



From Dark Places

Emma Newman

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The debut anthology from Emma Newman is a dark and twisting journey across the urban landscape, mining the rich seam of human frailties with insight and humour. The stories traverse the magical and the mundane, where supernatural beings are indistinguishable from their mortal counterparts in their complexity and complicity.

From Dark Places Details

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Author : Emma Newman

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From Reader Review From Dark Places for online ebook

Stacia says

This is a wonderful and refreshing book of short, modern horror stories. There are 25 short stories in all and no losers in this collection, each individual story stands out on its own. Some are touching, some are humorous, others satisfyingly macabre but every story has a sharp unexpected twist at the end. The authors imagination seems limitless here and she approaches classic horror themes such as zombies and bargaining with the devil in a new and unexpected way. If you are a fan of the Pan Horror books or Tales from the Crypt, you will love these stories. Equally, if you are a fan of well written modern short stories, you won't be disappointed. I am looking forward to reading more by E J Newman.

Jane says

A lot of short stories in this collection. All beautifully told snapshots.

The collection is called From Dark Places and some of the pieces are very dark indeed, some are funny and some are poignant. Great for a coffee break and you want something you can dip into and I can guarantee you will be thinking about these stories for a lot longer than you spend reading them.

I will definitely go back and read them again.

Mari Juniper says

My first impression at opening the pdf file from which I read From Dark Places, by Emma Newman, was relief, followed by delight.

The old cliché says you shouldn't judge a book by its cover but it's nice to have a cover to try and not judge the book from it! Several ebooks I've read in pdf format were missing their covers and I found it very frustrating. Emma's book is complete in many senses, including the back cover, so I started the reading it with an extra dose of good mood. (I also liked the cover, but don't ask me if it made any difference in my general opinion on the book, because I won't tell.) Another good surprise was the book's layout, but if the book didn't disappoint me, it sure wasn't because of its good looks.

There are 25 stories in this anthology, the great majority of which are of the fantasy genre. 'From Dark Places', the story that gives title to the book, and 'Seeing Him Again', explore the (possible) mental illness of two different women; 'The Tenth Lord' gives a modern and strange look on fairy tales, something that could be happening to our neighbor; 'Sunday Lunch' is about family, sanity and the loss of a loved one. It gave me a big knot on the throat at the end. 'The Letter' is a goodbye by a hurt woman, which gave me several chuckles and left me wondering how the heck did the dog die. I'm still curious.

There are also gods and goddesses; death, the devil and angels show up in varied forms (as well as false ones) and there are zombies. I was pleased to learn that 'And Then There Were None' was published in this anthology, as it was one of my favorite entries for the Zombie Luv Contest. The take on love between the brainless undead (sorry for the pun) is very touching.

Most of the stories lead the reader to a false conclusion that will be clarified in the end with a humorous or creepy twist. As the reading progresses, it's impossible not to expect a twist in the end, which could diminish the reading experience if not for the author's creativity. Another ever-present element in this book is her love for tea; it shows up in no less than seven stories and made me pause the reading to brew my own tea to keep the characters company.

Two stories have stayed with me longer, making my favorites (apart from the dog mystery in 'The Letter'): 'The Need to Create' is a very curious view on how god handles its creations and on the making of humanity most (in)famous historical characters. 'The Unwoven Heart' is a lovely story about loss and restoration with a twitch of magic. Devil shows up as a metaphor for grief, and the gathering of threads represents the healing process and the strength to move on with life. The story has a lyrical tone that made me smile.

From Dark Places is certainly a recommend, and I would love to see how the author handled longer fiction. 20 Years Later is on my to-read list.

Heather McCorkle says

This is a must read for fans of horror and anthologies. E.J. has a unique way of raising the hairs on the back of your neck and leaving you wondering about what lurks in the dark. She reminded me of why I love scary stories!

Alan Baxter says

From Dark Places is a collection of short fiction from E J Newman. The title is well placed, as the stories are all dark in a variety of ways. They explore subjects from the existential to the personal, from infidelity to murder, from the supernatural to the super normal and they're all bloody good.

A lot of these stories are really short, flash fiction pieces capturing a vibe or an event and searing a single scene onto the reader's brain with uncomfortable clarity. Some of the tales are longer, exploring all manner of things from Creation to madness.

Newman writes with a tight turn of phrase, many a well placed word and an eye for place and setting that makes all these tales of urban unease extremely convincing. She inhabits her characters, their distinctive personalities entrancing. Newman explores the speculative with ease; gods, demons and angels inhabit these pages as much at home as the cheating spouses, spurned lovers and ugly, foul-mouthed orphans.

