



Every House is Haunted

Ian Rogers , *Paul Tremblay* (Introduction)

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In this brilliant debut collection, Ian Rogers explores the border-places between our world and the dark reaches of the supernatural. The landscape of death becomes the new frontier for scientific exploration. With remarkable deftness, Rogers draws together the disturbing and the diverting in twenty-two showcase stories that will guide you through terrain at once familiar and startlingly fresh.

Every House is Haunted Details

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From Reader Review *Every House is Haunted* for online ebook

Josh says

A few stories into *Every House Is Haunted*, Rogers' debut collection, I thought I had it pegged. A little bit of Matheson, some Lovecraft, a dash of Frank Capra (yes, you read that correctly. Don't worry, I'll explain). Moving further into the nooks, crannies and dark corners of the haunts contained herein, I came to appreciate the sheer range of Ian's imagination and his skill as a weaver of words. If you want something easily consumed, labeled and set aside, you'd best look elsewhere. These stories dig under the skin, wriggle to the bone and stick with you.

The great unknown within almost all of the stories here is death. Whether characters are trying to cheat it, ease the transition into it, glimpse beyond it or skirting its edges precariously, death is ever present. Despite this, Rogers writes his characters and situations with true compassion. It's not really a sentimental thing (this is why Capra came to mind at first), so much as a positive attitude in the face of man's oft-cited greatest fear.

The angles Rogers takes to examine mortality and whatever may come after are as varied as they are fascinating, each story having its own particular spin. Standouts include

Winter Hammock

A series of increasingly unbalanced journal entries written by a man secluded in a warehouse as unspeakable things encroach outside.

The Rifts Between Us

A surreal and melancholy tale featuring a group of intrepid explorers who traverse the cusp of death, quite literally.

The House on Ashley Avenue

A deeply unnerving novelette in which the haunted house is as much a character as the people in it.

Although the stories in this collection aren't explicitly connected for the most part, some feature an organization of paranormal investigators called the Merveille group. These were the ones that left me wanting more, if only because the mythos is so intriguing. Given the allusive way they're written (it seems Rogers knows a lot more about this group than what we get here), I'd venture that we'll be reading more about the Merveille group in books to come.

Even the unconnected stories here have some common themes and details, and come across as being pieces of a greater whole, a rich metaphysical tapestry. I enjoyed them all, and would recommend *Every House Is Haunted* wholeheartedly to anyone who likes their horror quiet, subdued and thoughtful. This is a highly auspicious debut, and a damned fine bunch of tales.

originally posted at <http://www.horrornovelreviews.com>

Krista says

I was ready for creepy, haunting, and totally scary. What I received, cheesy, short (one story I classify as a blurb), and not good. I was so excited to read this, how disappointing. I really felt that some of the stories were really unfinished, like the author could think of nothing more to say, so it just ended.... My least favorite and the shortest, short story at only a few pages, was Autumnology. Which made no sense to me on how it was suppose to be haunting or scary in any way. I guess the author and I have a very different definition of haunting. I pushed on until 50 percent of my ebook and had to stop. My biggest regret was paying full price for the ebook.

Overall, this book was a bunch of random stories that didn't leave an impression, I could care less about, and I wasted time in my life reading...

Mindi says

I have been killing it with these short story collections lately! Of course, this one was recommended to me a while back by my friend Sadie, so I decided to finally add it to my Halloween TBR. I have so many books that are just sitting on my TBR bookshelf calling to me. I can't read fast enough.

This is a superb collection of horror stories that are divided into sections of a haunted house. I love that! It really added to the atmosphere of each story. The sections are The Vestibule, The Library, The Attic, The Den, and The Cellar. We literally move from the front of the house all the way down to the dark depths of the cellar, and the stories reflect that shift in wandering through parts of a house.

Before I talk about the stories I have to bring up the Introduction by Paul Tremblay. Never have I related to an introduction as much as this one! It's fantastic, and sets up the book perfectly.

