



Help! Wanted: Tales of On-The-Job Terror

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"HELP! WANTED is a rollicking, creepy, crazy, and thoroughly unnerving collection of work-related horror stories by the cream of today's horror crop. Each story is as stingingly fresh as a razor cut!" - Jonathan Maberry, New York Times Bestselling author of Dust & Decay and Patient Zero

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From Reader Review Help! Wanted: Tales of On-The-Job Terror for online ebook

Char says

This was a good collection of short stories involving the work place. The stand-outs for me were as follows:

Unrest by Stephen Volk-4*. A unique vampire story.

This was my first Stephen Volk story and I will be looking for more.

Another Shift Change by David Dunwoody. A story about why you shouldn't dedicate your entire self to work. 4.5 stars

Face Out by Lisa Morton. 5* Book store employees really love their books. And their books love them.

Carpool by Gregory Norris. The things we will do to gain access to the carpool lane! 4*

The Interview by Adrian Chamberlin. How do you get demons out? 4*

The Tenure Track Lottery by Ellen Herbert. Like Shirley Jackson's "Lottery", sometimes you don't want to win. 4*

Team Player by Patrick Flanagan. What we will do to keep our jobs! 4*

Agnes: A Love Story by David C. Hayes. You won't believe who Agnes is! 4*

Shutdown by Vince A. Liaguno. This was a poem and I'm not big on poetry but I really liked this one. 5*

Accountable by David Greske. "We don't make mistakes" is the company motto. But what happens when someone, inevitably, makes a mistake? 5*

New Orlean's Best Beignets by Vic Kerry. All my notes say is "Flat Out Awesome". 5*

Deadline by Matt Kurtz. Women shouldn't stay late at work alone. 4*

The Vessel by Henry Snider. I don't even know what to say about this one, other than that I loved it. 5*

Playing Blackjack with Mr. Paws. A card game between an employee and a mouse with unusual rewards for the winner. 4*

Must Be Something in the Water by Mar Allan Gunnells. What do you know about the water in your office water cooler? 5*

My favorite story in this collection was authored by Gary Brandner titled: Words, Words, Words! Plagiarism has serious consequences! 5*

Jim says

A really enjoyable book, especially "Like Riding a Bicycle". my favorite story in the collection (OK, I'm biased, I know that author, but it is a great story)

Vickie says

This was an unimpressive collection of short-stories with cliché plots and see through attempts at cleverness. Most of the stories in this book are transparent in their attempt to make analogies out of the office workers' plight (becoming a cog in the machine literally instead of figuratively, books that kill people for a woman who devotes her life to them in a world gone techno, people who die instead of retire, companies who kill their employees for making mistakes.) I can honestly say that there wasn't a single short-story in the bunch that impressed me. Here are my reviews for each story.

*The Chapel of Unrest, (1 star) - A dry, boring story. A crappy beginning to an otherwise mediocre book.

*Another Shift Change, (2.5 stars) - This was a decent (if unoriginal) short-story. It is decently written which is why I give it two stars. Anyone who works a tedious office job (like I used to) will relate to the main characters' plight.

*Face-out (1/2 a star) - Books that kill people? Really? I found this story sooo ridiculous. I must have rolled my eyes at least three times. Bleh.

*Carpool, (2.5 stars) - This was one of the more original stories in this compilation (which isn't saying much). It wasn't a particularly interesting story but then again none of the stories in this book are.

*Grist, (1 star) - I wanted so so badly to like this story. It was cool and I kind of understood what was happening but not really...It would have been really awesome if the author gave SOME kind of explanation as to what the hell is going on...did anyone truly understand this story?! It has amazing potential but is too confusing and jumbled to make any sense of it.

*The Interview (3 stars) - A decent story with a creepy atmosphere that is well portrayed by the author. I also liked the premise (people who are possessed trying to cut the demons out of themselves). It is dark and eerie. Good story overall.

*The Tenure Track Lottery (2.5 stars) - This was well written but a bit silly for my tastes. Why would these tenured professors jump to their deaths instead of just retiring? No explanation is offered. The whole premise is ludicrous without an explanation. Retiring or 'stepping down' from their positions would have been a more practical action to take instead of plummeting off the side of a cliff. They could have still had the same ritual of name pulling and the person whose name was pulled retired or quit or resigned..

*Words, Words, Words! (3.5 stars) - I read this story somewhere else a few years back (though I can't remember where) and really liked it then and still very much like it now. Irony always sits well with me. This is easily one of my favorite stories in the book.

