



Fearful Symmetries

Ellen Datlow (Editor)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Fearful Symmetries

Ellen Datlow (Editor)

Fearful Symmetries Ellen Datlow (Editor)

So what can you look forward to in *Fearful Symmetries*? There are monsters—human and non-human. There are children—those who victimize, and those who are victims. There are supernatural horrors, psychological terrors, nourish dark fantasies, and downright weird fictions. Featuring Nathan Ballingrud, Laird Barron, Pat Cadigan, Siobhan Carroll, Terry Dowling, Brian Evenson, Gemma Files, Jeffrey Ford, Carole Johnstone, Stephen Graham Jones, Caitlín R Kiernan, John Langan, Catherine MacLeod, Helen Marshall, Bruce McAllister, Gary McMahon, Garth Nix, Robert Shearman, Michael Marshall Smith, and Kaaron Warren. Come on in, and make yourself a cozy little nook in the dark, and enjoy.

Fearful Symmetries Details

Date : Published July 8th 2014 by ChiZine Publications (first published April 15th 2014)

ISBN : 9781771481939

Author : Ellen Datlow (Editor)

Format : Paperback 400 pages

Genre : Horror, Short Stories, Anthologies, Fiction, Fantasy

 [Download Fearful Symmetries ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Fearful Symmetries ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Fearful Symmetries Ellen Datlow (Editor)

From Reader Review Fearful Symmetries for online ebook

Chrystal Hays says

No horror editor comes close to Ellen Datlow. In this book, we have some brilliant works by excellent writers. The final story is perhaps the one that stayed with me the longest...

Catherine Grant says

Really solid anthology with established names as well as up-and comers.

My favorite story, by far, is Jeffrey Ford's MOUNT CHARY GALORE, which is the first story I've ever read from him and made me go out and buy every single book he's written. His prose is gorgeous, characters perfectly anchored in a story that makes sense and has a satisfying ending. One beautiful thing about anthologies is that they help readers find new authors.

My other absolute favorite was Catherine MacLeod's THE ATTIC. Haunting, great story arc and tension, and beautiful prose. I'll also be searching out more of her work.

Althea Ann says

Ellen Datlow can always be counted on to select some good writing. This collection simply further cements her already-stellar reputation. These are all strong stories, and all appear here for the first time. A must-read for any horror fan - or indeed, any fan of dark, weird fiction.

The editor's guidelines for submission to this anthology: "This is a non-theme, all original anthology of about 125,000 words of terror and supernatural horror. I'm looking for all kinds of horror, but if you're going to use a well worn trope, try to do something fresh with it. If you've read any volumes of The Best Horror of the Year, you'll know that my taste is pretty eclectic, that I like variety, and that while I don't mind violence, I don't think it should be the point of a story. I don't want vignettes but fully formed stories that are about something. I want to be creeped out."

“A Wish From a Bone” by Gemma Files

A fine entry into the 'cursed tomb' subgenre. A TV show crew gets more than they bargained for when they enter an ancient Middle Eastern crypt in search of some good documentary fodder.

“The Atlas of Hell” by Nathan Ballingrud

A mafia boss sends his minions out into the bayou in search of a man who's been holding out on him; selling occult artifacts. But even experts in the arcane may get more than they bargained for.

“The Witch Moth” by Bruce McAllister

A young boy believes that he lives in a beautiful home with his family. But his mother may be a witch whose

emotional instability will tear away all that he holds dear. Or is the witch someone else altogether? Or is there a witch at all? Layers of ambiguity are wrapped around this tale.

“Kaiju” by Gary McMahon

Probably the best take on a Godzilla-type scenario that I've read. In the aftermath of a monster's passing, survivors wander through the flattened ruins left by the devastating footsteps of its trail. And there's a nice bit of a twist...

“Will The Real Psycho In This Story Please Stand Up?” by Pat Cadigan

A high school girl's best friend (a bit belatedly) goes out of her way to befriend the one guy who's been bullied and picked on throughout their years at the school. She asks him out to prom, on a double-date. They're nervous that the bullies will ruin the dance - but when disaster strikes, it's not from the expected quarter.

“In the Year of Omens” by Helen Marshall

A weird and disturbing story. Strange omens presaging death have begun appearing to many, many people. A teenage girl, in her self-involved world-view, strangely envies those who have received a 'special' omen.

“The Four Darks” by Terry Dowling

An old-fashioned-feeling tale which weaves together a man with strange dreams, a declining mental health facility, and an investigation into a 19th-century theory about the nature of the universe involving the 'Fuligin Braid.'

“The Spindly Man” by Stephen Graham Jones

Meta-horror: a book club meets to discuss a Stephen King short story. They're joined by the uninvited 'spindly man,' who brings up uncomfortable and eerie experiences from the members' pasts.

