



Borderlands 1

Thomas F. Monteleone (Editor, Introduction) , David B. Silva (Contributor) , Jeffrey Osier (Contributor) , John Shirley (Contributor) , Lee Moler (Contributor) , Nina Kiriki Hoffman (Contributor) , T.E.D. Klein (Contributor) , Chet Williamson (Contributor) , more... Ed Gorman (Contributor) , Jack Hunter Daves Jr. (Contributor) , Thomas Tessier (Contributor) , Les Daniels (Contributor) , Harlan Ellison (Contributor) , John Maclay (Contributor) , Karl Edward Wagner (Contributor) , Elizabeth Massie (Contributor) , Charles L. Grant (Contributor) , G. Wayne Miller (Contributor) , Joe R. Lansdale (Contributor) , Nancy Holder (Contributor) , John DeChancie (Contributor) , Francis J. Malozzo (Contributor) , Bentley Little (Contributor) , Darrell Schweitzer (Contributor) , Michael Green (Contributor) , Poppy Z. Brite (Contributor) ...less

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Borderlands is a horror anthology series not concerned with traditional elements of horror fiction.

Borderlands is about breaking the mold and pushing the genre and its finest writers to the edge. Hailed as the anthology series of the 90s, *Borderlands* will remind you that horror can indeed be horrific. Read about a farmer who disdains his wife for a giant potato...women's clothing made from fetal tissue...an executive who slowly slips into the reality he sells...and more.

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From Reader Review Borderlands 1 for online ebook

Hugo says

Very strong collection, well selected to a brief (stories well-written and 'extreme') by Monteleone, and containing, amongst many others, the acknowledged classics, Poppy Z Brite's literary modern Gothic *His Mouth Will Taste of Wormwood* and Joe Lansdale's off-colour but striking Southern Gothic *By Bizarre Hands*.

Kim says

If only these books were more readily available to buy! The first time I read this book I completely fell in love with this genre, and indeed it should be considered a genre-defining collection of stories. I crave for more horror stories written like these.

Megan says

Some really good bizarre stuff in here, but over half the stories have men abusing women in some way. Horror writers, can we get past that, because it's not creative or fun...

Mel says

I just couldn't get into this. It just came off as really bleak and depressing. DNF stack.

Kristine Muslim says

The Borderlands books are the horror connoisseur's most basic requirement. These books contain none of the typical, mass-media mishmash of genre elements (lolling zombies, red-eyed vampires, etc.) interspersed with writing that resembles material meant for showbiz tabloid magazines. There are limitless great stories out there. But it's rare seeing them in one book together.

Here are some of my favorite stories in the first book of the Borderlands series:

David B. Silva's "The Calling" - This psychological horror story of a man and his dying mother forces the reader to confront mortality head-on: "She showed him the colostomy pouch for the first time. He couldn't bring himself to see how it was attached to her."

John deChancie's "The Grass of Remembrance" - This story of a man named Kirby, a toxic chemical dump, and urban chaos may have been funny in retrospect since I've read the book a decade ago. But I can never

forget how it made my skin crawl. This is one of those stories that people with paranoid tendencies must never read as they will never look at a patch of grass the same way again. Here's a spoiler: "Kirby noticed an amazing thing before he died. The bottommost parts of the grass stems were green! The grass wasn't dead; it was waiting."

Francis J. Matozzo's "On the Nightmare Express" - I'm not keen on horror train stories. There are only three exceptions: that one written a long time ago by Charles Dickens, Clive Barker's "The Midnight Meat Train," and this extremely well-written "On the Nightmare Express."

Bentley Little's "The Pounding Room" - This is, well, about a "pounding" room and the most powerful men in history "pounding" therein. The main character, an ordinary person, catches a glimpse of such room. This is the story that introduced me to a brilliant writer named Bentley Little.

Darrell Schweitzer's "Peeling It Off" - A grisly account of body mutilation, obsession, and hate -- that timeless motivation of a character trapped in a true horror tale. The first line reads: "I've done something to Joanne." And it gets so much better...

Michael Green's "The Raw and the Cooked" - If a religion is built around the fast-food industry and its own pantheon of gods, then what will those gods ask from us? And how are we supposed to prepare those offerings? I think this story answers these questions.

