



## Best New Zombie Tales Vol. 1

*James Roy Daley , Jessica Brown*

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**Best New Zombie Tales Vol. 1** James Roy Daley , Jessica Brown  
Want the Greatest Zombie Stories Ever Written?

BEST NEW ZOMBIE TALES (Vol. 1)

Over 110,000 words.

Includes Amazing Fiction by:

WHC Grand Master Award Winner, Ray Garton  
New York Times Best Seller, Jonathan Maberry  
Bram Stoker Award Winner, Kealan Patrick Burke  
Bram Stoker Award Nominee, Jeff Strand  
Edgar Award, Bram Stoker Award Nominee, Bev Vincent  
Micro Award Finalist, Robert Swartwood  
Emmy Award Nominee, Harry Shannon  
British Fantasy Awards Nominee, Gary McMahon  
Bram Stoker Award Winner, Kim Paffenroth  
And so much more...

## Best New Zombie Tales Vol. 1 Details

Date : Published April 22nd 2010 by Books of the Dead Press

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Author : James Roy Daley , Jessica Brown

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# From Reader Review Best New Zombie Tales Vol. 1 for online ebook

## Timothy Ward says

So far I will give this a 3 star review. Some of the new twists on zombie stories are interesting, but I'm finding I like more traditional, "pure" zombie stories. I'm new to this "purist" designation for zombie fans that hold to the classic view of slow, non-talking zombies. I like some of the stories, but some were either poorly written or too vulgar to finish. I bought this to study the zombie short fiction market, but these stories make me want to just write a novel where I can track one person surviving and finding places to hide.

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## Jen says

An interesting collection of tales with a variety of takes on zombies. Some of the stories were more traditional, some were more creative, while others played with the concept of zombies to create a creepy or eerie story to tell around a campfire at night. And I have to say that there was one story that seemed to parallel quite closely to The Walking Dead.

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## Todd says

Before you read any further, my Fanboy Disclaimer: I dig anthologies. The reason I love them is simple; I have a problem. Every book I open, I finish. Most days, I've got so much to do I just don't have time to take a big enough bite to satisfy the hunger. That can get really frustrating; especially if it's not that great a book. The solution, for me, has been copious amounts of Anthologies. In general, most anthology stories are open and shut in an average twenty-five pages. Have an hour? BAM! Two books down. Half that time? Not a problem; you'll be done and cleaned up way before curfew.

Now, to the books. Each of these books contains twenty (nineteen if you don't count the author's introduction) short stories and no two authors hold down the same fort. You have everything here from techno-Zombies to Voodoo body snatchers even to stranger than fiction morphological freaks. Not only that, but even when you do have two similar types of animates, the arc that they follow is absolutely unique. To fully paint the picture of exactly what these books are and are not, I'd need to write forty full-color reviews up and down. That's something I can't do, and you may not hang through.

My review, then, is this: I haven't come across an anthology I regretted buying, but I've never landed one without the here-and-there oddball either. These two stand toward the front of the horde as being definitely worth your time (Vol. One being my favorite of the two.) Both contain strong language, graphic content, and sexual themes. These are not for the kids. Keep your eye out for gems, such as: Pegleg and Paddy Save the World, Paradise Denied, and Dredging Up the Dead. If you have a young son, you may want to skip past Connections; that one's a tear jerker.

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## **Linda says**

I love zombie short stories. This book took the idea what it means to be a zombie and ran with it. There wasn't very many classical Romero (Hail Our Future Zombie Overlord) zombies but the stories didn't stick to boring tropes either. A few of the stories weren't as strong as they could have been which kept the anthology out of the 5 star category but over all it was a blast. If I can find the next volume I will read it.

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## **Matthew Blake says**

A great read. I mostly read these stories on my Kindle while taking walks, and I must say they filled me with dread when I did so! I think my favorite story was "Feeding Frenzy", and nearly all of the stories are well written and engrossing. You won't regret going with this one.

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## **Kimberly C. Winslow says**

### **A Must Read!!!**

If you are a fan of this genre, this is one collection you just can't pass up! Unique, entertaining, and all well written complete stories. An absolute pleasure you won't be disappointed!!!

