



Shadows Over Main Street

Doug Murano (Editor) , D. Alexander Ward (Editor) , Ramsey Campbell (Foreword) , Gary A. Braunbeck , Chesya Burke , Tim Curran , T. Fox Dunham , Brian Hodge , more... Kevin Lucia , Adrian Ludens , Josh Malerman , Nick Mamatas , Rena Mason , Lisa Morton , Aaron Polson , Mary SanGiovanni , Lucy A. Snyder , Cameron Suey , John Sunseri , Richard Thomas , Jay Wilburn , Stephanie M. Wytovich , James Chambers , Paul Carrick (Illustrator) , Vincent Chong (Illustrator) , John Coulthart (Illustrator) , Galen Dara (Illustrator) , M. Fersner (Illustrator) ...less

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What happens when idyllic small-towns, and the simple folk who inhabit them, collide with inexplicable evil borne of a vast and uncaring cosmos? Imagine a series of stories set in a golden era of American life, where worldly troubles are regarded from a distance, if at all.

Hear the buzz of playing cards clipped in children's spokes echo down quiet lanes. Smell the faint aroma of rich tobacco smoke from an old man's pipe on a shady boulevard. Listen to the gossip of small towns where everyone knows everyone's business.

Or do they?

Sometimes, deadly secrets lurk out in the barn. Sometimes, unimaginable evil awaits us in the root cellar. Sometimes, we fall under the sway of the Shadows Over Main Street.

Come inside and sit for a spell...

Foreword by Ramsey Campbell.

Cover illustration by Luke Spooner.

Interior illustrations by Paul Carrick, Vincent Chong, John Coulthart, Galen Dara and M. Fersner.

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From Reader Review Shadows Over Main Street for online ebook

Kris says

I have a great love of horror anthologies. My only complaint is that every one contains a story or two that I really don't like. That was NOT the case with this collection. I loved them all. My only complaint with this book is that it ended FAR too soon!

Adam Armour says

A good collection of short stories combining two of my very favorite things: small towns and madness-inducing Lovecraftian monstrosities. It's like a marriage made in Haddath.

Richard Howard says

As with all anthologies this is a grab bag: some good, some middling, some poor. The best story - 'The Ogre' - has nothing to do with the Cthulhu mythos at all really. There are too many stories that have the same theme and tone - Dagon & his amphibian-like progeny - and only the final tale 'Homecoming' has a real twist-in-the-tale ending, which truly captures a Lovecraftian feeling of horror. It's worth a read if you don't have high expectations.

Grampy says

"Shadows Over Main Street" is a highly entertaining anthology of 20 stories richly incorporating the style and characters of H.P. Lovecraft. One need not be a Lovecraft aficionado to appreciate these delectable tales of horror run amuck, but if one IS a Lovecraft fan, this collection will be a delightful find.

The subtitle of this collection is 'An Anthology of Small-Town Lovecraftian Horror'. Having lived a large part of my life in very, very small towns – with populations ranging from 150 to 500 – I can personally attest to the accuracy of the small-town persona presented herein.

Some of the stories in this collection are penned by authors who already will be very familiar to readers of the horror genre. Others are written by authors who may soon become favorites. I found the stories to vary greatly, but all were well-written and hard to put down.

I highly recommend "Shadows Over Main Street" for all Horror fans. You will not be disappointed.

Efka says

Before starting this book, I had some doubts, but the name of Josh Malerman, one of a dozen or so authors who contributed to this collection and whose "Bird box" I had recently read and quite enjoyed, worked like a

magnet, so I decided to give it a shot. I noticed, that this is a "lovecraftian" book, but since I haven't read Lovecraft, I thought that it would be worth a try. Turns out, I'm not really in "lovecraftian" stuff. I mean, can't say something negative about it. Even more, I actually still think that this book is certainly quite decent even if it's not my cup of tea, as they say, so I can safely presume, that people who ARE into Lovecraft(ian) would really enjoy it. But since I'm not one of those guys, my verdict is that it is simply an OK book - 2* and dropped it after some 40%.

D.T. Griffith says

Several good stories

I'm fairly new to the Lovecraft mythos and found this anthology to be a great experience in appreciating his legacy. I love dark stories set during the early and mid 20th century, so this felt like the perfect book to indulge. The small town settings work well for the creepy, organized groups of worshippers desiring full control of their environments as they called upon Cthulhu and the many other gods and monsters for their self-servitude at the detriment of innocent neighbors.

A few stories left something to be desired with abrupt endings and forced dialog. I realize this was the editors first attempt at an anthology and I applaud them for it - it's a true labor of love.

Overall, the collection was enjoyable and I recommend it to other fans of dark fiction and Lovecraftian lore. I will be watching out for other works by these authors and editors.

Tarl says

It wasn't until I read the editor's blurb at the end of the anthology that I really, truly, understood what he was going for with this collection. Once I read it however, I realized that Murano had not only succeeded, but had also captured a truly unique idea for his anthology. Small towns, especially in the Americas, holds a certain view in their cultural vision. Combine that with mythos tales, and you get something that contains a very nice level of creeping horror.