John Shirley's "Delia and the Dinner Party" -- Meet Delia, a child who sees the true forms of the people around her. They manifest as monsters: "Her Dad--she knew him by his clothes, they all wore their human clothes--had a second face on the side of his head that was snapping its jaws at Mama like a vicious little dog barely kept leashed. Mama's head was triple faced; the one facing Daddy was angry and frightened, one of its eyes had been gnawed away."

Nina Kiriki Hoffman's "Stillborn" - Lucid yet dreamlike. Reminiscent of Saki's Sredni Vashtar, "Stillborn" is a fantastic story about a boy who found comfort in a mummified thing (possibly his mother's aborted fetus) he had dug up. Passages like this one amp the creep factor to topnotch horror: "Eat me," whispered Little Brother. "Once I'm inside you, nobody can ever hurt you again. I'll be there to protect you."

T.E.D. Klein's "Ladder" - The most ambitious and the most complex story in this anthology. What if a person realizes that everything (names, dates, places, etc.) has a pattern?

Chet Williamson's "Muscae Volitantes" - This is a story of a guy (who is cheating on his wife) with another man. Then throw in a case of muscae volitantes, that telltale tic in the eye when you see spots in your vision until you can't stop blinking. Not for the squeamish.

Thomas Tessier's "Evelyn Grace" - Not an ordinary story about necrophilia. This has converted me to become a full-fledged Tessier fan.

John Macclay's "A Younger Woman" - This is for the Hugh Hefners of the world. Look again at all those younger women whom the typical alpha male (even the beta ones, too) lust after. They may not be that young after all. A pleasant spoiler: "It must be the strain of the trip--if not on her, on me, he thought again, as if grasping at a last, rational hope. My eyes, my mind must be tired, must be playing tricks on me. She can't have ... aged right before them. ..."

Joe R. Lansdale's "By Bizarre Hands" - Hands down, the best story in this anthology. Yes, it has child

molestation, racial epithets, and all those things that nobody in his right mind will put in one story. Maybe, just one or two, but not all of them. Then it tells about hogs eating a grandmother. I am even embarrassed to admit how much I love the story. It is so sick, so offensive, so powerful down to that explosive ending. The prose -- I don't know how Lansdale learned to write, but whatever staple diet he's on, I'll give an arm to get a piece of it.

Amanda says

A high school favorite!

Jesse says

4.5.

Don't let the generic spooky skeleton on the cover fool you. This inaugural volume of horror stories from powerhouse editor Thomas F. Monteleone is a fantastic, unusual, and powerfully written collection, ranging from the bizarre to the blackly comic to the deeply emotional. Even the stories that are minor still resonate with conviction, and the sheer breadth of style is astonishing. It makes me realize just how far reaching horror can be, and I love it for that. Some favorites: "The Calling" by David B. Silva, "Suicide Note" by Lee Moler, "His Mouth Will Taste of Wormwood" by Poppy Z. Brite, "Stephen" by Elizabeth Massie, "Muscae Volitantes" by Chet Williamson, "The Ladder" by T.E.D. Klein, and "By Bizarre Hands" by Joe R. Lansdale. An essential collection for horror fans.

Christopher says

I cannot recommend this anthology highly enough. This collection is loaded with surprises, shocks and lingering unease, even for a jaded horror fan like me. Smart, cohesive and innovative today as it was in the 90s when I first picked it up. It is the perfect choice/gift for the discerning horror fan that has seen it all.

Mariano says

There was some good stuff here (and some tales did nothing for me), but that's something that always happens to me when reading anthologies (when it comes to short stories I prefer collections of the same author): I liked a lot "The Pounding Room" (B. Little), "His Mouth Will Taste of Wormwood" by Poppy Z. Brite (I have to read Wormwood a.s.a.p.), the classic Lansdale "By Bizarre Hands" and "Stillborn" by Nina Kiki Hoffman. The other ones were ok, except maybe the standard bad-things-happen-to-bad-guys which I tend to find unfulfilling.

Michael O'Brien says

1.5 stars.

Very ordinary stuff.

Daniel says

I have always enjoyed taking a literary ride on the 'horror' train, though I haven't read as much dark fantasy lately as I did as a teenager. I picked this book up in an airport some years back when I had forgotten to bring along something to read, and while I read maybe two stories at the time, this book sat around on my shelves waiting for me to get back to it.

