



## **New Fears: New Horror Stories by Masters of the Genre**

*Mark Morris (Editor) , Alison Littlewood , Stephen Gallagher , Angela Slatter , Brady Golden , Nina Allan , Brian Keene , Chaz Brenchley , more... A.K. Benedict , Brian Lillie , Ramsey Campbell , Carole Johnstone , Sarah Lotz , Adam Nevill , Muriel Gray , Josh Malerman , Conrad Williams , Kathryn Ptacek , Christopher Golden , Stephen Laws ...less*

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Fear comes in many forms.

The horror genre's greatest living practitioners drag our darkest fears kicking and screaming into the light in this collection of nineteen brand-new stories. In *The Boggle Hole* by Alison Littlewood an ancient folk tale leads to irrevocable loss. In Josh Malerman's *The House of the Head* a dollhouse becomes the focus for an incident both violent and inexplicable. And in *Speaking Still* Ramsey Campbell suggests that beyond death there may be far worse things waiting than we can ever imagine... Numinous, surreal and gut wrenching, *New Fears* is a vibrant collection showcasing the very best fiction modern horror has to offer.

## New Fears: New Horror Stories by Masters of the Genre Details

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Author : Mark Morris (Editor) , Alison Littlewood , Stephen Gallagher , Angela Slatter , Brady Golden , Nina Allan , Brian Keene , Chaz Brenchley , more... A.K. Benedict , Brian Lillie , Ramsey Campbell , Carole Johnstone , Sarah Lotz , Adam Nevill , Muriel Gray , Josh Malerman , Conrad Williams , Kathryn Ptacek , Christopher Golden , Stephen Laws ...less

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# From Reader Review **New Fears: New Horror Stories by Masters of the Genre** for online ebook

**Nikki (Spine Tinglers) says**

New Fears

Edited By Mark Morris

Published by Titan Books, 2017

Rating: 4.5 out of 5

Reading anthologies is a lot like eating a bag of Starbursts. You know your favorite flavors, and you resist eating those first. There're some less savory flavors, but you eat them anyway because the experience is short, and, ultimately, it's serving to satisfy your sweet tooth. And, if it this bag of candy is anything like *New Fears*, edited by Mark Morris with some of the best names in modern horror, you're going to feel a little sick to your stomach after consuming it all.

*New Fears* is a unique anthology in that its purpose is not to be centered around a specific theme, per se, but rather to collect a set of stories to give you new things to be frightened about. And, for all intents and purposes, this anthology accomplishes its goals. The stories range from folkloric tales of mischievous creatures, to child abductions by way of obscured hell dimensions, to the realistic horror of mass shootings. Each author has a unique voice that brings these new terrors to the table, some with comedic tinges, some with full blown horror straight in your face. The diverse themes, perspectives, and tone of this anthology make it a true delight to read.

I enjoyed a majority of the stories in this book. "The Boggle Hole" by Alison Littlewood opens this anthology and brought me back to my days of bingeing *Are You Afraid of the Dark* as a child (and, let's face it, an adult as well). The whimsical tone of this story made the unnerving nature of the story even more exciting to read. A few other standouts include Stephen Gallagher's "Shepherd's Business", a truly disturbing story that sticks with you long after you finish the final sentences. "Dollies" by Kathryn Ptacek was chilling in its innocence; Christopher Golden's "The Abduction Door" has a horrifying cinematic quality to it. And still, though many of these stories creep into your mind, grabbing hold tight and notching up your paranoia, others imbued humor to provide levity between haunts. I'm looking at you "The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers" by Sarah Lotz, the funniest (yet still dark) story in this book.

There were a few stories that I did not enjoy as much as others, but that's to be expected in an anthology, especially one like this with such a wide variety of authors, themes, and tones. The stories that were less memorable tended to end ambiguously, without identifying the "fear" as concretely as in other stories. Still though, even these stories were successful in creating an atmosphere as dread, and none halted the procession of the book.

This anthology is one of the best I've read so far. Mark Morris has compiled a hard-hitting, fun, and terrifying anthology with *New Fears*. The authors included in this collection are some of the greatest voices of horror we have. This was a great way to learn about new wonderful authors, including many female horror writers I'm excited to follow. I highly recommend this book to genre fans, and I cannot wait to read the second installment coming later this year.

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## Angela says

As is usually the case with an anthology, I found that I like some stories and not others. SO, here are my individual ratings:

'The Boggle Hole' - 2/5. Didn't really do much for me if I'm honest but it was okay.

'Shepherds' Business' - 4/5. That was unexpected and quite creepy.

'No Good Deed' - 3/5. A bit disturbing.

'The Family Car' - 5/5. I think this one is definitely one of my favorites. I love stories like this, that bring something innocent and make it menacing.

'Four Abstracts' - 4/5. Spiders are nothing to mess with..

'Sheltered in Place' - 5/5. Definitely unexpected, never saw that one coming.

'The Fold in the Heart' - 1/5. Honestly didn't do anything for me.

'Departures' - 3/5. Creepy enough but I feel like it went on too long.

'The Salter Collection' - 5/5. Another one of my favorites. I love bizarre stories.

'Speaking Still' - 5/5. Another brilliant story, original and disturbing.

'The Eyes Are White and Quiet' - 1/5. Not my sort of story.

'The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers' - 1/5. This is more of a comedic story than anything else, I fail to see how it is horror, unless it is considered horror to abandon your dead grandmother.

'Eumenides' - I can't rate this one because I didn't bother reading it. Why did I decide against it? I flipped through it and nothing caught my attention so I decided to move on.

'Roundabout' - 2/5. Strange premise, could have worked if written better.

'The House of the Head' - 3/5. A bit silly maybe but also disturbing.

'Succulents' - 4/5. I have a feeling this would be good as a short horror film.

