



## Dark Screams: Volume Four

*Brian James Freeman (Editor) , Richard T. Chizmar (Editor) , Clive Barker , Heather Graham , Lisa Morton , Ray Garton , Ed Gorman*

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Clive Barker, Heather Graham, Lisa Morton, Ray Garton, and Ed Gorman lead readers down a twisted labyrinth of terror, horror, and suspense in *Dark Screams: Volume Four*, from Brian James Freeman and Richard Chizmar of the revered Cemetery Dance Publications.

## **THE DEPARTED by Clive Barker**

On All Hallows' Eve, a dead and disembodied mother yearns to touch her young son one last time. But will making contact destroy them both?

## **CREATURE FEATURE by Heather Graham**

What could be better publicity for a horror convention than an honest-to-goodness curse? It's only after lights out that the hype—and the Jack the Ripper mannequin—starts to feel a little too real.

## **THE NEW WAR by Lisa Morton**

Mike Carson is a war hero and a decorated vet. He doesn't deserve to be trapped in a hospital with some black *thing* sitting on his chest as patients die all around him. His only hope is to take out the nurse—before it's his turn.

## **SAMMY COMES HOME by Ray Garton**

It's what every family prays for: a lost pet returning home. But when Sammy, the Hale family sheepdog, appears on their doorstep, he brings back something no parent would ever wish upon his or her child.

## **THE BRASHER GIRL by Ed Gorman**

Cindy Marie Brasher is the prettiest girl in the Valley, and Spence just has to have her. Unfortunately, Cindy has a "friend" . . . a friend who tells her to do things . . . bad things.

## **Dark Screams: Volume Four Details**

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# From Reader Review Dark Screams: Volume Four for online ebook

## Peggy Geiger says

Genre: Adult Fiction>Horror

The book is the fourth in a series collection of five short stories.

### The Departed \*\*\*

Clive Barker's story of a ghostly mother trying to reunite with her son to say goodby on All Hallows Eve is disappointing. I expected a more scary, horrific story from this famous author.

### Creature Feature \*\*

Heather Graham's contribution center's on a Jack the Ripper mannequin displayed at a wax museum convention that comes to life. This story was my least favorite of the collection. There are many references to the character's ghost hunter connection to a previous Krewe of Hunters series which I had not read.

### The New War \*\*\*\*\*

Lisa Morton's thrilling tale of a W.W.II decorated war hero plagued by shadows hiding in corners. He is recuperating in a retirement home from hip surgery and is suffering from delirium and the onset of dementia. He believes that a black, shadowy creature is killing the residents of the nursing home one at a time. Mike Carson has a hard time separating fact from fantasy and begins to suspect a nurse is not what she seems. Mike experiences loss of time and experiences visions of army buddies who died in the war. The vet comes to realize that some battles will not be won as the black enemy waits for him, as it will for all of us.

### Sammy Comes Home \*\*\*\*\*

Ray Garton's terrifying story is a combination of "Pet Semetary", "Alien" and "The Body Snatchers". Bryan Hale's sheepdog, Sammy, disappears for over a week. Other cats and dogs in town have also gone missing causing anguish to the pet owners. Sammy shows back up looking sickly, bloody and bloated. It is only the beginning of a good, old-fashioned gruesome, gory story.

### The Brasher Girl \*\*\*\*

Ed Gorman's story is the longest of the collection. Seventeen year old Cindy Marie Brasher is pretty and popular. She introduces her new boyfriend, Spence, to a voice in the well that tells her to do bad things. The alien telepathic voice in the well soon begins to speak to Spence also.

I highly recommend this collection of scary stories. Enjoy.

ARC courtesy of the author and publisher via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

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## **Magdalena aka A Bookaholic Swede says**

### **The Departed by Clive Barker**

The Departed was the least horrifying story in this collection. Now I have actually not read anything by Clive Barker before, yes I'm just as shocked as you are, but I expected this story to be really dark and horrifying since this is the Clive Barker. I mean even though I haven't read anything by the man do I know how big his name is in horror. But this story felt actually kind of nice, a mother's longing to say goodbye to her son. **(3 stars)**

### **The New War by Lisa Morton**

Like the Clive Barker story was this not that terrifying either, but I was curious to what the black creature was it just the old man's fantasy or what? The ending was really good. But not a horrifying story, just a short story about death. **(3 stars)**