Some of the stories have a bit of fun to them, some a touch of the absurd or the surreal, all an edge of darkness that plays nicely with our boundaries of comfort.

Emma Newman is a powerful emerging voice in dark fiction and From Dark Places is an excellent selection of her work. I'll be watching out for more of her stuff. You should too.

You can get a signed copy of the book directly from Emma at her website [here](#). Or you can order from Amazon [here](#). Follow Emma on Twitter at [@EmApocalyptic](#).

Victoria Hooper says

From Dark Places is a short story collection by Emma Newman. The stories are mostly very short (three or four pages, usually), and deal with the darker, bizarre side of human nature. These are all character-focussed, subtle, yet deeply moving stories, and often quite funny too, exploring where the magical meets the ordinary, and where supernatural horror connects with the horror of the human mind.

The stories are beautifully written. Emma Newman seems to have a touch for capturing all the little things people do that make them human, their vulnerabilities and quirks, their grief and their humour. All her characters feel completely real and believable, and it is these characters that really drive the stories. The author delivers the messages and the horror within the stories with just the right tone, subtly yet insistently, and with a very good feel for pacing. About two lines in, I was hooked every time. The stories grab hard, and do not let go until the end.

The interweaving of many different elements is also pulled off extremely well. The stories can be vaguely categorised as speculative fiction, or dark fiction, or perhaps horror, or even, at points, the weird, but just as you think you've settled on a genre, the next story defies you. There's something Neil Gaiman-ish (Gaimanesque?) about them; the supernatural is inextricably mixed up in the everyday, and it would be pointless to pretend that our world is not magical, or that it is not also deeply dark, twisted and creepy.

Although much of the content leans towards horror, many of the stories are also funny, moving and observant. There are also a few good twists on old ideas. The stories complement each other well, although it might have been nice to have a few longer ones in the bunch, just to balance out the series of sharp, wickedly relentless punches that each of these very short stories were.

Although I didn't love every story, this is probably one of the best collections I've read in terms of consistently good stories. There isn't a single one that felt like filler, or any that jarred with the overall theme. And there were so many memorable ones that I honestly can't pick a favourite. Based on this collection, I'm very excited to read more of Emma Newman's writing, and am eagerly awaiting her first *Split Worlds* novel (coming soon from Angry Robot). And, if anyone is interested in reading some free stories by Emma Newman, you can sign up for *Split Worlds* shorts sent straight to your inbox, [here](#). I've done this, and I'm really enjoying them so far!

This is a beautiful little collection. It's very short, and the stories are a quick and easy read, but each one will linger for a long time after the book has been put down. Dark, complex, subtle and moving, and a great amount of fun to read.

Ashley says

The short stories in this collection are dark, extremely intriguing and most of all, absolutely and supernaturally fantastic! My favourite short story from this collection? I don't think I can answer that if I were asked the question. They're all so brilliant! This is simply the best short story collection I've ever read thus far! Highly recommended to those who love fantasies with dark twists, psychological thrillers and flash fictions.

Diana Alsobrook says

It would be easy to say that Newman's short stories deal with horror elements such as insanity, zombies, and monsters - but that would be the easy way out, and her book will really appeal to a wider range of readers than merely horror fans. If you look past the dark atmosphere that she developed over the larger part of the book, you will find that there's something in there for everyone: this anthology is not so much about monsters, but about relatable topics such as divorce, heartache, loneliness, and loss. The fantasy characters such as gods, fallen angels, souls, and zombies are often more of a distraction than actual plot points.

There are 25 stories in this anthology, and each of them brings something new to the table. Newman clearly enjoys studying different personalities and understanding what makes them tick; she helps us get in the head of an obsessive-compulsive murderer, an orphan looking for a mother, a girl abused by her father, to name but a few, and all of her characters are equally believable. Not every story included deals with a dark sci-fi/fantasy theme. The author also experiments with humor (*Shedding*, *The Letter*, *The Supporting Statement*), romance (*The Handsome Dragon*, *Someone to Watch Over Her*), drama (*Burnt*) and fast-paced thriller (*And Then There Were None*). Newman succeeds in all aspects, and these stories will haunt you even after you finish the book.

Better yet, most of these short stories are not particularly explicit. You are left to decide for yourself if the character really is insane or if they're simply in touch with an aspect of reality that the rest of us are not. The darkness I've mentioned before is not the kind that makes you jump out of your seat, but rather the psychological kind: it is meant to encourage your own fears to take shape, and lets you put your own spin on what it all means.

