this book, I think there were maybe two I didn't really care for. Some really phenomenal writers contributed to this book such as Clive Barker, Ramsey Campbell, Ray Bradbury, Whitley Strieber, Richard Laymon, and more. You can't go wrong buying this anthology with names like these included.

The stories cover a variety of different extremes of horror. Bradbury's THE REINCARNATE was actually kind of a sad tale. Whitley Strieber created a religious nightmare of a world in KADDISH. Rick Pickman's DARK DELICACIES OF THE DEAD had me laughing. William F. Nolen wrote a pretty good tale with DEPOMPA. Clive Barker's HAECKEL'S TALE was the last story included in this anthology, and probably one of the best. I had actually seen this story on an episode of Masters of Horror. There are many other great stories included in this anthology besides the ones I mentioned above.

I highly recommend you buy this anthology!!

*Book Hollow

Michael says

I read this for Clive Barker's short story, "Haeckel's Tale" which was made into an episode of the "Masters of Horror" anthology. The film was superb, a throwback to Roger Corman's AIP productions with Vincent Price and Boris Karloff. The story also did not disappoint. An excellent gothic tale of lust gone wrong. The rest of the anthology, I'm afraid to say, despite a few bright stories, falls short of the mark.

Mkittysamom says

Awesome. Writing review on iPad.. 3/4 done!

Scott says

Dark Delicacies is an anthology assembled to celebrate the California bookstore of the same name. It starts out promising, because most of the good stories are front-loaded. There is a touching zombie story told from a new perspective by Ray Bradbury, body horror by Brian Lumley and F. Paul Wilson, a tale of madness by Roberta Lannes, and a darkly funny story about a man who has a very bad day by John Farris. My two favorites were "The Seer" by Robert Steven Rhine, about a precognitive man who cannot escape his destiny, and "Kaddish," in which Whitley Strieber imagines a wounded America rebuilt as a fascist theocracy--easily the most frightening of the lot. About halfway through the quality takes a dive. Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Steve Niles provide a couple of half-baked mysteries featuring their ongoing characters (St. Germain and Cal McDonald, respectively). Nancy Holder's story of two cannibal buddies reads like Poppy Z. Brite lite (and I'm not a fan of Ms. Brite.) Gahan Wilson's story of an artist who paints unusual subjects is good but anyone who's read Lovecraft will guess the reveal early on, and David J. Schow's tale of a forbidden book of dreams is the only real bright light in the second half. The collection wraps up with a typical z-grade entry from Richard Laymon (somehow contributing four years after his death) and a tale of necromancy by Clive Barker that is weak especially for him.

There is some good work in here but I really can't recommend the book as a whole. I hope Dark Delicacies II is better and more consistent.

Kimberly says

About four or five stories in...lovin' it so far. I love the fact that each story is at a short and at manageable length. I can sit down and spend 10-15 minutes to read one story and go do something else, and come back again. A very "flexible" book, haha.

I loved the short story titled "Kaddish" (I think that's what it's called...) and the dystopian, totalitarian Christian world. It's haunting, daring and incredibly disturbing. Death sentence...swallowing needles? That's dark stuff.

Update (Jan 16, 2016)

"Part of the Game". I was hoping it was some kind of satire, but no, it was just bloody racist. I honestly did

not expect writers to perpetuate the "evil warlord in Chinatown" stereotype in this day and age. Seriously, if you really want to create an antagonist with a particular ethnic background, can you at least make it an interesting character with actual character traits instead of just blatantly stereotyping? Also, it was absolutely ridiculous reading lines like "You couldn't treat [chinks] like regular people. You had to approach everything on an angle. They were devious, crafty, always dodging and weaving, always ducking the question and avoiding an answer." or "Chinks were gossipmongers-yak-yak-yak in their singsong voices, trading rumours and tidbits like a bunch of old biddies."

Seriously, "yak-yak-yak"? *face-palm* How did this story get past the editors I have no idea. I am not against writers portraying a racist character, but portraying a racist character just for the sake of portraying a racist character...I feel like this kind of literature is completely unnecessary and does not serve anyone. Not every writer needs to be involved with some kind of grand discussion about gender and race and human rights but c'mon, I thought respect is a universal human thing.

Update: Jan 19

Finished the book. Favourite story: Dark Delicacies of the Dead is by far my favourite story. Love the goofy and satirical humour. :) Kind of sucks that this is the only piece of literature that this author has published...because I WANT MORE.

Logan says

I really, really enjoyed this anthology. I picked it up for \$2 the other day on my break at school, b/c I was bored and had an hour before I needed to be back in class. I'm a sucker for horror anthologies, and more often than not I'm made a sucker, as they are frequently padded with recycled stories by big name authors, and for every great story there are usually 3 or 4 mediocrities of debatable worthiness of publication. Regardless, every time I come across a new volume, I am invariably separated from my money.

This was such an unexpected surprise. Out of 20 stories, I only found 2 boring/lack luster. "Kaddish" by Whately Strieber, and "The Bandit of Sanity" by Roberta Lannes were the big stand outs for me. I was thrilled to see a Cal McDonald story, "All My Bloody Things," by Steve Niles. McDonald definitely Niles best creation, by far. While Niles is a moderately clever writer, he's not particularly gifted at his craft-except when writing about his fuck up detective character. I wish he'd do more of this and much less of his other hack work. This is a really fun read, I've been pleasantly surprised by this unexpected find. Definitely worth the \$2.

Anna says

This was definitely an excellent anthology of horror stories.

It is put together not only with horror, but with supernatural elements, comedy, fantasy, and the just plain weird. No story is the same, and no story elicits the same response. Some will scare the hell out of you. Some will make you think deeply. Some will make you smile. Some will make you unsure of what you are really thinking. Some may make you question that which you were sure about. And some may make you think twice about the future.

For the weak-hearted (myself being one of them), I would not suggest reading this volume at night.

Favourites:

"Kaddish" by Whitley Strieber
"The Bandit of Sanity" by Roberta Lannes
"The Pyre and Others" by David J. Schow
"All my Bloody Things" by Steve Niles

Darlene Harris says

What a great collection of short stories. Lately, I've really been pulled more and more to these horror anthologies, and this is one of the top ones I've read so far. Not a dud in the bunch. I know it's a little older, but it's worth hunting down.

Shanna Wynne says

I picked this book up because of the cover art. Then, when reading it, found the first few stories passable. They were entertaining, but not the sort of "grab you by the throat and never let go" stories that I prefer.

However, the deeper into the book I went, the more I enjoyed it. There are some horrifying stories and some genuinely amusing stories.

It's a good book to have on your own top shelf for whenever the rain is pounding against the windows and that scratching against the basement door is getting louder...