“The Window” by Brian Evenson

Classic ghost-story lovers should appreciate this one. A man is woken by a strange noise in the night. Intruder? Or something less tangible and more terrifying?

“Mount Chary Galore” by Jeffrey Ford

Kids from a broken family spy on the old woman who's locally rumored to be a witch. She invites them in - and they get more than they bargained for. Southern gothic, with a hint of the classic tall-tale, and some extreme weirdness that's all Jeffrey Ford.

“Ballad of an Echo Whisperer” by Caitlín R. Kiernan

A writer and a photographer, on a cross-country train journey to New Orleans. Gradually, perspective and personality fragment, mixing past, present, and might-have-been. Vividly written and richly evocative.

“Suffer Little Children” by Robert Shearman

After a scandal, a young governess is dismissed from her position. Her prospect of gaining a new job seem dim - but then, a remote school offers her a teaching position, sight unseen. Since this is a horror anthology, creepy events are bound to ensue... and creepy they are.

“Power” by Michael Marshall Smith

A tech geek who's also an abusive husband and all-around jerk is obsessed with building successively bigger and better robotic pool cleaners. Naturally, he tests them out at his home. And all does not end well.

“Bridge of Sighs” by Kaaron Warren

Post-mortem photography is a bit of a curiously morbid thing all on its own - but when mixed with ghost-hunting, by a practitioner who's a bit of a devious pervert? Super-creepy.

“The Worms Crawl In,” by Laird Barron

A jealous man's (literally) monstrous nature is revealed. For me, a bit over-the-top, but I'm sure fans of Barron will be pleased.

“The Attic” by Catherine MacLeod

This might be my favorite in this collection. A young woman has escaped the clutches of her Mafia boss, for whom she did enforced work as a thief/locksmith. Seeking a totally different life, she's happy to marry a rural man and join his family - following a simple, traditional lifestyle in his isolated village. However, her instincts start telling her something is being kept from her... perhaps the practices of a religious cult? She slowly begins to feel like Bluebeard's wife.

The story is nicely thought-provoking, with commentary of responsibility, demands, and what is properly owed...

“Wendigo Nights” by Siobhan Carroll

Arctic research team goes crazy. This reminded me quite a lot of a less-fleshed-out version of something else I've read... but I can't quite place it. Later update to come? I did like it, though.

“Episode Three: On the Great Plains, In the Snow” by John Langan

Ghosts versus Dinosaurs! A spirit is thrust into a violent afterlife, his regular landscape populated by warring cowboys and Indians, bloody accident scenes, and yes, a rampaging T-Rex. It seems a bit silly - but the possible explanation offered at the end gives the piece an unexpected pathos.

“Catching Flies” by Carole Johnstone

Emergency workers grab a young girl and her baby brother from their home, rescuing them from a horrible scene. They're unwilling to talk to the girl about what happened to her mother. But the girl knows more about the horror than any of them. Really effective; well-done.

“Shay Corsham Worsted” by Garth Nix

Garth Nix is always excellent; and this tale closes the collection on a strong note. A retired secret service agent has been watching a certain house for thirty years. But when the threat that's been feared for all these decades erupts, the weapon has been forgotten, and bureaucracy gets in the way.

Daniel says

I received an advanced reading copy of this from the publisher via NetGalley.

Ellen Datlow's name to me is synonymous with horror anthology. I see the two together so often, and usually with accolades, that I decided I really did need to just read one of her collections. This one really impressed me in its variety and its quality. I typically enjoy reading horror stories like these around Halloween time, and this collection would be suited well for that kind of celebration. The hard decision will be whether to reread this one or try out another one of her collections.

A review of each single story seems excessive, and there isn't a single story that failed here. There are no

common themes uniting this collection other than the very general fitting into the category of horror or dark tales. They range from very realistic to paranormal, from gruesome gore-filled feasts to nuanced, atmospheric tales, from pulp to literary. Fairly well-ranged in background and style, this is an ideal volume to discover new authors or names that you may merely recognize.

Frankly, it is hard to even pick out favorites from this. For someone like me who has a wide range of tastes across the genre, each of these represents top contributions to their respective category of story type. If you are discriminating regarding the type of horror you like then this may not be the best collection. There will certainly be some or several stories here that you like, but others may hold no interest, in which case you might search elsewhere for a themed collection or just read certain selections here. But for those wanting an intro or return to the range that the horror genre has available, "Fearful Symmetries" is absolutely perfect.

William Freedman says

"Fearful Symmetries is a mixed bag, but intentionally so. When you combine the editorial talent of Ellen Datlow and the publishing talent behind ChiZine Publications, good things are going to happen, but unpredictably.