'Dollies' - 5/5. I dislike dolls, I dislike their vacant appearances and I can't understand how I ever played with them as a child. This has a twist as it's not so much focused on the dolls themselves but the main character. Another surprise ending.

'The Abduction Door' - 5/5. Again, I love stories where it leaves you with the unexpected. I'll never look at elevators the same way again.

'The Swan Dive' - I didn't read this one either, I started it but I literally fell asleep and just can't be bothered to...oops.

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## Pam Winkler says

This is a good book, with a lot of really high-quality stories. If you like horror, this is a good book for you.

The Boggle Hole by Alison Littlewood was good and kind of heart-breaking.

Shepherd's Business by Stephen Gallagher was good. I thought the premise was a little unbelievable, but the story was well-written enough that I didn't really care.

No Good Deed by Angela Slatter was good.

The Family Car by Brady Golden was good. I'm not quite sure what I expected, but this probably wasn't it. It was definitely good though.

Four Abstracts by Nina Allen was good. I didn't like it as much as some of the others.

Sheltered in Place by Brian Keene was good and I liked it a lot. My work has to do with Emergency Medical Services and the various shootings, in a sort of distant way. This was very reminiscent for me in a weird way.

The Fold in the Heart by Chaz Brenchley - I absolutely loved this one. The relationships; unhealthy, slightly unhealthy and healthy, and his absolute love and affection were wonderful.

Departures by A.K. Benedict was good.

The Salter Collection by Brian Lillie was good. I didn't expect it, it's very different in tone than a lot of the other ones. Just as well written, though.

Speaking Still by Ramsey Campbell was good and maybe a touch predictable, but lovely just the same.

The Eyes Are White and Quiet by Carole Johnstone was interesting. And not at all what I expected; the difference between the first part of the story and the last was pretty extreme.

The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers by Sarah Lotz was good, but I didn't like it very much. It felt like embarrassment humor; but I guess it's embarrassment horror. I don't like embarrassment much, it gets to me and upsets me.

Eumenides (The Benevolent Ladies) by Adam L.G. Nevill was a bit uncomfortable. I didn't like it, but I suppose it was good.

Roundabout by Muriel Gray was very good. It's a well-done horror trope, done by unusual people and it's just fantastic.

The House of the Head by Josh Malerman was also fantastic and horrifying. I think I'd divorce her husband, just from the lack of respect for the horror she went through. It's incredibly vivid.

Succulents by Conrad Williams was one I didn't like. I suppose it's good.

Dollies by Kathryn Ptacek was nasty and good.

The Abduction Door by Christopher Golden was also nasty and good. I know what my reaction is likely to be my reaction, or what I think my reaction is likely to be. I can get a bit stubborn and mean when I feel that I've been sinned again.

The Swan Dive by Stephen Laws was good. It was kind of lovecraftian in a way.

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## **Laura Mauro says**

Okay. So I actually only managed to finish one non-university related book in October. But – what a book.

There are nineteen stories in total, all of them good, some of them incredibly good. The book opens with a strong offering from Alison Littlewood, whose story 'The Boggle Hole' is unexpectedly melancholy – to great effect. 'The Fold In The Heart' by Chaz Brenchley (who I had not previously heard of, and whose work I will be actively seeking out) is an eerie and beautiful story about abuse, and about love. 'Departures' by A.K. Benedict is clever and imaginative, and totally believable even in its surrealness. Kathryn Ptacek's 'Dollies' is skin-crawlingly weird, while Christopher Golden's 'The Abduction Door' masterfully evokes the breathless panic of a parent in search of their lost child, though the story takes a bizarre turn you might not expect – so much the better, in my opinion. Stephen Laws (who I still credit as giving the most incredible reading I've ever heard – his story, 'The Slista', read aloud at the Best British Horror 2015 launch, was utterly captivating) once again proves his formidable ability with 'The Swan Dive'.

But, to my three favourites: Carole Johnstone, who is fast becoming one of my favourite writers, knocks it out of the park with her tense, suffocating tale 'The Eyes Are White And Quiet', which leads you sightless and bewildered on a strange, dark journey. 'The House Of The Head' by Josh Malerman is weird in all the right ways – a haunted doll-house sounds almost trite but I couldn't stop reading until the very end. And 'Four Abstracts' by Nina Allan, who I believe is a true master of the genre, and whose ability to evoke authentic, tangible emotion even as she weaves uncanny strands into her narrative is unparalleled.

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## Seregil of Rhiminee says

Originally published at Risingshadow.

New Fears (edited by Mark Morris) is an excellent anthology of modern horror stories that showcases the talents of many authors, some of which may be a bit unknown to readers. This anthology is clearly one of the best horror anthologies of the year, because its contents are satisfyinly dark and unsettling.

As a long time fan of horror fiction, dark fiction and strange fiction, I'm glad to say that I was impressed by all of the stories in this anthology. Each story in this anthology is a small gem of horror fiction that will interest horror readers and those who are looking for something chilling to read.

One of the best things about this anthology is that it is not a themed anthology, but a collection of frightening and atmospheric stories in the vein of classic horror anthologies. As much as I love themed anthologies, it was refreshing to read an old-fashioned yet wholly modern horror anthology in which the editor has made sure that all of the stories are fascinating and demonstrate the versatility of the genre.

This collection contains the following stories:

The Boggle Hole – Alison Littlewood  
Sherpherd's Business – Stephen Gallagher  
No Good Deed – Angela Slatter  
The Family Car – Brady Golden  
Four Abstracts – Nina Allan  
Sheltered in Place – Brian Keene  
The Fold in the Heart – Chaz Brenchley  
Departures – AK Benedict  
The Salter Collection – Brian Lillie  
Speaking Still – Ramsey Campbell  
The Eyes Are White and Quiet – Carole Johnstone  
The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers – Sarah Lotz  
Eumenides (The Benevolent Ladies) – Adam Nevill  
Roundabout – Muriel Gray  
The House of the Head – Josh Malerman  
Succulents – Conrad Williams  
Dollies – Kathryn Ptacek  
The Abduction Door – Christopher Golden  
The Swan Dive – Stephen Laws

All of the above mentioned stories are excellent and strong stories. The authors have done their best to write chilling and unsettling stories that will continue to haunt readers for a long time after they've finished reading them.

