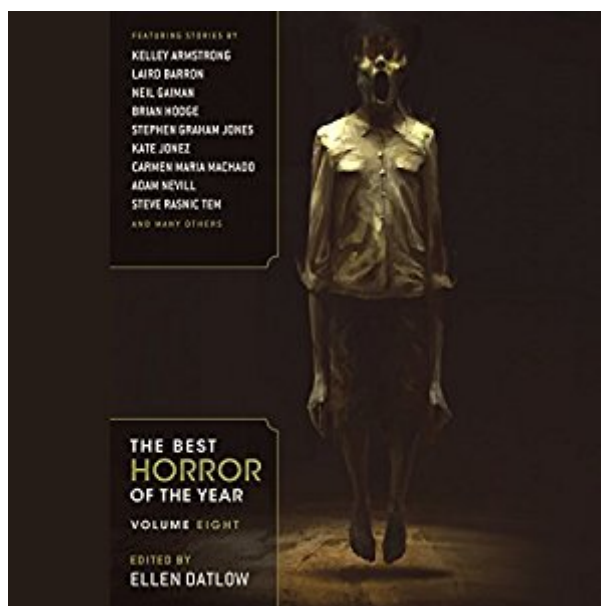


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# The Best Horror Of The Year, Volume Eight



## Synopsis

For over three decades, Ellen Datlow has been at the center of horror. Bringing you the most frightening and terrifying stories, Datlow always has her finger on the pulse of what horror listeners crave. Now, with the eighth volume of the series, Datlow is back again to bring you the stories that will keep you up at night. Encompassed in the audio of The Best Horror of the Year have been such illustrious writers as: Neil Gaiman; Kelley Armstrong; Stephen King; Linda Nagata; Laird Barron; Margo Lanagan; and many others. With each passing year, science, technology, and the march of time shine light into the craggy corners of the universe, making the fears of an earlier generation seem quaint. But this light creates its own shadows. The Best Horror of the Year chronicles these shifting shadows. It is a catalog of terror, fear, and unpleasantness as articulated by today's most challenging and exciting writers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have enjoyed many of the stories but in the last few years it seems like everyone who writes fiction feels they need to make the characters all have ugly issues with family and everybody else. I would just like to go back a few years to when the development of characters was done through personality and the plot. I hear about domestic violence and crap all the time in the news. It seems to me that we've just lost some real beauty in literature and everyone seems to be trying to make the characters lives just as ugly as they can. I don't appreciate it. I very seldom see stories about people with happy families or good relationships or decent pasts. This kind of writing just depresses

me.

This volume of Datlow's series struck me as taking fewer risks. There is only one story that I just didn't like - *My Boy Builds Coffins* - and a handful that I thought were okay. But at the same time, there were no stories that I thought were amazing. In previous editions, there has always been at least one story that left me feeling like, "well, that was probably the best one of the year, thanks Ellen." There are four stories here that stood out from the pack for me: *Snow* by Dale Bailey, *The Rooms are High* by Reggie Oliver, *In a Cavern*, *In a Canyon* by Laird Barron, and probably the best of the book: *Black Dog* by Neil Gaiman. (It almost certainly is incorrect to have two colons in a single sentence, but there you have it.) I've read a lot of Laird Barron lately, and *In a Cavern* hit me probably when I should have been taking a break from him. He is a fantastic writer and if memory serves, has had a story in every volume of this series, but there is a uniquely defining style and arguably type of story he uses that can wear thin if read back to back. Similarly with Neil Gaiman. This story is in the *American Gods* world and is quite good, but I'd rather have visited someplace else. Still, *Black Dog* is easily the best story in this volume and shouldn't be missed. The rest of the stories are all good, they just aren't spectacular. If I take my ratings of each individual story, it comes out higher than other volumes have in the past, but it just doesn't feel like a 'best of' collection. I feel like horror as a genre has so much flexibility, it can be steeped in genre trappings like werewolves, vampires, or drenched in blood, or it can be subtle and psychological. Finding the absolute best each year may require putting in some stories that are really challenging, and not to everyone's tastes. Some of my favorite Laird Barron tales I've had to read a few times before I can figure out what is going on, but I know that I feel unsettled each time. Nothing in this collection really pushed the genre forward for me. But I'll definitely continue with the series, it's always worth reading.

This year's collection is a mixed bag. It's hard for me to see how some writers still don't understand that just throwing some creepy elements into a story doesn't necessarily make it a successful one. Many of the endings are just blah, but I'll point out some that are great. "*Snow*" depicts a viral apocalypse that has something even more horrible behind it. The ending was masterful. "*All the Day You'll Have Good Luck*" tells a tale of a strange girl who is part of a strange family. The standout, "*Fabulous Beasts*" is a story so sensual, creepy and over-the-top you won't believe it, and if you are afraid of snakes, you make have to take a pill before you read it. BTW, editor Ellen Datlow is a very nice lady!

I always am looking for anthologies to read up and coming writers and new stories in the horror genre. However, I don't know if it was because I am just getting used to the Kindle after reading real books for so many years, or jaded from reading so many horror anthologies, but this one just didn't stand out.

I loved the stories in here. The authors were excellent and the editor did a great job!

If there's one thing about Datlow anthologies, they always have great stories. This volume was no different. Standouts in this volume are Laird Barron's "In a Cavern, In a Canyon" and Stephen Bacon's "Lord of the Sand." Highly recommended for anyone interested in the horror genre.

Excellent stories no matter your tastes. Varied and dark. I've never been let down by one of this editor's 'Best Of' anthologies.

I have already consumed Volumes 6, 7, and 8. I am currently reading Volume 4. As soon as I can afford Volumes 1, 2, 3, and 5, I will read all of this collection. Ms. Datlow has collected an excellent range of horror stories and writers within these pages. And, make sure to read the yearly Summations to find even more fantastic horror from the last 8 years! Nuff' said. DKW

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