If any of this has piqued your interest, you can read the first half the book right here on Goodreads. Even better, for \$4.99 you can get the ebook version of the entire anthology or purchase a signed copy of the print edition and support a talented emerging author while you're at it. It's a win-win, isn't it?

(review originally posted at <http://narrativemusings.blogspot.com/...>)

The Sunday Book Review says

When the author and I connected on twitter, she told me she had written some great horror short stories. After reading the first one, I knew she wouldn't disappoint. There is no in your face horror, this book revolves more around our own dark fears. All the ones we had as children and continue to have as adults. The feeling you get when you move into a new house and are still trying to figure out all the noises...these stories feed off that fear and uncertainty.

Know when your parents tell you nothing is living under the bed? Know how you tend to forget about the boogymen? Maybe you should revisit this idea! This is a great collection of tales that would be a great addition to anyones library.

Fran Jacobs says

Emma NEwman is a very talented writer, her Split Worlds series is my favourite read of the year, and her

talent can be seen in her short story collection. Humour, vivid description, dark twists, all put together brilliantly. A few of the stories aren't as good as the others, though, but that's to be expected as there are a lot of them. The ones I enjoyed certainly stand out, and are lingering with me now in the bright light of day, particularly, 'in the bag.'

James Everington says

This book of twenty-plus short stories was the first I've read of Emma Newman's, and it was certainly impressive.

Most of these stories are very short; I don't think one exceeds around 3k words in length. My only criticism of the book as a whole would be that a couple of longer, 6k plus tales might have made it more varied in terms of pace. As it is, this is a book to dip into and read the stories one or two at a time, rather than try and gulp them all down. And as such it's an excellent debut. Despite their similar length and style there's a great variety in the story's emotional punches: horror, comedy, romance. Most have a twist at the end, but few are predictable.

The writing style is clean and displays a lightness of touch - more Neil Gaiman than Ramsey Campbell. Newman is a writer who reminds you how close many children's stories are to horror.

My favourite stories were:

'The Tenth Lord' - a deliciously ambiguous modern fairy tale.

'The Letter' - what did happen to the dog?

'The Need to Create' - an interesting & compelling story with a fantastical take on history and certain historical figures.

'The Unwoven Heart' - beautifully written and compelling imagery - almost an extended metaphor rather than story. I'll say again: beautiful.

'Idolised' - an almost Wicker Man style horror story.

'The Best Pie In The World' - the best twist of the collection? One to immediately re-read after you know the ending.

But nearly all these stories are well-worth reading; there's a higher-strike rate than most short story collections. It's certainly an impressive advert for Newman's talents and I look forward to reading more of her work.

Andy Gibb says

Love it! The most wonderful thing about this collection of short shorts is that you can't outguess the stories. You may think you know where they're going by convention but it ain't necessarily so. For instance, *The Art of Desire* twists and turns so that the ending is always in doubt – masterful. Somerset-based Emma (the E in E.J.) also subverts the odd fairy tale: *The Tenth Lord* is one such.

My favourite, *The Need to Create*, has such a fertile premise that it could have gone in a million directions. I swear a novel is struggling to break out too. I also like its political slant and its potential for really bad taste. On a personal note the Winchester (Hampshire, I hope) setting also made me smile.

A treat.

Sarah Carter says

This is a series of very short stories, some of them vignettes and I found it a pretty hit and miss bundle sadly. It's a format I'm not overly fond of, done well you get Roald Dahl's *Tales of the Unexpected* or a really good 2000AD *Future Shock*, done poorly and well it's a lot less fun.

A couple of Newman's stories here are excellent and do hit those heights, but, not really enough for me to love this.

Kirsten says

I already loved the flash fiction E.J. Newman posted on her blog, but *From Dark Places* is what really made me a fan. In the past I was always the "Confessions of a Shopaholic"-type of reader, but Newman's work has really made me branch out into new genres. Each story has a twist that you'll never see coming. I find myself incredibly jealous that Newman has all these characters inside her head that prompt her to tell such wonderful stories. I can't wait to see what else she comes out with--will be reading *Twenty Years Later* very soon!

Phil says

This is a short collection of stories that touch upon the macabre. I thoroughly enjoyed them. They benefit from being well crafted to the degree that Emma gets a great deal out of a few hundred words. Most enjoyable to sit down with a cup of tea and jeopardy.