These stories demonstrate that fear and terror come in many forms. In them, everyday life can suddenly take a turn for the macabre and nobody is safe from the clutches of fear.

Here's a bit more information about the stories and my thoughts about them:

The Boggle Hole – Alison Littlewood:

- A story about Tim who spends time with his grandfather. Tim hears from his grandfather that a goblin lives on the beach in the boggle hole and if you take something that is his, he might take something from you.
- An excellent and atmospheric story that has been written in the vein of classic horror stories.

Sherpherd's Business – Stephen Gallagher:

- In this story, a doctor called Munro Spence arrives on an island to replace the old doctor who's become ill. Soon he learns that something terrifying may have happened among the islanders.
- This is one of the best horror stories I've read this year, because the author writes well about the islanders, their lives and their customs.

No Good Deed – Angela Slatter:

- A story about Isobel who wakes up, finds herself in a strange place and doesn't remember what has happened to her. She only remembers that she married Adolphus Wollstonecraft, but everything after that is blank to her. Soon she hears about what has happened to her and what is expected of her...
- This story is connected to the author's previous story, "St. Dymphna's School for Poison Girls" (originally published in *The Bitterwood Bible and Other Recountings*), but can be read as a standalone story.
- I was very impressed by this story, because it has everything that I've come expect from the author's stories. It's an atmospheric and brilliant story about poisons, justice and vengeance.

The Family Car – Brady Golden:

- Lindsay notices a car that looks exactly like the car her parents used to have, but she knows that it is not possible, because they had suddenly vanished along with the car.
- I find the author's way of writing about Lindsay's mental health fascinating, because the loss of her parents has affected her. It was interesting to read about how she tried to move on.
- A well written strange tale with emotional depth.

Four Abstracts – Nina Allan:

- A story about Isobel who knew an artist, Rebecca "Beck" Hathaway, whose work in oils is a kind of journal-keeping. Isobel reminisces about her friendship with Beck and remembers unsettling things that Beck told about her mother and how she said that women in her family are part-spider...
- There are many things in this story that I find fascinating. First of all, the author writes excellently about Isobel's friendship with Beck and what happens to Beck. She also explores spider mythology in an engaging and fascinating way, and her descriptions of the abstracts are captivating.
- The atmosphere in this story is effective, because you get a feeling that something is wrong with Beck and you won't be able to shake away this feeling of unease.
- An atmospheric and beautifully written story with plenty of underlying emotion and sadness. This story is slow-burning and harrowing literary horror at its utmost best.

Sheltered in Place – Brian Keene:

- This is a surprisingly memorable story about what has happened at the airport when someone has begun to shoot people.
- I think that this story will chill and terrify many readers, because it has elements that are slightly connected

to real life shootings.

The Fold in the Heart – Chaz Brenchley:

- A story about a man, Rowan and Josh who face a sudden and powerful storm.
- This story is something a bit different and has a literary feel to it.
- I liked this story very much, because the author writes well about the characters and their relationship with each other.

Departures – AK Benedict:

- A woman wakes up in a pub and senses that something is wrong, because she can't remember her name or address.
- This is an interesting short story, because it deals with death and afterlife in a slightly different way.
- It was fascinating to read about the Hollow and what kind of a place it is.

The Salter Collection – Brian Lillie:

- In this story, Alice works at the library. He takes Mr. Caul to the place where the Salter Collection is and shows him something strange in the listening room...
- It was fascinating to read about what Alice and Mr. Caul found and what happened afterwards.
- This story has an excellent ending.

Speaking Still – Ramsey Campbell:

- A story about Bill whose friend, Daniel, has lost his wife. Bill witnesses how Daniel copes with the loss and how convinced he is that he gets messages from his dead wife...
- This story is a testament to the fact that Ramsey Campbell is one of the best British horror authors, because he writes consistently good stories.
- A well written story with a chilling ending.

The Eyes Are White and Quiet – Carole Johnstone:

- A story about Hannah who has problems with her eyes. Hannah has been to doctors, but nobody believes her when she tells them about her condition...
- I liked this story very much, because it's intriguingly bleak.

The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers – Sarah Lotz:

- In this story, Steven has gone to the theatre with his grandmother to see Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera". His grandmother dies during the show and he finds himself in quite a difficult situation...
- This is one of the best stories in this anthology, because it's a darkly humorous story about an evening gone awry.

Eumenides (The Benevolent Ladies) – Adam Nevill:

- In this story, Jason works at Agri-Tech and the only light of his working life is Electra who's like a siren to him. He is bored and fears of what may become of him if he forgets who he is. When he asks Electra to go

out, she agrees to meet him beside the zoo...

- The authors's descriptions of Jason's life and feelings are excellent, because he paints a realistic picture of a man who think of his own life and what he should do with it.
- The Victorian zoo adds a touch of macabre atmosphere to the story.
- This is definitely one of the best and most compelling stories in this anthology.

Roundabout – Muriel Gray:

- A story about Danny and the Blowbarton roundabout. Danny decides to shift The Dark Thing on the roundabout...
- I found this story especially interesting, because it's something a bit different.
- An atmospheric and well written story.

The House of the Head – Josh Malerman:

- In the winter of 1974, Elvie May witnesses a terrifying haunting in her dollhouse. The story begins when Elvie's father buys her a dollhouse that has three people inside it, just like in their house. At first, everything is normal and Elvie enjoys playing with the dollhouse, but then things gradually change and Elvie sees something disturbing and macabre inside the dollhouse...
- I like the author's writing style and the way he writes about Elvie's feelings.
- An excellent and satisfyingly dark story.