Few readers are going to like every story here, but it will be a matter of readers' taste rather than writers' talent. I've been waiting a long time to read something by the immensely gifted Gemma Files in which I'd feel like I'm part of the intended audience, and I thank her for letting me in with "A Wish from a Bone". I also enjoyed the works representing Bruce McAllister, Jeffrey Ford, Robert Shearman, Michael Marshall Smith, Laird Barron and John Langan. The last couple stories, by Carole Johnstone and Garth Nix, are virtual companion pieces that should have anchored a collection of their own -- one about Britons who face bizarre adversity with innate courage and plucky aplomb.

If "Fearful Symmetries" has a persistent flaw, it's that too many of the authors seemed intent on building a world in which further adventures could be had. Nothing wrong with that in a short story, but when you string too many of them together it starts reading like a SyFy Channel pitch session.

Overall, though, I'm glad I backed the Kickstarter campaign for it (even though I didn't get credit in the back -- sniff!) and would support further Datlow-CZP collaborations in future.

Erin says

ARC for review.

So, short story anthologies versus collections. If you are reading a collection it's probably because it's by an author you already love. If you are reading an anthology there are bound to be stories by writers who have a style you don't particularly care for, but then you also get the opportunity to find a great new author. From a rating standpoint you're nearly always going to end up running the gamut - lots of twos you don't love, some fours you like and, if you are lucky, maybe a surprise five here and there.

All that said, that's exactly what I found here. Datlow did a great job curating a broad selection of scary stories. There's no real over-riding theme, and, as always, there were some I thought I didn't work at all, and

some I really enjoyed - my own personal standouts were "The Witch Moth" by Bruce McAllister (loved the line "some people who love see only the light. My grandmother saw the darkness too, and still loved. That made me feel safe...." (56), "Kaiju" by Gary McMahon (the banality of evil), "Mount Chary Galore" by Jeffrey Ford (if for nothing more than for the description of something smelling like "a home permanent on the Devil's ass hair" (144) and "Shay Corsham Worsted" by Garth Nix (loved the description of aging combined with horror, "it was a good day to die, if it came to that, if you were eighty and getting tired of the necessary props to a continued existence. The medicines and interventions, the careful calculation of probabilities before anything resembling activity. (313)).

Overall quite successful if you like discovering new dark fiction authors.

Violette Malan says

Usually when I read an anthology I expect to find maybe 3 stories out of 20 that are really outstanding, an couple of maybe-I-won't-finish-this-ones, and the balance fine enough. In this collection I'd say it was more like 17 outstanding and 3 fine enough. I finish even the ones that weren't my usual cup of tea. Shockingly good stuff.

Rachel Bridgeman says

Ellen Datlow does it again! Thanks to Netgalley for allowing me to review this, as a big fan of Ms Datlow's previous anthologies I was excited to read this latest one. It is to be highly recommended, as always in an anthoology there are some hits and some misses but you cannot deny that Ms Datlow has some of the biggest names in ficiton lining up to be included in her anthologies and this is because she picks the best stories and lines them up beautifully. Each book feels like a labour of love and this is no exception.

Jen says

I love anything Edith Datlow works on. I have one too many times attempted to read a compilation, only to find nothing but a collection of mediocre to bad stories. That is NEVER the case with Datlow edited works. This is no exception. The stories in the beginning were a bit weaker to me than those in the middle and at the end, ending with a particularly amazing offering by Garth Nix. Horror is not my genre, not in the slightest, but the grand majority of the stories compiled in this work were mostly more cerebral than your classic monster movie. I thoroughly enjoyed this book and would recommend it to anyone who enjoys more than just blood, guts and gore in their horror. Those things are in some of the stories, but they all are smart. Excellent editing job.

Matthew says

One of the best anthologies I've read... period. A real page turner that terrified and enthralled me from start to finish. The highlights included stories from Dale Bailey, Laird Barron, Gemma Files and Garth Nix.

Highly recommended for all genre readers.

Tobin Elliott says

Maybe it's just me--likely is, considering the overwhelmingly positive reviews for this collection--but I really wasn't impressed by it. And Ellen Datlow is likely the closest thing to royalty when it comes to editors. I have nothing but the utmost respect for her. And the authors are a stellar group, overall.

Perhaps it was the unthemed theme of this collection. Perhaps it was my state of mind. Who the hell knows? All I know is, I started the first story, got halfway, and gave up. Moved to the second story, loved the first three-quarters, hated the ending. Kept going, finding little things here and there that I loved, but found none of the stories satisfying. Which is shocking, because I've read--and enjoyed--many of the authors before.

This is why I'm wondering if it's my state of mind. I don't know, but all I can say is, at this point, I didn't enjoy this at all. Which is sad, because I'd really looked forward to it.