There were a couple that stood out, both for the good and for the bad, within this anthology.

The Ogre by Lisa Morton feels like the odd man out in this anthology. The horror is there, make no mistake about it, as is the small town feel. The lovecraftian or mythos aspect of it however, isn't. Rather, it's a tale about mankind's ability to become the monsters themselves, which is a great concept. It just doesn't fit in among all the other stories in this collection, or with the general theme of the anthology of itself. This made Morton's story less impactful than it could have been in another, more appropriate anthology.

The Crisis by Cameron Suey played along my emotional scale extremely well. Even though it took a bit to realize the protagonist was a girl, the entire story plays out exactly like you want to, with one of the most satisfying moments of justice in the entire anthology. The story brings about a lot of interesting elements that you don't see much in the rest of the collection, which makes it worth a read and makes it stand out among the rest.

The Stagnant Breath of Change by Brian Hodge was my favorite story in this anthology. Pulling together a number of horror elements, Hodge brings about a tale that is haunting in a number of ways, and weaves them together masterfully. I could easily reread this story a number of times and still get the same pleasure from it that I did initially. Definitely a good one!

The Black Pyramid by Kevin Lucia built was a premise that I truly loved. Lucia pulled in everything that should have been in this story and wove it into a wonderful tale of corruption. Unfortunately, the actual conversion itself was a bit too over the top for my tastes, but the beginning and end of the tale more than made up for it. A very enjoyable story.

Overall, this is a good anthology with a number of themes and different types of horror that make it a pleasure to read. Both Lovecraft's themes and mythos, as well as the American Small Town setting are handled well and it brings about a level of horror we don't generally see in other Lovecraftian anthologies. Well worth picking up, especially if you have ever lived in a small town!

steven duane says

Worth the price...but..

So I bought this solely for the Josh malerman story. Which sadly was one of the weakest stories in this collection. However, many of the other stories made it worth the money.

Gevera Bert says

Solid Lovecraftian anthology.

John R. Dailey Jr. says

A OLD BOX OF DREARY TALES IT IS.....

Hello, this is your usual collection of authors trying to be "Lovecraftian". I would say that half did an okay job and one of two were good. The rest were not so good. Thanks.

Nick Nafpliotis says

A wonderfully curated collection of small town Lovecraftian terror.

Dan Johnson says

The collision of small-town America and Lovecraftian nightmares makes for enjoyable reading. This is a fine collection of stories, bringing the horror of the Old Ones to the streets and front yards of the idyllic

America that really never was. These are the "good old days" of fifties and sixties television, but with a darkness hiding just under the surface. I would recommend it for all lovers of weird fiction.

Fiona says

In keeping with my effort to read more horror this October, I finally made my way around to this anthology - and it's actually a pretty great collection.

As with any collection of short stories, there are some standouts:

This Stagnant Breath of Change, by Brian Hodge - considering it came out in 2015, it's an awfully relevant piece about an old generation sacrificing the future of their children to maintain their fragile view of how the world should be. Also one of the few pieces that gives a nod to the less-savoury side of HP and his intolerance.

The Friendless Bodies of Unburied Men, by Gary A. Braunbeck - framing Lovecraft within the bounds of one man's mental breakdown, and does it brilliantly.

The Abomination of Fensmere, by Lucy A. Snyder - really reminiscent of those "young girl sent to live with relatives for a summer after losing a parent/gaining a sibling" books that I read so many of as a kid. Also incredibly satisfying.

Homecoming, by John Sunseri - the final piece of the collection, quite short but very impacting.

Lots of these were quite short actually, but it's a strong collection nevertheless; when I'm left with multiple authors to add to my groaning to-read list, I know it's been a success.

James Sabata says

Lovecraftian fiction set on the streets of every small town you've ever wandered through. Cosmic horror attacking the peace and tranquility of towns where people remember "that one time there was a car accident." In the small nestled corners where people still move at a leisurely pace, Shadows Over Main Street introduces reasons to run.

These streets are no longer safe.

Twenty authors came together to create this amazing new take on Lovecraft's world. What's that you say? You're unfamiliar with Lovecraft's work? Before this anthology, so was I. Luckily, the foreword, written by the great Ramsey Campbell, provides a detailed orientation into this style of writing and sets the mood for the stories which follow. But even if you were to skip Campbell's words, you'd get the hang of it really quickly. This collection is geared for those of us who are new to the genre as well as those who have survived under Lovecraft's dark umbrella for many years.

Every story in this collection more than deserves to be mentioned individually, but the ones that truly stuck with me afterward included Lisa Morton's "The Ogre", Josh Malerman's "Fiddlehead Party on Carpenters' Farm", and "This Stagnant Breath of Change" by Brian Hodge.

This collection not only attacks our fears. It assaults them in the places we've been taught to feel the safest;

and does so in such a satisfying way, we're almost okay with it.

Not that the universe left us much of a choice anyway...

Joshua Sexton says

Big fan of Lovecraftian horror. The way this book ties in small town life with otherworldly horror is great.