*Team Player (2.5 stars) - This was an interesting story. I liked the premise and I liked the ending. I worked at a grocery store as a teenager and the story is true to form. District managers are almost all dicks and nobody ever stands up to them.

*Agnes: A Love Story (3 stars) - The main character, Jack, is a decent guy with a drunk and bitchy wife who takes him for granted. Thankfully his copy machine who is known around the office as Agnes appreciates him...Unique little story that is well executed.

*Work/Life Balance (1/2 star) - DUMB STORY. SOOOO RIDICULOUS. HOW DID IT EVEN MAKE IT INTO PUBLICATION?

*Monday Shut-down - In all fairness I do not like this type of writing (free form poetry? So I skipped it.

*Accountable (2 stars) - Another blah story. I can't even be bothered to recap it.

*The Gardeners (3 stars) - This was original and creepy. You can feel the main characters hesitancy and anxiety. Well done.

*New Orleans Best Beignets (3 stars) - Despite the fact that the plot was EXTREMELY predictable (I figured out the whole story in the middle of page two) it is well written and better then most of the other crappy stories in this book so I will award it three stars. There is something to be said about being amongst the best of the worst lol.

*The Vessel (3 stars) - I liked this story. It is a decent horror story. Reminded me of Stephen King a little.

*Playing Blackjack with Mr.Paws (1 star) - Gambling mice and midgets? If this was a compilation of cutesy stories I would get why this was included. This was SUPPOSED to be a compilation horror like creepy stories about the work-place. How killer hardcover books and gambling mice made it into this compilation annoys me. So childish.

*Must Be Something in The Water (2.5 stars) - I enjoyed this story. You can feel the wrongness of what's going on and the main characters growing anxiety about it.

*Like Riding a Bicycle (2 stars) - Meh. This was neither interesting, well written or original.

*A Hundred Bucks is a Hundred Bucks (1 STAR) - The ending ruined the whole story.

*The Pipes (2.5 stars) - Decent plot with a decent ending. Typical ghost story feel to it.

*Deadline (3.5) - Best story in the book. Creepy, interesting plot with a suitable ending. Well done. It was stories like this one I had thought this book would include. Not midgets or mice or people poofing into piles of hair.

*The Little Church of Safe crossing (3 stars) - A close second to deadline. Well written with definite horror aspects to it. Good read.

*Expulsion (2 stars) - Odd but interesting.

*Career Day (no stars) - This isn't even an actual story. I don't know what it is but two thumbs down lol.

Stephen says

I received this book from a Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

Help! Wanted is a collection of short horror stories centered around the workplace. Each story was from a different author, some new and others more well known.

My experience with anthologies has been hit or miss in the past. Shared theme collections tend to be more erratic in quality than shared world or joint story-telling, but I never let that deter me from something that could be good.

I was pleasantly surprised at the consistent level of story quality throughout the anthology. Although I did catch a couple of typos (technical errors), the level of story-telling was great almost across the board.

The stories ranged from terror inducing suspense to gut wrenching levels of grotesque. I actually felt like part of the enjoyment came from experiencing such a wide range of ideas from every corner of the horror genre.

I liked so many of the stories, but one of them stood out as my favorite. (Even though it did kinda fit into one of the older horror formulas.) - 'New Orleans' Best Beignets' by Vic Kerry was by far the most fun to read!

So, for those who don't mind developing a healthy fear of the workplace...I heartily recommend this book!

Ashley Vail says

Help! Wanted is a great book filled with 25 short stories taking place on the job. Definitely a must read.

David Watson says

Help Wanted: Tales of On The Job Terror from Evil Jester Press is a fun and scary read. This book is edited by Peter Giglio and has short stories by Joe McKinney, Gary Brandner, Henry Snider and many more. As if work wasn't already scary enough, this book gives you more reasons to be scared. Help Wanted is an excellent anthology that includes some great stories by some master storytellers.

One of the stories includes Agnes: A Love Story by David C. Hayes, which tells the tale of a lawyer named Jack who feels unappreciated at work and by his wife so he starts a relationship with a photocopier. They get along well until the photocopier starts wanting the lawyer to kill for it. The thing I liked about this story was how the author makes you feel sorry for Jack. His two co-workers are happily married and love their jobs while Jack is married to a paranoid alcoholic and he hates and works at a job he can't stand. You completely understand how he can fall in love with a copier because he is a lonely soul that no one understands except the copier of course.