So, the stories! There isn't a weak story in this collection. As always, I enjoyed some more than others, but as a whole this is a very strong collection. *Aces* is the perfect first story. It's weird and quirky and so much fun. It reminded me a lot of Joe Hill. *Winter Hammock* is a dystopian nightmare that builds dread slowly over the course of the story. *The Nanny* is a supernatural tale about a woman who has devoted her life to the ghosts of children. *The Dark and the Young* gave me a sci-fi vibe that explored the lengths a person will go to over a dark obsession. I loved the characters in *Leaves Brown*. A grandfather and his grandson share a special, sinister bond. One morning the grandfather decides to explain that bond to the young boy, who seems wise beyond his age. I think *The House of Ashley Avenue* is one of my favorites in this collection. I love the idea that there is a group of people who deal with the aftermath of a haunted house murder. If people work so hard to cover up such inexplicable cases, perhaps haunted houses truly exist? I've read books about evil dogs, but a vengeful cat? It works. *The Cat* is such a fun little nasty tale. And finally, since apparently I could practically mention every story in the book, *Charlotte's Frequency* has me absolutely rethinking all of the spiders I've found in my house and left to take care of any bugs that happen to also find their way inside. This one is truly unsettling.

Again, a big thank you to Sadie for convincing me to pick this one up. We have such similar tastes, and very rarely do we disagree. Once again, she knew I needed this one.

Alana says

The stories in this book weren't exactly what I expected (straight up horror), but I greatly enjoyed this collection nonetheless. Quite a few of them seemed to fall more into the realm of fantasy, though there were definitely some creepy moments in there. I also liked the variety in this collection in tone, mood, and length. I liked all the stories, but I think my favorites were "The Dark and the Young", "The Rifts Between Us", and "Charlotte's Frequency". On the whole, I definitely recommend this collection.

Barry says

I'll be the first to admit/point out that I didn't finish this book.

The stories aren't bad or poorly-written. Mr. Rogers has very cool ideas at work in his noggin, and it's great that he gets to explore them, yet at times, they appear to lack clear endings. Often, a story will open, unfold, slowly revealing its dark machinations--and then abruptly stops.

For one thing, "Aces" was beautiful, touching, and more than a little creepy; I loved it. "Autumnology" was super-short (3 pages!), but still eerie and melancholic.

Then things began getting iffy with "Cabin D." I liked its beginning, but with a few grammatical uses that I found a little distracting, but the second half of the story takes the narrative fully in another direction, throwing in lot of background/characterization into a few pages, and then abruptly stopped.

"Winter Hammock" was a fairly formulaic Cthulhu-type apocalyptic tale, as described in journal entries by a lone survivor. It lost steam fairly early – another example of pacing being a problem – but I still enjoyed its mood and atmosphere. "Library of the Gods" was just plain odd, and reminded me a bit of a Jorge Luis Borges story. "The Nanny" had an interesting premise, and was told in a quiet, even sweet, manner, and then again, an abrupt ending hurt the mood.

While I understand that a short story does not necessarily have to have a pronounced ending (in fact, generally speaking, they *don't*), but there's still a certain way of orchestrating a tale so that it feels like it has a beginning, middle, and end; here, it's more beginnings and middles that face the directions of ends, yet never quite reach them.

It's really too bad, too; it has a great title, an excellent opening story, a cool layout of story "groupings" ("The Foyer," "The Attic," "The Basement," etc.), and *amazing* artwork and layout by the great Danny Evarts. But unfortunately, at least for the time being, this was a book that I chose not to finish.