Succulents – Conrad Williams:

- Graham and his young son, Felix, are on a bike trip with other people while his wife rests at the hotel. Their guide shows them a succulent plant called 'Mother's Tears' and asks them to try it...
- I enjoyed reading about what happened to Graham and how the plant affected him.
- An interesting and atmospheric strange tale.

Dollies – Kathryn Ptacek:

- In this story, a woman used to have dolls when she was little. She named all of them Elizabeth and they all died of smallpox.
- It was intruigng and unsettling to read about what was revealed about the protagonist's birth.
- A well written story with a good ending.

The Abduction Door – Christopher Golden:

- In this story, a man suffers from the fear of the abduction door.
- The author has created quite an intriguing story about people getting snatched through the abduction doors in the middle of their elevator rides.
- The ending of this story is chilling and unsettling.

The Swan Dive – Stephen Laws:

- In this story, the protagonist is on the bridge and intends to kill himself by doing a swan dive into the water below. As he takes the dive, something weird happens to him, because he is saved by a strange being that bursts out of the water...
- An excellent and very well written weird story.

- This is one of my favourite stories in this anthology, because it's satisfyingly strange.

Here are a few more words about some of the stories:

- Alison Littlewood's "The Boggle Hole" is an entertaining and satisfyingly chilling story about what happens when Tim's grandfather takes Tim to the beach and tells him of the goblin that lives there. The author writes excellently about how Tim feels about his grandfather's house, because he experiences a strong sense of silence there as if the silence is alive.

- "Shepherd's Business" by Stephen Gallagher's is an excellent story about a locum who arrives on an island and takes over the medical practice. The author writes realistically about what it is like to work in a new place and how people react to a new person. What happens among the islanders is memorable, because it's something unexpected.

- Angela Slatter's "No Good Deed" demonstrates perfectly why the author is one of the most talented writers of dark fantasy and horror fiction. Her literary writing style is excellent and her sense of style and atmosphere is impeccable. I think that everyone who has a taste for well written literary strange fiction and dark fantasy will love this vengeance story, because the author writes captivatingly about Isobel and her situation.

- Nina Allan's "Four Abstracts" is a masterpiece of slow-burning literary horror fiction. This story is memorable and effective, because the author takes her time to build up an unsettling atmosphere and doesn't hurry with the story. To be honest, this story is one of the best stories of the year, because it's well written and the events advance at a subtle pace. The author's descriptions of the characters' feelings and behaviour are realistic and perceptive. Each of the characters feels like a real person and that's one of the things why the story works so well.

- Brian Lillie's "The Salter Collection" intrigued me a lot. I found it fascinating that the author wrote about library work and concentrated on writing about what the protagonist found in the Salter Collection. Brian Lillie is unfortunately a bit unknown author to me, but I intend to take a closer look at his stories, because I enjoyed this story and its ending.

- "The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers" by Sarah Lotz is an excellent and darkly humorous story about what happens when Steven's grandmother dies while they're at the theatre. Steven finds himself thinking of how to keep everybody from not noticing that his grandmother has died. I think that this story will especially appeal to those who love dark British humour.

- Josh Malerman's "The House of the Head" is definitely one of the best horror stories of the year. I find it satisfyingly strange and unsettling. The author writes well about Elvie May and how she feels about what she witnesses happening inside her dollhouse. The dollhouse turns from a normal children's dollhouse into a hellish playground for terrifying happenings. When you begin to read this story, you'll feel Elvie's concern for the family of dolls, the Smithsmiths, because she fears what may happen to them because of the head that has suddenly appeared inside the dollhouse. This story was so original and impressive that the author made his way to my must-read list.

Although I enjoyed all of the stories in this anthology and found them intriguing, the strongest story is without a doubt "Four Abstracts" by Nina Allan. It's such a haunting masterpiece of literary dark fiction that you can't help but be impressed and captivated by it. It's one of the best and most harrowing stories I've read this year. Stephen Gallagher's "Shepherd's Business", Angela Slatter's "No Good Deed", Adam Nevill's

"Eumenides (The Benevolent Ladies)", Josh Malerman's "The House of the Head" and Stephen Laws' "The Swan Dive" come as close seconds, because they're excellent and well written stories.

It was a real pleasure to read this anthology, because all of the stories are good in their own ways. I found the diversity of the stories enjoyable, because it was nice to read different kinds of stories. The atmosphere in these stories impressed me and made me devour them as quickly as possible, for I've always loved unsettling stories that cause genuine feelings of unease in the reader.

New Fears is a real treat to all horror readers who love atmospheric and unsettling stories, because it showcases how good, effective and original modern horror fiction can be at its best. Please, don't hesitate to read this gem of an anthology, but grab it immediately and treat yourself to a chilling and unsettling reading experience.

Highly recommended!

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## **William M. says**

### 3 AND 1/2 STARS

I had heard this collection was coming out months ago and was looking forward to reading it because it seemed to have a nice mix of veteran writers and some new names I had not heard of before. It was surprising to see Alison Littlewood and Sarah Lotz on the cover over larger horror names such as Brian Keene, Adam Nevill and Stephen Laws, but perhaps the first two writers I mentioned have a larger following in England. It didn't seem like a wise marketing choice, but I'll let that up to the publisher.

As for the content, all of the stories were entertaining to some degree, but the two real standouts were Josh Malerman and Ramsey Campbell, whose entries had a real sense of dread and buildup and clearly better than any of the other tales. However, I discovered four others that were quite strong by Stephen Gallagher, Angela Slatter, Brady Golden, and Brian Lillie. The rest were readable, but nothing amazing. However, the authors I named elevated the collection into the realm of recommendation to any horror fan. Most of the stories were subtle and not in your face, so fans of gore or extreme violence should be aware that this is not that type of book.