Another story in Help Wanted is Work Life Balance by Jeff Strand. In this story a man works for a company that starts to let their employees do what they want at work. It starts with letting them come to work a little later than usual, then the employees are allowed to hug and kiss on the job. Things get really out of hand though when the company starts letting employees carry knives and stab each other, as long as it doesn't

interfere with their job. This story is meant to be more funny than scary but still has its scary moments. Jeff Strand does a great job mixing humor and horror in this story.

Another good story in Help Wanted: On The Job Terror is The Chapel Of Unrest by Stephen Volk. This is a gothic horror story that takes place in the 1800's and has to deal with an undertaker who has the duty of capturing and embalming a ghoul who has been eating dead bodies in a graveyard. Stephen Volk through his use of imagery in describing the graveyard, the chapel and the clothes of the time, transports you into an 1800's gothic setting that reminded me of Bram Stoker's Dracula.

One more story in this anthology that I have to mention is Expulsion by Eric Shapiro which tells the tale of a mad man going into a office to kill his fellow employees. This is a very short but very powerful story that gets you into the mind of a disgruntled employee but manages to end on a positive note. Though there were stories I didn't like in Help Wanted, all in all its a very good anthology. I highly recommend this book

Rhonda says

For most people, there is nothing more terrifying than waking up and going into work day after day. Peter Giglio shows just how valid this fear is as he brings together twenty-five authors and stories in Help! Wanted. As with all anthologies, some stories will be favored by one reader while other readers will prefer the ones that reader didn't care for. For me, some of the stories that truly stood out were Lisa Morton's "Face Out", where a spell goes wrong for a bookstore owner; Mark Allan Gunnells' "Must Be Something in the Water", which will make you hesitant to ever drink from a water cooler again; Gregory L. Norris' "Carpool", in which a man finally goes crazy from driving to work each day; and Jeff Strand's "Work/Life Balance", which shows how things really can be too good to be true. These are just a few of the magnificent and utterly terrifying stories in this collection. Do yourself a favor and read this book... unless, of course, you think it will make it that much more difficult to get out of bed in the morning. Consider yourself warned! Highly recommended for all library collections.

Contains: Adult Language & Adult Situations

Ellen Herbert says

Jobs, work, groan! This anthology is wonderful; helps you laugh and see the work place in a whole new light. Some terrific writers of mystery and horror here!

Rebecca McNutt says

This book had some stories I'll have forgotten by the end of the week, but also some unforgettable ones that make this book worth reading.

Lachinchon says

I sure hope this is not the best of the genre. Only two stories were even remotely creepy or disquieting. The

rest were either trite, inelegant, or prosaic. Are there any good don't-look-in-the-closet ghost/terror stories? The emphasis in my question is on terror (the creeping fear of the unknown), not horror (visceral revulsion), what you imagine, not what you see. Wait, what was that scratching sound in the wall behind my bed...?

Catherine Cavendish says

Loved this collection. I was gripped by each one of them. Some wonderful twists and great ghostly/paranormal/horror atmosphere. The quality of writing was excellent and the stories varied and riveting enough to keep me entertained for hours. Definitely 5 stars from me!

Rechan says

It's difficult to write a review of such a large anthology. With twenty five stories here, I can't address them all and instead I'll address the best, the middle, and the least appealing. First I should say that I liked the anthology's premise, because "the workplace" has a lot of potential, and the stories here really do cover a variety of possible work places.

The Tenure Track Lottery by Ellen Herbert has several successful elements going for it, all popped at an excellent pace. The story is revealed near the beginning to be similar to Shirley Jackson's "The lottery", so the twists are how that is manipulated by the characters, leading to an excellent ending.

I would not call Patrick Flanagan's "Team Player" scary, but it is interesting. The plot seems to be an uncomfortable yet unremarkable situation until you catch on to the subtle implications, and by the end you're staring and smiling at the odd cleverness of it.

Meanwhile "The Vessel" by Henry Snider is deliciously fiendish. Both interesting and seemingly normal until things start going south, when the buildup becomes dreadful and exciting to a gawk-inducing conclusion that left me hungry for more by Snider.

Craig Saunders' "Playing Blackjack With Mr. Paws" has an excellent sinister curiosity about it, along with a sympathetic character. It creates not only a good tale with a justifiably satisfying ending, but almost builds a mythology about it.

Like "Team Player", Marianne Halbert's "Like Riding a Bicycle" is more a weird tale than horror necessarily, but unlike anything else in the anthology it surprised me. The plot twist was fairly unique and left me enjoying the piece for both its originality and the small touches of characteristic description.