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## **Marlowe says**

Introductions are supposed to either hook the reader or provide additional insight into the work(s) to follow. This one, however, was just an absurd, juvenile fantasy in which Daley defends his choice to put out yet another zombie book to H.P. Lovecraft, while Lovecraft holds his hand in a blender. It adds nothing to the book save for a really poor first impression.

As for the collection itself, the goal is, as Daley puts it, "To put together the best zombie tales ever written. Don't care what year the story was written. Don't care who wrote it. Don't care if the story follows Romero's un-written rules of what a zombie is supposed to do. Don't care if it's offensive, or filled with naughty language. All I care about is High Quality Fiction. Simple."

To his credit, what Daley lacks as a writer of introductions, he's made up for in story selection. A few fell flat (such as "Fishing"), but most were quite interesting. For the most part, the writing quality was decent (except for issues like in "Muddy Waters" where a boy rides a moose "like a demented cowboy" on one page, and then "like some demented junior range rider" on the next).

There were also quite a few issues with the editing/proof reading of the stories. Words would be omitted ("I didn't kill my all [sic] of these people," writes Gary McMahon, and "He knew him. I could that [sic] by the

look on his face...," writes John L. French). I found the editing sloppy enough to distract me, but only a little, and someone less anal may not even notice.

I did like that Daley didn't just pick Romero zombies, so there's quite a variety of imaginings of the animated dead.

Overall, I enjoyed reading this anthology, and it certainly served its purpose as entertainment. But it's nothing particularly special. Good for a lazy afternoon, anyway.

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### **Dana says**

This is a quick read. There are many different kinds of stories in this book--zombies from every angle, if you will. There were a few that weren't my normal reads but overall this is a decent book. There were some writers in this anthology that I will look for in the books and stories sections when I'm in the mood for a zombie fix.

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### **Lisa Cleveland says**

This was a fine collection of stories, but I've got to tip my hat to Gregory Miller and his story "A sense of duty." It's one of the best stories I've ever read and I'm be looking for him on amazon and goodreads. The rest of the stories we're pretty good, although there were a few stinkers! Still I would recommend this book. Funny thing, after posting this review, I looked up Mr. Miller and it turns out I've got one of his books in my t.b.r. pile. He just moved up the list!

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### **Robert says**

Good collection of stories. Some great, some very good, only one that is so completely stupid the man should probably think about giving up writing until he learns that the story can reveal social commentary, but you can't start a story with a political ax to grind and expect it to turn into a decent story. The timeline and knowledge of the main character in Gary McMahon's "Nowhere People" didn't make sense. A humble cab driver isn't going to be able to uncover some conspiracy theory, and there was no evidence of a conspiracy until the very end, so it made no sense for that to be the conclusion that the character jumped to immediately. Complaining about horrible writing aside. The book was great otherwise and I've already bought volume 2 and 3 on my kindle to read soon.

Zombie Love ~ RAY GARTON (Great story of love lost before it's time. 4 stars)

Feeding Frenzy ~ MATT HULTS (One of the best in the book. Very twilight zonish. 4.5 stars)

Wings ~ JESSICA BROWN (I always love zombie animals. 3.5 stars)

The Man Who Breaks The Bad News ~ KEALAN PATRICK BURKE (decent, not the most memorable, but a good idea. 3.5 stars)

Immunity ~ JEFF STRAND (great short story about a man's ego. 4 stars)

In The Land Of The Blind ~ ROBERT SWARTWOOD (a great story about the value of life. 4.5 stars)

Nowhere People ~ GARY McMAHON (by far the worst in the book and the only story that wasn't

enjoyable. 1 star)

Muddy Waters ~ BRIAN KNIGHT (good idea that had elements of sleepy hollow or blair witch. 3.5 stars)

Darkness Comprehended ~ HARRY SHANNON & GORD ROLLO (Another sad father tale, that is powerful and disturbing. 4.5 stars)