### **Sammy Comes Home by Ray Garton**

In my opinion the best story in this collection. Felt like reading an homage to Alien. I hate reading about animals suffering, but I think that made this story just a little bit better because I was really uncomfortable with Sammy and the other pets returning home with their...passengers... **(4 stars)**

### **The Brasher Girl by Ed Gorman**

This one was interesting, but also a bit frustrating to read because I had so many questions toward the end. What was her friend after? Did the friend just want the people he connected to kill and for what? Did he get off on it? Did he live on other people killing? Too many questions, not enough answers. But a good ending by the way. **(3 stars)**

### **Creature Feature by Heather Graham**

Interesting story, but it seems that the characters in this short story are from one of her book series and personally I just don't like that much reading short stories when the characters are from a series without having read the series first. I could just feel that Aidan Mahoney and Maureen Deauville had a lot of history together and here in this short story we got some glimpse of that. But the short story was not bad and I would like to read more about the Krewe of Hunters. But it also felt a little bit like the odd story out since the rest as far as I know did not base their stories on old characters. **(3 stars)**

*I received a copy of this book from the publisher for a blog tour at TLC Book Tours.*

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## **Kimberly says**

Volume Four of the Dark Screams series impressed me much more than its predecessor. Of the five stories included in this collection, I felt that two of them were excellent, two rather good, and only one that left me feeling unimpressed.

"The Departed", by Clive Barker (3\*): A unique look at what happens after death, but not much in the way of an ending as far as I was concerned.

"The New War", by Lisa Morton (4\*): A look at an old man in a nursing home, who sees more than he "should" be seeing...

"Sammy Comes Home", by Ray Garton (5\*): Excellent! For a short story length work, the characterization was fabulous, and the story had me on the edge of my seat the entire time.

"The Brasher Girl", by Ed Gorman (5\*): A longer piece that I felt had great characterization and plausible "motivation". This story had just enough stated to have me wondering "what if?"....

"Creature Feature" by Heather Graham (2\*): This one started out with promise, but fizzled out after the initial scene into something much less.

I felt this was a great addition to the Dark Screams line, and will be eagerly looking forward to Volume Five.

Highly recommended!

\*I received an advance e-copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.\*

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## **Donald says**

Dark Screams continue to be a strong horror anthology with its fourth volume. It is not quite as strong as the previous entry in the series, but it is still an incredibly solid collection of short stories.

Clive Barker's "The Departed" is something of a departure for the famous author. It's a very reserved tale of a ghost that wants to see her son one last time. Barker is known for including certain story elements in his horror writing, but most, if not all, of those elements are absent from this story, and I think it's better for their absence.

"The New War" by Lisa Morton is a creepy little psychological thriller with hints of the supernatural. An elderly war veteran is moved into a nursing home and begins to believe that one of the nurses isn't what she seems. This is one of those stories that works great as a horror tale, but would work just as well if all supernatural elements were removed (though the tone would change drastically). A very good story and a reminder that I really need to read more of Morton's work.

Ray Garton's "Sammy Comes Home" is a perfect blend of the anguish of losing a beloved pet and the primal fear of the alien, perhaps best demonstrated by the classic Invasion of the Body Snatchers. As a pet person, this one was a real punch in the gut. I've only recently started reading Garton's back list, but this story is a perfect example of why that was a good decision.

"The Brasher Girl" by Ed Gorman is dedicated to Stephen King as written as something of a companion piece to his classic tale "Nona." It was very similar in style to King, which I imagine is intentional. My only complaint is that it offers a fairly straightforward explanation to the events of King's story, and while obviously not "canon", such as it is, the two stories are now inextricably linked in my mind. Still, it's a good story and a worthwhile addition.

The final story is "Creature Feature" by Heather Graham. This is kind of a weird entry. I get the feeling it's a short story set in a world Graham has written about in other stories or novels, as there are references to things that, while prior knowledge is not strictly necessary, it may have been a more rewarding read with it. The basic premise is that some folks are setting up for a horror creature convention when something apparently comes to life and starts wreaking havoc. It's a fun story, don't get me wrong, but again, I'm not a huge fan of reading works set in an existing setting without knowing anything about that setting.

I'm really loving the Dark Screams series because it's combining lesser-known stories by established authors with stories from authors I've either not read (much) or simply not heard of. I'll be eagerly awaiting the fifth volume, due out later this year.