Mike says

A strong collection of horror stories!

karen says

3.5 stars.

even though i have come a long way w/r/t my feelings towards short stories, i still have trouble writing reviews for them. i have written reviews in which i have painstakingly reviewed each individual story, but that is such a pain in the ass, because sometimes certain stories in a collection will just leave me cold, and once you've committed to that structure of a review, it's like "AARRGGH what was i thinking?"

and that is why i am not going to do that with this book. this book is a collection of 6 years worth of stories, and while they can loosely be grouped into an overarching stylistic similarity of "dark fantasy," they take on a number of different forms, lengths, and styles, some of which i really responded to and some which just left me a little flat.

the stories are loosely gathered in groupings designated by the parts of a house: the vestibule, the library, the attic, the den, and the cellar. and while some of these stories do in fact slot tidily into these groupings; for example - three of the stories in "the library" segment feature books in some way, some of them are less bang-on obvious. i speak exactly two words of german: das unheimliche, which of course means "uncanny," but more importantly, "heimliche" means "homely," so the truer meaning of the word is something like, "that which makes us uncomfortable in the place where we should be feeling most comfortable." and that's what many of these less-obvious stories do. while some of them do feature haunted houses or houses haunted by memories, troubled relationships, spiders, the past - some of them are just about discomfort within our supposed comfort zones: family, friends, work. the familiar rendered unfamiliar, and a little creepy.

but knowing what you know about me. do you know? have we met? i am coming out of a long held "short stories? bluck!!!" stance and while some of these stories didn't work for me, i can't be trusted, so you're on your own.

so - brief summaries only, and make of them what you will

Aces

first sentence is aces. hahahaaha!! DO YOU SEE WHAT I DID THERE?

Soelle got kicked out of school for killing one of her classmates.

actually - the whole first paragraph is pretty good, and sets up the entire collection nicely:

Soelle got kicked out of school for killing one of her classmates. They couldn't prove she actually did it, which was why she received an expulsion instead of a murder charge, but there was no doubt among the faculty that she was responsible. Soelle told me she didn't care if they kicked her out or put her in jail. She just wanted her tarot cards back.

basically, a spooky little girl with powers who is *having an adverse effect on reality* while her older brother/guardian tries to protect her and simultaneously protect the town *from* her.

Autumnology

this one touches explicitly on the whole *das unheimliche* theme when a character is confronted with a tree in full autumnal splendor despite all the surrounding trees having succumbed to winter bareness:

It's hard to explain why the tree frightened me so. I think it was what it represented. A place where it was always autumn. There was something unnatural about the idea. Unnatural. Un-nature. The tree was something that shouldn't be. It was a tree out of time. A living monument that shouldn't exist, and yet at the same time couldn't be ignored.

it's more of a quietly haunting story rather than a scary one. unsettling.

Cabin D

this one is probably my favorite. ancient malevolent forces and a very hungry man. a good build and a satisfying resolution.

Winter Hammock

lovecraft tentacles/zombies/mutations. like This is Not a Test in the "boredom of the apocalypse," parts, but also its own thing. an escalation of dread. and tentacles.

A Night in the Library with the Gods

haunted books. this story, like many of them, has a stephen king feel to it. or that x-file episode *blood*:

The Nanny

another one i really liked. a neat premise: exorcism by babysitting

The Dark and the Young

moar magical books. this one is way more sci-fi-ish, so i liked it significantly less than the other one, even though it is like 4 times as long. it's good, but it's got that thing that makes my head hurt. i have never read lumley, but this one reads the way i always imagined lumley would read. feel free to tell me i am wrong.

The Currents

this one is good- it reads like a folktale or song. i could see nick cave writing a ballad based on this.

Leaves Brown

this has a little callback to *autumnology*, and another iteration of the theme of "home."

"There's a writer who said you can't go home again. He was only partly right. You can go home again, but when you come back you find out home isn't home anymore. It's just a place where you used to live. It's lost something, but you can't tell what it is. It's like an itch that you can't scratch."

Wood

frankly, i am mystified by this one. the tone is suitably creepy, but i have no idea what the hell happened. this is like a meaner *giving tree*. and a little bit like this movie:

The House on Ashley Avenue

similar to *the nanny* in that it is a more traditional haunted house story. this one might be my favorite, actually. it's a perfectly encapsulated little tale, with a solid ending.

The Rifts Between Us

sci fi *and* a short story? brother - you are going into this with two strikes against you. this is how i feel about most sci-fi - great ideas but the execution bored me to death. this one had what i feel was a particularly inelegant info-dump. which i think is my general problem with sci-fi.