Rose says

All stories are good, most are genuinely disturbing. A couple are more like sketches.

Jaki says

More of a 3 and a half really.

*I received this book for free from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review. This does not affect my opinion of the book or the content of my review.

If you're anything like me, you like your horror in small doses. :D When I was younger, I used to love horror novels – I devoured anything by Stephen King, Richard Laymon, Dean Koontz and the like. Now, I like 'em short and sweet.

So Ellen Datlow's new anthology, *Fearful Symmetries*, was right up my alley. And as I've mentioned many times before, anthologies by various authors will always be a hit'n'miss. You're gonna like some, hate others, get totally lost in confusion about some, be "meh" about a few, and fall in love with a couple. So I always figure that rating of various authors anthologies is hard – is that one stand-out superb story worth the price of the book? Do you feel justified in spending money on it if you can get a few rippers out of it, while the rest are just so-so? It's a personal opinion, and people's tastes will vary on it.

Me, I figure that if I had paid for this in paperback, I would have felt justified in it. I liked quite a few of the stories, was bored silly in a couple, and flat out didn't understand some. Which is one of my pet hates in the short story form actually – I really dislike shorts that don't really "finish", where you're left wondering whether she really did get eaten by the slime monster, or did she in fact, marry it?? The ones I call "arty-farty" stories, where the emphasis is more on the pretty prose than actually telling us what happened.

There were only two names here that I recognized – Garth Nix and Pat Cadigan, with the rest being unknown to me. I quite liked Cadigan’s tale – “Will the Real Psycho In This Story Please Stand Up?” – a great tale of a high school girl and her night at the Prom, with her boyfriend, best friend and the date of the BF, an unpopular boy who has been bullied and picked on all his life by schoolmates and his family. It didn’t go where I was expecting it to go, and if you’re expecting that old chestnut of a redemptive tale of unpopular kid finally making friends..well, it ain’t happening here.

Kaiju by Gary McMahon is another good one, although I did feel it lacked a little bit of something, of perhaps “completedness”. Main character wandering his home neighbourhood in the aftermath of a giant monster wrecking havoc. Had me thinking, we are inundated with movies and books about the actual destruction when it comes to Godzilla type monsters...but we never see stories about what happens afterward. But there’s a neat little twist in the tale here...

I skipped through a couple of the stories – they weren’t holding my interest, or were more of those “arty farty” type ones. But all in all, if you’re a horror fan, you’re probably going to like these offerings.

Stacie Wolff says

I received an advance copy from Netgalley. Loved this collection. Not a dud among them. Especially liked Will the Real Psycho in This Story Please Stand Up.

Ben Rowe says

I was keen to pick up this book in part because I like the taste of Ellen Datlow as an editor and in part because the range of writers in the collection appealed to me. Caitlin Kiernan and Jeffrey Ford are two of my favorite writers and I basically seek out everything that they publish. Nathan Ballingrud left a real impression on me with the few of his stories I have read as had the stories I had read by several of the other writers in the volume such as Brian Evenson. On top of that many of the other writers were writers who I had heard great things about and was eager to check out.

The first story I read was the Caitlin Kiernan. Often when I read stories due to my fatigue I do not follow them 100% and I do find with Kiernan many of her stories benefit from a second reading. At the same time they have an almost Lynchian element to them in which they are more about how things feel than actually making any sort of literal sense anyway. This story was beautifully written and whilst it feels very familiar territory for Kiernan with its struggling writer protagonist it was very effective, engaging and memorable. I enjoyed the New Orleans atmosphere of the piece.

The Gemma Files is the first time I have read her and I found the story to be well written, exciting and creepy all at the same time. Although I didn’t fall in love with the story it was a very effective tale of the creepy/sinister archaeological discovery type. Didn’t feel to be making any new ground but I always have time for a well and interestingly told tale.

The Nathan Ballingrud was superbly entertaining. I got a feeling of an entire dark fantastic world with hell creatures and hellish influences as well as the seedy underbelly of society interested in them. Hugely enjoyable and whilst the story felt complete in itself I could happily devour a whole novel in this type of

world/setting.

The Bruce McAllister was quite short and the Gary McMahon was very short, both were by writers new to me and whilst they were quite well written they were not to my taste particularly in style or content. Still they were enjoyable enough and made a refreshing change from the two before in content and theme.

The Pat Cadigan was set in a American high school and involved a prom. This is a setting that in my 30s I am increasingly uninterested in and a bit tired of. Still Cadigan came up with a fresh and interesting tale using this setting and I thought it was a memorable tale that I liked if not loved. I do feel with short fiction that anything that leaves an impression on you, unless its disappointment in the author has succeeded.

Thats where I am up to thus far.