Mostly this book was a time-passer. Few, if any, of the stories really reached me. Nothing stood out as a story I'll remember for a long time. One story, as I was reading it, had me thinking ... oh good, a story that I can write about in my review, but as I look through the table of contents, it doesn't stand out. I recognize all the titles. I remember reading them, but none strike me as 'outstanding.'

At the same time, none of these struck me as terrible. In some cases, they were predictable ("By Bizarre Hands" "The Man in the Long Black Sedan" "Muscae Volitantes" "Stillborn" "Delia and the Dinner Party" "The Raw and the Cooked" "The Grass of Remembrance"). However, of these, some did stand out as being excellently written, specifically "Stillborn" by Nina Kiriki Hoffman and "Delia and the Dinner Party" by John Shirley and "The Grass of Remembrance" by John DeChancie.

If you enjoy the genre, then this book will probably be a welcome window to the dark for you. If you are new to this type of fiction, then better, perhaps to start with a true master of the field (find something by Robert Bloch or Robert Aikman or H.P. Lovecraft).

Sue Bridehead (A Pseudonym) says

Update: So I accidentally bought and read this book twice, several years apart. To an extent, I stand by my earlier review, that the stories are forgettable. I did, after all, forget reading most of them; the only one I remembered having read before was the first one, "The Calling" by David Silva, which seemed familiar as I was reading it -- though it is also not that original, so one could chalk it up to recognition of the situation but not necessarily the story.

This time around, I thought a few selections sustained an interesting, haunting feel or made unexpected choices. Only time (weeks? months?) will tell if I will remember them after this second read. They are:

1. "Scartaris, June 28" by Harlan Ellison -- by far, the most sophisticated story in the bunch, all the better for its lack of gratuitous violence (sexual violence in particular)
2. "Stephen" by Elizabeth Massie -- about something other than going for the grotesque scare
3. "By Bizarre Hands" by Joe Lansdale -- creepy and packed with some standard horror choices regarding

violence against women, but with an air of southern gothic, and some dark humor, that elevates it

There's something to be liked about almost every story here, but most are interchangeable and feel like they could have been average-to-weak episodes of "The Outer Limits" or "Tales from the Crypt." Not that this is a bad thing. I would probably watch weak episodes of both of those shows every day of the week if they were still on.

One bone I do have to pick with this collection (har har, I think that's a pun if you look at the original paperback cover) -- too many religious nuts. To me, this is a cheap shortcut in modern horror, and I wish authors could find better, more subtle ways to reference mania than having people quote the Bible and praise the Lord.

Almost done reading this. Not a single stand-out story in the bunch. Very forgettable stuff.

Mcf1nder_sk says

Borderlands is an anthology of horror/dark fantasy edited by Thomas Mobteleone. When he put out a request for author submissions, he requested that the authors push the boundaries of the typical HDF genre; thus the title. There are 24 short tales in this compilation, but before reading, I only recognized three names, Bentley Little, Poppy Z Brite and Charles L Grant, of which only Little have I previously read.

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These stories range from true horror to the purely psychological chiller that will keep you shaking and thinking long after the story is told. Mobteleone included a short biography of each author before the stories, which comes in handy, since several of the writers are ones whose works I would like to continue reading. Some of the stories seemed a bit obtuse, but others were incredibly crafted. Overall, a great way to pass the time, either a story at a time or all at once.

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My Rating: 4.25/5 stars

Ryan Pidhayny says

Borderlands is a decent collection of horror, dark fiction, and suspense, but while many of the stories are fairly good, I don't believe the anthology as a whole quite lives up to the hype. I feel too many stories within try to go for over-the-top and offensive just for the shock value. I'm not sure if it is limited to this specific Kindle edition, but the editing was pretty horrific throughout. Nevertheless, there were a good number of strong stories here, especially 'Ladder' by T.E.D. Klein, 'The Pounding Room' by Bentley Little, and 'The Man in the Long Black Sedan' by Ed Gorman.

John says

If you only ever read one horror book in your whole life, make it this one. I rarely gloat over a book, but this one is totally worth any praise (and much more) than can be heaped upon it. The stories are strange,

disturbing, and not at all what you might expect in a horror anthology. This is still the best collection of horror I've ever read in my life, even 15 years after first reading it.