Connections ~ SIMON McCAFFERY (They know how to make a new father's heart ache. 4.5 stars and a must read in the book)

Sign of the Times ~ JOHN GROVER (nice little twist on a women getting free from the yoke of a bad marriage. I love the irony of the ending. 4 stars)

After, Life ~ JEFF PARISH (good little short story about dedication to a loved one and trying to get back to them even after life ends. 3.5 stars)

Paradise Denied ~ JOHN L. FRENCH (Great setup that led into a story that felt like Film Noir. I could see it in black and white with a private eye. Didn't really fit the zombie genre, but was a good story. 3.5 stars)

On The Usefulness Of Old Books ~ KIM PAFFENROTH (another great father son story. This would make a great full length novel if the idea were expanded. 4.5 stars)

The Revelations of Dr. Maitland ~ CHARLES BLACK (good little twist at the end. 4 stars)

Pegleg And Paddy Save The World ~ JONATHAN MABERRY (Best comedy in the lot. 4.5 stars)

SKN-3 ~ STEVEN E. WEDEL (great idea, not technically a zombie story, but a hat tip on the creativity. 3 stars)

Fishing ~ JASON BRANNON (another father/husband story, not as good as the previous but still not bad. 3.5 stars)

Groundwood ~ BEV VINCENT (interesting take on what to do with the zombie bodies. Some stupidity at the front, but finally abandoned the slack-jawed yokel thing and told the story. 2.5 stars)

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## **Shayne says**

I was pleasantly surprised upon reading this book. I thought for the exceptional low price of \$2.99, the stories had to whomp. Most of them were very good and well written. Out of the 20 stories, I can say there were two I didn't care for whatsoever. My fave was Zombie Love and Feeding Frenzy.

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## **David McDonald says**

You would think that with the current trend for all things zombie being cool that the sub-genre itself might be a little tired. It would seem that shambling, rotten corpses have went considerably mainstream over the last few years, resulting in the incredibly popular The Walking Dead TV series from AMC and the mega-budget production that is the big screen adaptation of Max Brooks' World War Z starring Brad Pitt. A bookworm such as myself might be forgiven for thinking that there really was nothing left to explore with zombie stories. Step up Books of the Dead's Best New Zombie Tales Vol I...

Books of the Dead Press have published some great genre titles over the last three years or so and in particular, their anthologies such as Best New Vampire Tales and Best New Werewolf Tales have impressed me with their unique short stories from award-winning writers and talented new authors alike. Thankfully, Best New Zombie Tales Vol I continues in the same vein with stories from the likes of multi-award winning author Jonathan Maberry, the talented Matt Hults, Bram Stoker award winner Kealan Patrick Burke and the World Horror Convention Grand Master of Horror recipient, Ray Garton.

The above authors don't even make up half of the roster for this collection of horror stories, since this book

comes loaded with no less than nineteen tales of the walking dead. Getting back to my original point, if you think there's nothing left to be done with a story about the living dead, then think again...

Matt Hulst ramps up the weird with Feeding Frenzy and a fast food joint that's serving up a lot more than just burgers and fries in a diner that could easily be someone's idea of hell...

In Wings, Jessica Brown draws the reader in with the concept of a zombie virus that not only affects humans but animals also, with dire consequences.

Steven E. Wedel's SKN-3 is an exercise in body horror that will make your skin crawl... or someone else's!

As well as the aforementioned stories, there is more conventional fare but still, unique in its own way: Ray Garton's Zombie Love takes up around a third of this title and could well have been a novella on its own right. It is a tale of teenage love and the lengths a young man will go to for his recently deceased girlfriend; including enlisting the services of the local witch.

Kealan Patrick Burke's The Man Who Breaks The Bad News looks at what governments would do if the dead were to walk once again.

Harry Shannon and Gord Rollo collaborate on Darkness Comprehended, a sharp little tale of postapocalyptica and what one man will do for his wife.

Possibly my favourite in the collection and certainly the most charming is Pegleg And Paddy Save The World by Jonathan Maberry. Here, the author offers up an alternative explanation to The Great Chicago Fire of 1871, including strange glowing comets and, you guessed it, zombies!