Vogo

this is a very short story about a lake monster in which no one has intercourse with a lake monster, which is a change from most of the lake-monster lit i have read.

The Cat

NO - THIS ONE!! THIS ONE IS MY FAVORITE STORY!

it kind of reminded me of that *amazing stories* episode - *Thanksgiving* even though it is nothing like that episode except in terms of unexpected sources of secret wishes coming true.

i don't know why i can't seem to stop comparing these stories to completely unrelated things. but this is my path, now.

Deleted Scenes

this is a clever idea, and a treat for film geeks and fanboys. i enjoyed it, especially the sad trombone ending.

The Tattletail

this is pretty cute. slap some illustrations in here, and you got yourself a very marketable children's picture book. i would buy it

Charlotte's Frequency

where sci-fi meets spiders. this would also have been a fun episode of *amazing stories*. or to make myself sound about five years younger: *tales from the crypt*. or *creepshow*. no, that makes me even older. damn. but it's good - a little nod to Charlotte's Web, but with more dead bodies.

Relaxed Best

It looks like a Philip Marlowe novel exploded in here, observes one character. that is my take on it as well.

Hunger

another teeny tiny one, but the length works for it. more of a sensory piece than anything, but the sense is good and spooky, like that first episode of *walking dead* with all that hospital-confusion before it just turned into a show about people talking endlessly.

Inheritor

these family secrets are worse than your family secrets

Twillingate

dreamy childhood story more about wonder and innocence and that loss than anything truly ghostish. a haunty feeling without any true haints.

The Candle

another one with an effective atmosphere, but that i don't really get. like *wood*, i liked it without really knowing what it is about, really.

and that is my review!!

i would definitely read more by this author, especially if the next book is a full-lengther. and is about cats.

Marie says

Loved this! Every piece is wonderful. Rogers has a great cinematic style and is great with imagery.

Bonnie Randall says

Well written with some pieces reminiscent of Stephen King, but....the storytelling style wasn't my cuppa; too many of these stories plopped the reader into a white box and goals / motivation were murky or there was no clear beginning / middle / end to the tales. So while these were all really cool 'snapshots', any narrative drive felt like it was missing and so I needed to set this collection aside and move on.

Sadie Hartmann Mother Horror says

I have had the best luck in horror lately! Two great collections back to back! This collection by Ian Rogers is totally different than Bracken MacLeod's 13 Views of Suicide Woods that I reviewed earlier.

Yet still a five star collection. Just goes to show you that authors have totally different voices and you really get a feel for that in a collection like this.

I've seen Ian Rogers compared to Shirley Jackson's style and I would totally agree with that. He has an elevated level of prose under his belt and sometimes I found the descriptions so compelling, I would re read them a few times before moving on in the story. Especially in stories like "Cabin D" and "A Night in the Library with the Gods"

These stories range from the beautiful and poetic, like "Autumnology" to like an X Files vibe like the "Dark and the Young" and then my favorite kind of stories that Ian writes, the dark and humorous like "Aces" and "The Cat". I would say that's his wheelhouse, the ones that are drawing you in with clever dialogue and humor but also carry around a sense of the creeps lurking around the edges.

The book is broken down into mini collections, The Vestibule, The Library, The Attic, the Den and the Cellar. I loved the first collection very much and the Attic and the Cellar close behind. One of my favorite stories was "the Currents", a family finds a man washed up from the river that they believe to be dead. Really an interesting read because you have no idea where it's going, it's like being around the campfire at night with a creative storyteller.

Of course there are always a few stories in these collections that don't grab you or you don't resonate with them. Not every story is a home run.

I also would tell readers that this collection isn't necessarily terrifying. I'd use words like haunting, creepy, strange, supernatural or paranormal and just entertaining as hell. Classic. Classic tales of the dark and mysterious. I highly recommend this book.

Chantel Coughlin says

really fantastic collection. I think the first story, Aces, was my favorite.