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## **Gavin says**

Brand new horror stories by masters of the genre

The horror genre's leading living practitioners drag our darkest fears kicking and screaming into the light in this collection of nineteen brand-new stories.

The impressive line-up includes stories from:

Ramsey Campbell, Adam Nevill, Sarah Lotz, Stephen Gallagher, Angela Slatter, A.K. Benedict, Josh Malerman, Muriel Gray, Christopher Golden, Nina Allen, Stephen Laws, Carole Johnstone, Brian Keene, Kathryn Ptacek, Conrad Williams, Alison Littlewood, Brady Golden, Chaz Brenchley, and Brian Lillie.

New Fears invites readers on a ride through a world of human fears in a vibrant collection of numinous, surreal, gut wrenching and terrifying stories that showcase the very best that modern horror fiction has to offer. Curated by leading horror author and editor Mark Morris, the collection proves that fear truly does come in many forms...

Fear comes in many forms

The moment I saw the remarkable list of contributors Mark Morris had gathered, expectations were raised, this was an immediate 'must read', so I was delighted that Titan Books sent me this anthology in advance of its September 19th release date to review. I've already been lucky enough to read some superb collections this year, so how will New Fears stand up to some very stiff competition?

I'm not going to write a story by story review of New Fears, what I'd prefer to do is cherry pick a few of my favourites. Now that's not as easy a task as you may think. New Fears is an incredibly well written collection of stories. Hardly a surprise due to the authors involved, but it's the sheer variety and diversity of each tale that makes things difficult. These are not gory filled, violent tales of monsters on the rampage, I was pleasantly surprised how a lot of these tales were so cerebral, they didn't hold the readers hand and mollycoddle. Out of the 19 stories in New Fears, I can safely say that 11 of them were outstanding to read, easily falling into the best shorts I've read this year. Of the remaining 8 the standard was very high, with only a couple of the tales dipping in quality, I'm already looking forward to rereading this collection later in the year and re-evaluating my review.

So, onto my favourites, and in no particular order I'll start with Kathryn Ptacek's Dollies. Ptacek manages to pull shock after shock in this incredibly dark and heart wrenching tale about a girl and a secret harboured by her parents. I was unaware of Kathryn Ptacek prior to reading Dollies, I'll certainly be looking for more of her work in the future. Next would be Shepherds' Business by Stephen Gallagher, this had a distinct Hammer Horror vibe going on with a new Doctor taking over the rounds on a remote island. I loved how alive the island felt with its close-knit community and their obvious distrust of this stranger among them. I was utterly engrossed in this tale and it's decidedly dark conclusion. The last story I'm going to mention will be Eumenides (The Benevolent Ladies) by Adam Nevill. Adam has a writing style that just embraces you, words flow and the horrors he unleashes are truly terrifying. I was in this story, I was standing alongside protagonist Jason as he made his steady climb to complete insanity at the summit of Pentree Zoological Gardens. OK, maybe this was my favourite story in the collection. In my opinion, nobody is writing as consistently as Adam Nevill, who along with Josh Malerman (who also features in this collection with an incredibly effective haunted dolls house story) have the future of modern horror sewn up.

New Fears is a stunning collection of 19 tales that will both terrify and delight you. The quality of writing is brilliant with every contributor, and the editor, Mark Morris, deserving congratulations. This is a special anthology that I hope to see run and run. The bar has been set very high.

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## **Olivia says**

Trying out a new system of ratings this year! Boiling books overall down to 1-5 stars always felt hard and not right to me, so I'll be using this new system to hopefully create more nuanced ratings:

Characters 1-5

(Are they multifaceted and complex? Compelling? Do I enjoy reading through their view? Do they inspire

reactions in me?)

Plot 1-5

(Exciting? Does it make me want to keep reading? Is it structured well? Does it flow logically? Does it seem inventive?)

Prose 1-5

(Beautiful? Skillful? Distinct voice?)

Impact 1-5

(Does this make me think about the world? Does this make me want to do something/change something? Am I thinking about it days after reading it? )

Originality 1-5

(Pretty self explanatory, applies to all the above categories! I realized as I was creating this system that originality has a big impact on my enjoyment of a book.)

.. and then I'll convert those scores to this star rating! This is definitely subject to change as the year goes on but I'm excited to use it and force myself to rate books thoughtfully.

Using this rating system on a collection of stories by different authors is actually a little tough haha but I did my best.

Characters:3.5/5

Plot: 4.5/5

Prose: 4/5

Impact: 3/5

Originality:4/5

So that adds up to 3.8/5 stars!

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## **Blair says**

Nina Allan's story 'Four Abstracts': W O W.

'Four Abstracts' is told through, or around, four significant works from the career of artist Rebecca Hathaway. The narrator is her friend Isobel, who is reflecting on their complicated relationship in the aftermath of Rebecca's death, at just 49, from 'complications following a diagnosis of early-onset Alzheimer's'. The two first became friends when they were students, and 'not long after I first met her,' says Isobel, 'Beck told me a strange story'. It's about the time her mother Jennie – herself a renowned photographer – told the then ten-year-old Rebecca that 'the women in our family are all part-spider'. Isobel doesn't believe this, of course, but she's never quite able to forget it.

The story charts the friendship between the two women, Rebecca's career as an artist, and Isobel's feelings of guilt and grief about her friend's physical decline and eventual death, all while keeping the spider theme uncomfortably in view. Everything about it – tone, characterisation, settings, descriptions of artworks – is so expertly detailed that, ultimately, it hardly seems to matter whether this is a horror story or not.