Finally I come to "Deadline" by Matt Kurtz. Along with "The Vessel" this is hands down the best story in the book. With a real sense of building tension and dread, the story's background is a little hackneyed but that doesn't slow down the ending which is startlingly eerie. I want more by Kurtz.

Other stories had elements which worked for them but overall weren't as great. "A Hundred Bucks is A Hundred Bucks" had believable, interesting characters, "Face Out" had a unique plot element, "The Interview", while it dragged, built up interestingly, and "Agnes: A Love Story" also built with an interesting element.

Finally the stories that stood out as the worst. "Little Chapel of Safe Crossing" would have been a good story, but we are not provided any real contextual information about what is happening - it's from an ignorant observer watching a side character frustratingly resolves matters without explanation. The Gardeners tried to make the horror elements present but they lacked any sort of information, so when the final reveal is made I was left scratching my head, looking back to say "wait, what?" and feel disappointed. "Grist" felt incredibly impenetrable for my taste, and "The Chapel of Unrest" dragged out in dull verbiage, a story your great uncle might think would get a rise out of you, only to result in a "hm" at the end.

Overall, the anthology is probably worth it for the good stories, and while the bad ones aren't terrible, there are quite a number of them. So it may be worth your time.

R.B. Harkess says

I'm relatively new to horror, at least horror for its own sake. Its growing on me, though, and I'm even writing some myself - which is a surprise. Help! Wanted is right in the niche that I like. Not into slash/gore fests, and not really into Lovecraftian stuff. I guess I like my horror a little more psychological, thought provoking.

Help! Wanted pretty much delivers there. In any antho there are some stories you just skip across; its the nature of the beast. Having said that, there was more than enough variety to keep me reading through my lunchbreak as well as at home (thank you Kindle Reader for PC). However, anthos dont give you much scope for detailed review as its too easy to drift into spoilers.

Special mentions to Lisa Martin for 'Face out' and Gary Brandner for 'Words,words,words', to Gregory L Norris for 'Carpool', and Adrian Chamberlain for 'The Interview'

Gary Olson says

Help! Wanted collects 25 short stories on the really dark side of the workplace, with tales ranging from a financially-desperate undertaker given a horrifying request (Stephen Volk's "The Chapel of Unrest") to a bookstore where the more annoying sorts of customers have a habit of dying (Lisa Morton's "Face Out") to an interview in which a psychiatrist with some highly unusual views on treatment tries to hide his true self (Adrian Chamberlain's "The Interview"). The workplaces and workers featured vary as greatly as the styles of the contributing authors, making for an entertaining mix.

As always, a collection of stories has its high points and low. Not all of the stories here worked for me, but my level of satisfaction overall was quite high. In addition to the three stories mentioned earlier, my favorites included Jeff Strand's "Work/Life Balance" (on a Casual Fridays policy gone very wrong) and Mark Allan Gunnells' "Must Be Something in the Water" (featuring a new water cooler that encourages some highly unprofessional conduct). Overall it's a good and tasty collection of sharp short horror fiction, well worth checking out.

Kitty Austin says

Book Title: "Help Wanted: Tales of on the Job Terror"
Author: Various Authors, Edited by Peter Giglio

Published By: Evil Jester Press
Age Recommended: 18 +
Reviewed By: Kitty Bullard
Raven Rating: 5

Review: I practically cut my teeth on Stephen King, I learned to walk with Dean Koontz, and was reading Edgar Allan Poe, and Hitchcock while learning to ride a bike. These men always scared me, but I LOVED being scared. So when Peter Giglio offered the chance to review this anthology of 'on the job, tales of terror' I though... alright, sounds like some awesome fun. I have since decided that I will never work in an actual office again... why you may ask? I fear the water coolers now, I am scared to death my fingers are going to fuse to my keyboard (even as I'm writing this review), and I'm wondering just how many district managers have come to a store only with the thoughts of taking over the lives of their underlings.

I refuse to sit in my office chair at my desk because I'm scared my spine will magically attach itself to the chair and I'll be stuck there forever, I now sit on the couch with my laptop on... my lap... can you imagine? Well if you can't, read this book and trust me you'll be able to. I have to say this anthology is a collection of some of the most adept and fantastic horror writers I have had the pleasure of reading in a very long time. I loved it from start to finish and all the stories were complete perfection. If you hate work now... just wait until you read this book. You'll want to stay as far away from the office as possible and remember... be wary of the water distributors, they are out to get you whether you realize it or not. Take your own bottled water to work! Do NOT drink out of the water cooler!

Yes... sadly I think I have developed some form of psychosis having read this book. I'm going to take my medication now.