Orrin Grey says

Full disclosure, before I get into the meat of this review: Ian and I are friends, though we've only met in person a couple of times. I've known him since we were both published together in *Bound for Evil* back in 2008, and we both did our first ever book signing at that year's Readercon. You can rest assured, though, that while our friendship affects how excited I am to see him have such a handsome book in print, it wouldn't be enough to make me be as effusive in my praise as I am about to be.

Every House is Haunted, in addition to having a great title, is about as assured a debut collection as you're ever likely to find. Ian writes in the grand tradition of folks like Stephen King, Richard Matheson (albeit with fewer *Twilight Zone* endings), or Shirley Jackson, but he also manages to make the stories entirely his own. Many of the stories involve haunted houses, as you might gather from the title, but rarely are they haunted in the usual sense. Many other stories, including some of my favorites, feature a sort of blue collar approach to the supernatural. The agencies that deal with the occult in Ian's world are believably bureaucratic, peopled with the kinds of folks you'd find working in cubicles in any office building.

In fact, a big part of what makes Ian's stories so good is their very human heart. While often ominous or creepy (and occasionally very funny), the stories in *Every House is Haunted* never feel the least bit mean-spirited. There's always a warmth and sympathy at the center of each story, no matter how grim the subject matter becomes.

I have favorites from the book, of course. "Cabin D," "The Cat," and "Inheritor" all jump to mind. But really, it's not any one story or stories that makes *Every House* such a success, but the way they combine to form a whole that is more than the sum of even its (already quite exceptional) parts.

Isidore says

An impressive debut collection by yet another talented Canadian writer of weird fiction.

There is a wide range of style and subject matter on display, which I suppose can be seen either as a young writer's excitement at experimentation, or as exploration in search of a distinctive voice. Not all the experiments succeed, but Rogers is never dull, and always intelligent.

He has a gift for the surreal, especially piquant in its lack of pretension. His prose and characters are usually the sort one might find in mainstream pop fiction, but the things that happen certainly are not, and the strangeness of the juxtaposition is generally effective. Many of the stories barely make any sort of orthodox narrative sense, but they evoke powerful images and create a mood of unease which lingers after you've finished---long after specifics about the elusive and perplexing plots have vanished from the mind.

Once or twice Rogers goes too far. "Hunger" is so elliptical that I can't say what happens in it, and too brief to have much impact. There are a few humorous tales which leave me cold, although "The Cat" is great ghoulish fun.

"The Rifts Between Us" is a fascinating blend of banal sf trappings and sheer weirdness. The premise---exploring the borderlands of death by hitching a ride on a mental ray transmitted by the moribund---is truly nutty, but Rogers makes it work by unleashing a succession of bizarre images and sustaining an atmosphere of dread. This story feels like a bad dream, as does "The Candle", a splendidly disturbing vignette chosen to finish the book.

"Leaves Brown" and "The Currents" remind me of good *early* Bradbury, and Rogers several times expresses a dark fascination with the dying year which the creator of "The October Country" would have understood. "Inheritor" and "The Nanny" are also fine.

There are two noteworthy narratives of a more straightforward variety. "The Dark and the Young" has some effective ideas, but is a little spoiled by a central glaring anachronism, an ancient Sumerian *book*, although books of the kind described were not invented until thousands of years after the Sumerians closed up shop. "The House on Ashley Avenue" seems to be going somewhere interesting, with carefully developed characters and intriguing references to a mysterious "Mereville Group", but then an apparition pops up, and is dispelled with despatch, leaving a distinct sense of incompleteness---Rogers could have done more with such a promising start to his story (although the ghost *is* an unusual and striking one!).

Altogether an auspicious debut, and I'll be looking out for Rogers in the future.

Gef says

I love ghost stories, so by the title alone I was instantly drawn to this book. The stories, however, are not focused solely on apparitions and spooky old houses. The book does have its fair share, though. I think Paul Tremblay puts it best in his introduction: "Ian's stories are explorations of the cosmic, social, and paranormal what-ifs, of the terrible and wonderful awe of possibility. Yeah, that's this book in a nutshell.