*I've come to believe that being haunted is actually just belated understanding.*

'Four Abstracts' is so good that I'm kind of reluctant to read the rest of the anthology. How could anything else compare? I did make an exception for Sarah Lotz's 'The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers', which wasn't really worth bothering with but was at least very short. I might come back to this at some point, but for now I just want to luxuriate in the brilliance of 'Four Abstracts'.

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### **Stephen Robert Collins says**

An interesting collection but not all of the stories are that good but I still enjoy the rest which made up for less good stories & I buy vol.2.

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### **Amy Jane Alice says**

I heard about New Fears, an anthology of horror stories edited by Mark Morris through Titan Books. While I don't usually read horror stories (I can be a bit of a scaredy cat), I thought that this sounded awesome and I very luckily received a copy from the publisher! Each short story is around thirty or so pages long, so I decided to try and read one a day. Keep reading for my spoiler free review of New Fears.

Each story was so individual and thrilling; from haunted airport lounges, to grandparent imitating creatures to a doctor that stumbles upon a terrifying scenario on an isolated island, there's a horror story for everyone.

Of course with so many different writing styles from the number of authors, there was always bound to be a couple of stories that weren't my cup of tea, but each instalment was short and snappy meaning that even if something wasn't to my taste it was still super easy to sail through each story.

There was definitely a constant undercurrent of creepiness throughout, and I did find myself casting a few backwards glances down the stairs every time I walked ran up them in the dark, just in case, you know? The thing that scared me the most throughout the book was that New Fears isn't filled with typical and traditional monsters. While some do feature a demon like creature, a lot of the stories play on human fears and terrors which makes the stories much more realistic and therefore all the more terrifying.

I won't review story by story because then we'd be here for a pretty long time, so I've cherry picked a couple of my favourite tales. I definitely feel that the stories got creepier and creepier, as the following are all from the last quarter or so of the book.

The story that affected me most was definitely Dollies by Kathryn Ptacek. It left me feeling super uneasy and I'm pretty certain that a chill went down my spine, literally. Dollies is about Nonny, a young girl who is gifted dolls throughout her life which all die of smallpox. The story definitely took a turn that I was not expecting, and I guess that's a prevalent theme throughout the book: expect the unexpected. I finished Dollies with an audible release of breath and a "wow". To call it my favourite wouldn't be quite right considering what happens, but it definitely had an effect on me that the others failed to do.

Another chilling tale is The Abduction Door, which is a story by Christian Golden about exactly what it sounds like: a door through which children are abducted. But the door moves. And through the door a child

is abducted may not be in the same place through which they return, if they're lucky enough to escape. The stolen children can be saved, but at a cost.

The House of the Head by Josh Malerman definitely freaked me out. Whilst nothing particularly scary happened, the whole premise of the story made me feel apprehensive; Evie owns a large doll house and loves to spend time playing with her dolls, until they start to move. And they start to die.

New Fears is a fresh take on the classic horror story, with stories that will definitely stick with you long after you finish reading them. I gave New Fears 3/5 stars, and it was definitely refreshing to read a genre which is worlds apart from my preferred, high fantasy, though I did find myself skipping a few of the stories that I didn't fancy. Thank you to Titan Books for sending me a copy to review!

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## **Steven Belanger says**

Overall very good collection of stories with only a few I didn't care for, not an uncommon thing for a short story anthology.

Though most were good stories and well-written, I continuously didn't care for how most of them ended, like the writers had a good idea, and wrote them well, but then had no place to take them. That isn't exactly true, either; they definitively end. Inexplicable, really, but the bottom line is that I just didn't like how most of the stories concluded. Why? I guess because they were too much like a nightmare the characters couldn't wake up from, and I'm living one of those right now in real life, and don't need to be reminded of it. Too many stories were about things that characters saw, or things that happened to them, but they weren't able to take their own action. The last story is a perfect example of this. I think this is what I mean when I said many of the stories had no place to go. I don't know. You may disagree.

They're all good, most written by maybe the best authors from the United Kingdom. Most of the stories take place in England, Scotland, Ireland, etc. and that was all good. I got descriptions and spellings I don't normally come across. There are a great many pubs with fireplaces and cozy confines, for example. The writing is all good. I don't remember any stories that I just glazed over and immediately dismissed. Well, maybe there was one or two.

The stories are effective. I think my favorite is "Shepherds' Business," a very well-written tale with a shocking ending that is nevertheless logical and conclusive in the reality of the tale. I also like it best because the narrator is someone of action. Unlike the narrator of the last story, for example, who is just a witness to terrible things and then he's back where he started (literally), the narrator here, a local doctor of a small, rather isolated island. Yes, this one was my favorite, by far.

But they're all good, and if you're a fan of the old Twilight Zone episodes that were like nightmares the characters couldn't wake from, you'll have no problem here. Again, the stories are all good and the writing for the most part is very good, so this one is well worth your time. If you read this, and you feel the same way I did about many of the endings, please comment to let me know, so I won't think it's just me and that I'm losing my mind.

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## Theresa Derwin says

New Fears

(Ed) Mark Morris

Publisher: Titan Books

Page count: 408pp

Release date: 19th September 2017

Reviewer: Theresa Derwin

Mark Morris, from the start of his career with his novel *Toady*, has cemented a reputation as an exemplar of everything notable in the Horror genre.

Now, after many years working on a variety of projects, Morris has hit the jackpot; the resurgence of the modern day 'Pan Book of Horror stories'.

Recalling his childhood and a New Years Eve in 1975 spent devouring a well known horror anthology, Morris has captured the spirit of discovery.

The discovery of gripping, creepy, shudder-worthy horror stories that create shadows in dark bedrooms.

In 'New Fears', he reinvigorates the Horror genre by collecting nineteen new tales written by the masters of horror (and I include female writers in that description).

Firstly, as I opened the book, I cursed Mr Morris and those imps and Titan Books.