My sole criticism of Best New Zombie Tales Vol I is, like many other anthologies, you cannot help but want more from some of the stories contained therein. It's not that the work is incomplete, simply that it is compelling enough that you don't want it to end.

Again, like many collections of short stories, this book is ideal for those looking to get back in to reading and don't have much time to commit to a full novel, with most of the tales being easily read in an hour each. For die-hard horror fans, this is definitely one to add to your collection, adding new dimensions to the zombie sub-genre.

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### **angie says**

A very solid collection of "undead" short stories that isn't afraid to venture out some beyond the "normal" ideal, Best New Zombies Vol. 1 reminds me that horror can provide some of the best short fiction around. Lots of writing talent to be had here, plus it's an overall intriguing read, even for the non-zombie person. :)

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### **Daniel Powell says**

James Roy Daley did a great job in collecting this first volume of zombie fiction. It's a large book (110,000 words and nineteen stories) that's filled with all sorts of narratives: shocking humor rubs elbows with more mundane existentialism in these pages. It's a nice break from the "run, scavenge, fight" school of zombie

fiction (although fans of that type of thing won't be turned off by this book, either).

Best New Zombie Tales, Vol 1 was in the first batch of books that I purchased for the Kindle, and it has some formatting issues. Many of the paragraph indents didn't make the translation for a few stories. It's a minor deal and wasn't a distraction. There were some pretty glaring typos, though, in just one of the stories (which is a little strange).

Still, minor stuff...

I enjoyed all of the stories to some extent, though a few clearly stood out.

Ray Garton's "Zombie Love," a chilling story of the occult and the sorrow of lost love, was a fantastic way to begin the anthology. Mrs. Kobyłka is the star here, a finely drawn character with veiled intentions. Keith, our protagonist, is a sympathetic character; the scenes in the third act, when the horror of just how far his love for Natalie has pushed him over the edge, are chilling. I think I honestly flinched while reading them.

Oh, and then there's Baltazar. Balty is a trip and, even though we see it coming, nothing quite pulls at the heartstrings like the thing Balty says to Keith in the third act.

Scary and compelling, this was a great tale among a bunch of fine work.

"Feeding Frenzy," by Matt Hults, was an interesting, frightening story. It felt like a mix between some Lovecraftian dimensional horror with a little bit of Serlingesque Twilight Zone on the side. Oh yeah, and it takes place in one of my favorite horror locales--the bizarre country diner. Scary and well written, this one will stick with you...

"The Man Who Breaks The Bad News" and "On The Usefulness Of Old Books" were really strong, polished tales that excelled in world building and delivered the chills with a dose of caution and morality.

My favorite tale, and one that was echoing through my mind a few days after I read it, was Simon McCaffery's "Connections." The relationship between father and son was very nicely rendered, which made the heartbreaking final act all the more difficult to take. McCaffery writes well--clear, concise prose that slowly ratchets the tension up until our characters' lives are literally crashing down all around them.

It's a nice collection--one a zombie lover will enjoy, but also an anthology that fans who like a little bit of attention and care in their narratives can appreciate. Exposition is accentuated in many of these stories, to good effect, and the authors took their care with plot. And a majority of the stories shared, at their core, some interesting discussions on the nature of human experience in the face of harsh conflict.

Very satisfying collection--I'll be taking a look at volume two down the road...

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## **T.W. Brown says**

Best New Zombie Tales Vol 1, edited by James Roy Daley

Best New Zombie Tales Vol 1, edited by James Roy Daley is a very solid offering from front to back. There are a few familiar names here, but the thrill comes from names I was not up to speed on. The introduction



makes it seem as if there will be problems for “traditionalists” of the zombie genre. As I consider myself to fall in that category, I braced myself. There was no need. These were an eclectic and well-selected group of stories. The editing could have been more thorough, but all-in-all this is worth owning.