The book is segmented in five parts, with a few stories in each: the vestibule, the library, the attic, the den, and the cellar. The stories don't use those rooms as their theme so much as reflect the exploration of Ian's imagination.

Things start off creepy as heck with "Aces," about a young man coping with his teen sister, Soelle, whose been kicked out of school. That doesn't sound so bad until you discover it's because one of her classmates died after Soelle gave her a malicious tarot reading that sent to panicking girl into the path of a bus--and it's not the first time Soelle's fascination with the paranormal has played part in someone's death or disappearance. The story carries that squabbling brother/sister tone perfectly and only amplifies it as Soelle starts to embrace the idea of being seen by everyone as a witch.

"Cabin D" had a great Stephen King kind of vibe when a man named Henry walks into a diner and orders everything on the menu. The waitress finds him mildly amusing at first, but his odd, fatalistic mood grinds on her. The story seems to take in one long, straining breath through the first half of the story, and then it switches to Henry's point of view and it's like that breath is being forced out for some great purpose, and it all has to do with an abandoned cabin where Henry has to go. This one may have been one of my favorites from the collection.

Another stand out is "The Dark and the Young," about a translator specializing in ancient texts, fresh out of college and desperate for work. She's setup with a prime gig, albeit with modest pay and odd accommodations. She winds up in a neighborhood almost in the middle of nowhere, working in what looks like an old glove factory on the outside, but is a secret underground installation housing one very dangerous piece of literature. Think Necronomicon with a chip on its shoulder. This story worked wonderfully for me, especially as I'd recently watched *The Cabin in the Woods*, and the whole secret underground installation motif was played to the hilt. Loved it.

I could prattle on about some of the stories that captivated me, like "Wood" and "The Cat" and a disturbing bit of flash fiction called "Hunger," but sufficed to say that this book will rank highly on my year-end favorites list. There are but a couple stories that fell flat, due to ending so abruptly as things were getting good, but the overall collection is just a great showing of Ian's evolution as an author. And to think he's just getting warmed up. If Ian wasn't already on my "authors to watch out for" list, this book would have cemented it.

Tobin Elliott says

Full disclosure: I am a friend of Ian Rogers and we've both been published by the same publisher (Burning Effigy). That being said, I'm still going to be completely honest and forthright in my review.

Reading any short story collection is an interesting experience for a reader. Instead of getting a single, all-encompassing insight into the author, you're treated to several different facets which, to me, put that author into a better perspective.

In **Every House Is Haunted**, you can't look at this as though you're diving into a package of cookies. Instead, this is like attending a chili cook-off: yes, they're all chili (horror stories), but some are smooth, some are spicy, some aren't quite to your taste, and some you love. Ian Rogers, at his worst, is still a writer that entertains and challenges the reader. At his best, he's terrifying, and terrifyingly good.

In fact, at one point, I finished a story, turned to my wife and said, "I really hate Ian Rogers." When she asked why, I stated it was because he was such a great writer. His characters are real, they're believable. The dialogue is natural. The details he picks out are intriguingly perfect. But it's the man's sheer imagination that blows me away.

Reading the stories, you do get a sense that he has his certain tropes: worlds hidden behind doors, rifts, dimensions, phases. Characters that aren't quite in step with those around them. Shadowing agencies that study the weird. They all show up again and again, but in each iteration, they're new, they're different and they're fascinating.

There's some absolute standouts in this collection. Personally, I don't think he tops the first story in the collection, **Aces**. It simply defies expectations and kicks all kinds of ass. However, there's other gems scattered throughout Ian's House: The larger world hinted at in **Cabin D**, the simplicity of **The Nanny**, the wistful relationship in **Leaves Brown**, the fun of **The House on Ashley Avenue**, the absolute unflinching brutality of **The Cat**, the sparsity of **Hunger**, the slow build of **The Inheritor**.

This isn't a book to run through quickly. Take your time in each section of the house. Look at each area slowly and carefully. Rogers' writing will reward you for your time.