A white cover riddled with images of

Crawling flies. Yeah, thanks for that. And just in time for blue bottle Season as well.

Once I'd recovered from the creepy crawlies and read the wonderful introduction, I started the first story.

'The Boggle Hole' by Alison Littlewood.

Reminiscing childhood, young Tim is staying with his grandad whilst Mum and new chap are sitting on a beach in the Bahamas.

Intent on Tim having fun, grandad takes him to the local, black beach near Ravenscar. The visit comes with one warning; there's a boggle there (a type of malevolent fae) and once something is taken from his 'boggle hole', something is taken back.

In parts creepy, in parts a lyric to childhood and loss, 'The Boggle Hole', if it can be described as such, is a beautiful and frightening story with an ending which gives a lightening bolt of realisation and emotion.

A great way to start what I suspect will be an award winning series.

Stephen Gallagher, well known for TV writing as well as his novels and stories, offers the next gem; *Shepherd's Business*.

1947 and a young doctor on a supply boat is on his way to his new practice, taking over from the regular GP who is badly ailing. There's a lot to say about this piece; from the atmospheric scenery, to the compassion the new doctor shows his patients and his understanding of how depression was ignored during that time, it is both poignant and heart warming. Then suddenly- eww, argh. From a critical point of view, the historical accuracy and Doctor Spencer's 'voice' were spot on. As for the denouement- I literally gasped.

And reread that last page twice.

The next story comes from Angela Slatter. I know her work through the brilliant *Verity Fassbinder* series.

Her story 'No Good Deed' is an interesting period piece with a character name familiar to many readers. A good solid, enjoyable and humorous story with a lovely ending.

Now, it's getting to the point that this review will be very long if I dissect every story, so I'm going to pick some hi lights.

Next is my first experience of Brady Golden, and wow - *The Family Car* is a helluva story - and I found myself likening it to Stephen King, not just because it features the King Family. Very creepy. Nice creation in the 'antagonist'.

It has convinced me to check out more of his work.

The standout story of the anthology is the longer piece by Nina Allan.

'Four Abstracts' Nina Allan - four words: Holy Crap! Holy Hell!

The abstracts refer to the work of the artist Hathaway and a short piece written, chronicling the art. Rebecca Hathaway (Beck) is a character in the story - her story is woven through the narrative - strands of silk between the tale of Hathaway's daughter Beck and our narrator, Isobel. And I found I could seriously relate to some of Isobel's attitudes and beliefs. Amidst the bleak, disturbing imagery and words, are some really humorous bits. It's a stand out piece in the book, and the reader is left wondering just how much is real.

There is so much I want to say here, but, 'spoilers darling'. All I can say, is read it!

The change in tone with the next story by Brian Keene is a welcome reprieve.

It's a down to earth, gritty kind of horror story that starts with a 'terrorist' incident, but Keene's Voice is a perfect switch over to allow the reader time to recover from Allan's story, and of course, it's a great story in its own right. I discovered Keene many years ago with his fantastic alt-zombie series which started with the much praised 'The Rising'. Fans of Keene will be pleased to know a movie adaptation of his novel 'The Ghoul' has now been released on DVD in the U.K.

In his piece 'Sheltered in Place' I did wonder if Keene's was having a joke poking fun at his writer buddy Maberry by putting in a 'guy in a Hawaiian shirt' - saying nothing guys! It's a nice little story but unfortunately relevant in our current times.

Some excellent stories follow; I really enjoyed AK Benedict's slant on - hmm, an interesting pub, shall we say?

One of my personal favourites was 'The Salter Collection' by Brian Lillie, a writer I've never encountered before, which always delights me. I'm a sucker for a Supernatural mystery and this felt almost cinematic. Ramsey Campbell's 'ghost' story embedding modern technology, reflecting on grief, was an excellent and painful read. This anthology came out not long after my partner passed away, which is part of the reason I couldn't carry on with it at that time. If that's not a measure of getting it bang on, I don't know what is. Loved 'Eumenides' by Adam Nevill, zoos are one of my favourite places in the world and I love animals, whilst a 'familial' story by Sarah Lotz made me howl with laughter. Terrible, but I got the character's dilemma.

So, I've now read Muriel Gray - heard great things about her, but never read her until now. Again, I'm avoiding spoilers, but a nice, fun, dark story with working class protagonists and I really liked it. Nicely done.

Which brings me to the next 'heard a lot of' writer, 'never read'.

'Bird Box' is on my TBR list, especially as I'm watching his pics from the forthcoming film come out on Facebook starring Sandra Bullock, one of my favourite actors. Yes, I said 'actor', not actress; deal with it. Anyway, here's his story 'The House of the Head'. Typo? Supposed to be 'Dead'? Not sure, but, watch this space ...

"... there was an independence to the dollhouse from the very beginning."

Yeah, a haunted dollhouse- Oh. Crap.

As a little girl, I had a few dollhouses- Holly Hobby, Fisher Price - and the open front, old, wallpapered kind that spooked the crap out of me.

As a kid, I thought the dolls moved about at night. So, well done Josh! Creepy.

Now, anyone who knows me, knows I like stories that deal with certain senses, and stories that are also honest about it. So, I loved Conrad Williams' 'Succulents', funny, dark, bleurgh, and a great twist on an old monster.

Speaking of dolls again - 'Dollies' by Kathryn Ptacek is quite a disturbingly familiar piece; at least if you were a girl raised with dolls. To this day I still owe my sis Tish an apology for cutting Alice's hair off and giving her 'chicken pox' with a permanent marker.

Chris Golden's 'The Abduction Door' like many of the stories here, play on children's fears in regular situations- this time, it's a lift/elevator and bit does the punchline deliver.

All of the stories are exceptional and unique, but when you get to the last one 'The Swan Dive' by Stephen Laws, I suspect you'll be in awe. I don't want to say too much about this, other than the imagery is stunning, the denouement is spot on and it's a perfect way to finish the anthology that won the BFS Award in the anthology category in 2018.