#### Zombie Love – Ray Garton

Very tense and enjoyable. The idea of a zombie that has not so much the base instincts to re-enact old rituals from their life, but also a limited vocabulary to speak to loved ones plays well. And a zombie that says “Ow!” is actually quite humorous in a dark way. The whole bit about going to the mall and subsequently a house of an acquaintance seemed awkward, but does not derail a very enjoyable story.

#### Feeding Frenzy – Matt Hulst

This is one of those twisted stories that, try as you might to dislike it for one reason or another, gets a firm grip on your inner-child who loved the impossible. Everything in this story fits perfectly and draws a reader in deep.

#### Wings – Jessica Brown

Nothing is safe here. Animals. Long-dead friends and loved ones. The story is short and to the point. Kinda like a kick in the groin; there is the initial shock...then, a flood of pain.

#### The Man Who Breaks the Bad News – Kealan Patrick Burke

Ever wonder what it would be like to exist as a self-aware cadaver? Me either. However, this quirky story takes you for a very interesting ride.

#### Immunity – Jeff Strand

This was the only story I’d read before. I’m just not a fan of flash fiction. The story is clever, I just didn’t dig it.

#### In the Land of the Blind – Robert Swartwood

Fairly high-concept stuff here. This was the first story to really stand out as something different.

#### Nowhere People – Gary McMahon

My love of all things British continues and is fed by this noir-esque tale that – if Americanized – (Heaven forbid!) would play out against the backdrop of our Civil Rights turmoil in the 1960’s South.

#### Muddy Waters – Brian Knight

Suffering from the poorest editing of the bunch, the story still packs a pleasant wallop. It is entertaining if not overly original.

#### Darkness Comprehended – Harry Shannon and Gord Rollo

I often wonder when two people share credits, “Who wrote which part?” If not for the Baby-Scene in the remake of Dawn of the Dead, this tale would be even more disturbing.

#### Connections – Simon McCaffery

Sad and very special. This story was one of my favorites. It is rich in its darkness and emotional depth.

#### Sign of the Times – John Grover

A bit like seeing a stand-up comedian doing marriage material. The story still draws a response, but it reminded me too much of a story that I’ve read a hundred times before. (Even if I’d read it in 2002)

After Life – Jeff Parish

More flash fiction. The writing is fine, it just doesn't grab me any more than a prompt in the most recent edition of Writers Digest.

Paradise Denied – John L. French

My favorite of the bunch. It is a wonderful twist on the "whodunit" story. What to do in a world where the Rapture may have occurred, the dead return, and one of them walks in to a detective's office wanting to know who killed him.

On the Usefulness of Old Books – Kim Paffenroth

Never disappointing, Paffenroth can take something so gruesome and make it read like literary fiction. Some may be put off by his turning of phrases, but he brings an intimacy to a story of a father and son surviving in the post-apocalypse and creates a story that defines a generation gap in a whole new way.

The Revelations of Dr. Maitland – Charles Black

With an M. Night Shyamalan ending, this story almost seems like an excerpt of something bigger. It is one of the shorter stories, and it almost feels like the reader is cheated by gaining such a small glimpse of a much grander tale.

Pegleg and Paddy Save the World – Jonathan Mayberry.

This tale first appeared in the Permuted Press Anthology, History is Dead. It made me realize even more clearly why my own submission was rejected. You will never think about the Great Chicago Fire in the same manner after this very fun story.

SKN-3 – Steven E. Wedel

Perhaps if it was filmed in black and white with the cast of MST3K heckling from the front row, I might've enjoyed the story more. It just did not seem to fit with so many other enjoyable offerings.

Fishing – Jason Brannon

Quick. Quirky. Disturbing. In just a few short pages, Jason Brannon manages to deliver the most unsettling story of the bunch. It is the kind of story that makes you wonder what is going on in somebody's mind that makes them so wrong.

Groundwood – Bev Vincent

Not the strongest story (which is how many anthologies wrap up) but still worthy. This tale with the odd angle of converting zombies into paper products at a mill lets the reader fill in all the nastiness. The narration does not bother with scenes of gore, instead, just enough it told so that, when you start getting squeamish, it is your own doing.

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