Disclaimer: I was provided a review copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **J.C. Brennan says**

Clive Barker, Heather Graham, Lisa Morton, Ray Garton, and Ed Gorman come together to bring fan's this collection of horror shorts.

These authors have produced a twisted, rollercoaster of terror ridden reading experience their audience will not soon forget.

If you like monsters, this book is packed full of nasties. Ghosts, the grim reaper, aliens, the unexplainable, and, the wickedest monster of them all, man fill the pages to terrify and delight any horror fan.

So, my fellow horror fanatics don't miss having this book on your shelves. It's a horror fan's dream!

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### **Bill says**

Whew! Dark Screams is back! A very good collection of horror shorts. Pretty much 4 stars on all but the last and even that one wasn't bad, it was just a bit elementary for this collection or at least that's how it felt. I am glad to see the quality has returned for this edition and I look forward to DS 5.

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### **Angela Crawford says**

I received a copy of this eBook in exchange for an honest review. This is in no way reflected in my opinion of this book.

Dark Screams Four is a super fun group of short stories written by some fantastic authors. This was the first volume in the Dark Screams series that I have read but it definitely won't be the last! Horror fans will love sinking their teeth into this collection of fast paced and terrifying stories. I think my favorite would have to be Sammy Comes Home by the always phenomenal Ray Garton. As a dog lover it both horrified me and crushed my heart doing it. Even the worst story in this book was great. My only complaint about this 4.5 star collection of stories is that it ended way to soon.

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### **Char says**

This is the best volume of Dark Screams yet! With some heavy hitting authors within, I thought this collection was pretty damn good.

The Departed by Clive Barker-A very sad story to read around Mother's Day. 4\*

The New War by Lisa Morton-Another sad story about a WWII veteran. 4\*

Sammy Comes Home by Ray Garton- A creature feature that really hit home for me. This was my favorite of the bunch. 5\*

The Brasher Girl by Ed Gorman-A story where I thought I knew where it was going, but I was very wrong. 4\*

Creature Feature by Heather Graham-This was my least favorite of the bunch. It seemed to be all over the place-not knowing what kind of story it wanted to be? Or maybe it was just me-because I thought the initial concept was good then it morphed into something else. 3\*

Overall, I thought this was an above average collection and I recommend it highly!

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\*I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review. This is it! Thanks Net Galley!\*

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### **Andrea ♥Ninja Bunneh♥ says**

I should always remind myself not to request anthologies. The stories in this one are so-so, none of them really grabbed me all that much.

Hopefully, Mr. Barker won't send a certain someone after me for retaliation.

### **3 ninja bunnehs**

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*(arc received in exchange for an honest review)*

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### **Elke says**

The Departed (Clive Barker)

My favourite in the collection, The Departed is heartwarming, sad but also very sweet. It is a silent story about motherly love, but also about the absolute love of a child for its mother. Have some Kleenex ready

when reading this eye-waterer. 5 stars.

#### The New War (Lisa Morton)

Subtle and dark, this is a depressing story about the oppressing presence of death for an old man. The author did a great job building up tension. 4.5 stars

#### Sammy Comes Home (Ray Garton)

Creature alert! A little disgusting but highly entertaining, although I felt sad for the pets. Would be nice to have this one stretched into a novella. 4 stars.

#### The Brasher Girl (Ed Gorman)

Although I liked the plot, I felt indifferent towards the characters and the outcome of the story. It was ok I guess. 3.5 stars

#### Creature Feature (Heather Graham)

The title tells it all, although I expected a larger mess and more real creatures. Though not really bad, this was my least favourite of the bunch. 3 stars

After some middle-rate second and third volumes, the fourth part of Dark Screams raises the level again and collects some very fine stories. However, I suggest reading in reverse order to save the best for last.

A town with a dark history...when a new resident moves into the old dilapidated Upshaw Mansion, history comes alive again in Mesa Rapids. Affecting its inhabitants, the town and especially the rooms and surroundings of the Upshaw Mansion turn into a nightmare vision resembling a Hieronymus Bosch painting (who is mentioned, quite fittingly, in the book). Only a handful of people are able to see the truth and discover that something truly evil is about to be released. Will they be able to stop it before it's too late?