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### **Dawn Livingston says**

I'm of two minds regarding this book. On one hand I found myself indifferent to most stories in this book, they just made no impact whatsoever. I just read them, shrugged and went on to the new one. I did not read this book all in one sitting. To me short stories shouldn't be treated that way, it's best to read a few and let them possibly sink in a bit if they will. Mull them over a little. The pages went by quickly but there were so many of them it seemed to take forever to finish it. My first impression is to say it was okay, no big deal, read it or don't. One story stood out, The House of the Head by Josh Malerman but considering how many stories there were you'd think more than one would have stood out. Nope. I felt as if I was just numb to it all, not much really clicked for me. Horror anthology burnout? I think so. Time to put my horror anthologies aside (I think I have three more) and read a few other books at least to give myself a break before I dive back in.

On the other hand, I feel this was a refreshing change to the usual horror stories, a nice break from a Stephen King or a Lovecraft. I think the horror was more subtle which is why I feel I didn't get a lot of what was implied. I felt that a lot of stuff just went over my head. Not a good feeling, very disappointing. Still this was a nice collection of horror that wasn't samey, wasn't carbon copy horror of something else. It just wasn't for me.

I think if you're a fan of horror you should definitely read this book and possibly add it to your collection along with Stephen King's "Just After Sunset" and "American Fantastic Tales: Terror and the Uncanny from Poe to the Pulps."

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### **Katie says**

New Fears, edited by Mark Morris, compiles some of the best short horror stories into one book. Some of them, for me, were a lot better than the others. I'll be honest, in some of the stories I had no idea what was going on. Please excuse the lousy reviews; it's been a while since I've left one.

#### **The Boggle Hole**

A young boy spends time with his grandfather and gets to hear about 'The Boggle Hole'. I enjoyed this one, it was a good way to kick start the book. It was creepy and left me wanting more. 7/10

#### **Shepherd's Business**

Another fantastic story. Told from the point of view of a doctor in 1947, sent to work and live on a small island. Initially sceptical of him, the locals each have their own story. A deliciously dark ending to the story that I did not see coming. 8/10

#### **No Good Deed**

A young woman finds herself enacting revenge on a former lover. I enjoyed this one, probably not as much

as the others, but I do feel inclined to go and read the prequel to it. 6/10

### **The Family Car**

What used to be her family's vehicle follows a young woman around shortly after the death of her family. Enjoyable and sad story, nice twist at the end. 6/10

### **Four Abstracts**

Not going to lie to you, I had no idea what was going on in this one and didn't really rate it much. 3/10

### **Sheltered in Place**

Told from the point of view of a man stuck in the aftermath of a terrorist attack. Brilliant story. Very short but a massive twist at the end that I loved. Left me wanting more. 9/10

### **The Fold in the Heart**

A storm batters a local town and our three characters have to find shelter whilst escaping horrors of the past. This was enjoyable enough but it wasn't my favourite. 6/10

### **Departures**

A young woman wakes up to find herself in a bar with moody inhabitants. I liked this one quite a bit. It was dark but had a bittersweet ending. 7/10

### **The Salter Collection**

I started off really enjoying this story but I quickly lost interest and didn't really understand the ending too much. 4/10

### **Speaking Still**

A man, having recently lost his wife, confides in his friend about hearing her voice. A poignant story of loss with a dark twist and a cliffhanger ending. 8/10

### **The Eyes Are White and Quiet**

We're never really told what has gone on in this story but our main character, a young blind woman, is not all as she seems. This was one of the better stories within the book; I'd definitely go out and read the novel if there was ever one written. I found myself wanting to know more though. 6/10

### **The Embarrassment of Dead Grandmothers**

Dark humour encapsulates this very short story. I didn't know whether to laugh or be shocked at the actions of our main character but I thoroughly enjoyed this one. 9/10

### **Eumenides (The Benevolent Ladies)**

Our main character, what I assume is a middle-aged man, becomes almost obsessed with his female colleague. Once he plucks up the courage to ask her out, he comes to wish he hadn't. This could have been so good if I hadn't ended it with 'What the f\*ck just happened?'. Another example of me apparently being too stupid to understand what had gone on. 5/10

### **Roundabout**

A mystery creature inhabits the local roundabout in town and one man takes it upon himself to rid them of this creature once and for all. Wonderfully dark and tense, I definitely wanted to read more. 9/10

### **The House of the Head**

A young girl is gifted a dollhouse that seems to have a mind of its own. I was really excited to read this one, having LOVED Josh Malerman's *Bird Box* and I was *not* disappointed. This had me hooked from start to finish. Creepy, spectacular and atmospheric I would rate this one the highest. 10/10

### **Succulents**

Our main character, a middle aged English man on holiday with his wife and son, finds himself in the midst of a hellish nightmare. This was a really good story, I didn't see the ending coming at all. 9/10

### **Dollies**

Told from the point of view of a woman who is reminiscing on her childhood, we are introduced to a traumatic life with horrific events that seems to mould her into someone you end up feeling quite shocked at her actions. This starts off relatively innocent enough but has a magnificently dark ending that I did not see coming. 8/10

### **The Abduction Door**

A man was told as a young boy the story of how a small door in elevators, known as 'The Abduction Door' is home to a mystery creature that snatches people, mainly children, and takes them forever. Now grown up, he finds himself victim to it. What a c r e e p y story this was. I really rooted for the main character. A sad twist at the end left me wanting more. 8/10

### **The Swan Dive**

Our main character, a something-aged male, intent to end his life is instead taken on a hellish nightmare that reaches a dramatic conclusion. This was my second favourite of the whole book. Graphic and brutal, I really enjoyed the concept of this one. 9/10

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