The story is told in very short chapters, each named after the character who is the main focus of that chapter. This made reading a very fast-paced process and allowed to see events from several perspectives, which helped put the pieces together. There also was a part documenting the town's history, which gave a lot of explanations to the questions raised by the creepy events taking place. Together with the interspersed diary entries of Colin, who is hired to paint at the Upshaw Mansion and thus, unknowingly, wake something terrible from the past, we get a good idea what is going on.

The well-drawn main characters, especially Colin, were not all easily likable, which perfectly worked to make them real and believable. The book had a constant dream-like quality, and I felt like stepping into a nightmare where unimaginable things happened. However, the townsfolk participating in this sick dream were unable to see what was really going on and even enjoyed their cruel acts, like at a never-ending party in hell.

While the story had some predictable moments, it was unputdownable until the end, which still held a surprise.

However, I still wonder why the author chose to name the buyer of the mansion Klimt - with the constant references to art and the main subject of painting, I would have expected some connection to the painter...

(I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review)

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## **Jan says**

I was invited to read Dark Screams 4 (and 5 as well) from the publisher and NetGalley for an honest review. I didn't know what to expect, but I'm a fan of short stories as well as stories of the 'unusual' so this was right up my alley and didn't disappoint.

I haven't read the first 3 books but they all seem to be consisting of 80-100 pages of short stories dedicated to the darker side of things. Some are silly, some make you gasp, and some make you afraid to turn the lights off....

I recommend to anyone who enjoys stepping outside their comfort zone and escaping to a world that thankfully exists due to the wonderful imaginations of these fine writers.

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## **Gef says**

This anthology series has been a cavalcade of the macabre thus far, highlighting some of the absolute biggest names in horror. And kicking things off for this fourth volume is a guy who has been dubious by his absence until now, that being the legendary Clive Barker.

Now, when you bring up Clive Barker's name while on the topic of short stories, you will invariably wind up evoking memories of *The Books of Blood*. Those collections featured some grim, grizzly, and grotesque little masterpieces. So it wouldn't be out of bounds for you to suspect you might get a slice of that Clive Barker in this anthology, but the truth is you don't. With "*The Departed*," Barker offers something a bit quieter, but something equally as haunting. A mother, recently deceased, longs to hold her son in her arms one last time and with her ghostly companion at her side she is afforded one last chance on All Hallow's Eve. In one sense, the story felt kind of quaint coming from the guy who penned "*Rawhead Rex*." But as the story progresses and the romantic veneer of the afterlife is pulled back, it feels like vintage Barker.

For some good old fashioned gore, depend on Ray Garton's "*Sammy Comes Home*," though pet lovers be warned as the four-legged characters get put through the proverbial wringer in this one. This story had that same kind of hard-edged horror set in suburbia that made Robert McCammon's "*The Deep End*" so fun to read in the second volume of this series. In fact, this infectious tale may have been my favorite from this volume.

Lisa Morton's "*The New War*" was no slouch either, offering a bit of a spiraling psycho-thriller with a supernatural twist, in which an ailing resident in a hospital who is recovering from hip surgery and plagued by a shadowy succubus that is killing off his fellow patients one by one ... or is it? Very cool balance of the protagonist's mind being the battleground as much as the confines of his hospital bed.

Filling out the quintet of tales were Ed Gorman's "*The Brasher Girl*" and Heather Graham's "*Creature Feature*." While the latter was fun in its own creepy and cozy way, the former had the psychotic serial killer angle more tautly wrapped in its clutches. I am a sucker for a good imaginary friend story, though.

All in all, I can't say for certain Volume Four is the strongest offering yet, but it did not disappoint in the slightest and stacks up well with any of the other three books so far. A fairly good variety in the kind's of horror stories too, so if you're new the series this is a good jumping on point, and then if you like what you see go and grab the other volumes and enjoy.

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### **Andi says**

I have read all four volumes released from Dark Screams and this one is definitely my favorite. With the exception of Creature Feature by Heather Graham (who I learned is NOT the actress), I enjoyed the stories in this one a lot. I will refrain from listing them each individually to give you my opinion. I will tell you that Sammy Comes Home by Ray Garton was my favorite in this collection. The Departed by Clive Barker was my second favorite. I liked The New War and then The Brasher Girl in that order.

I went into this one hoping to like one or two stories and liked four. I would highly recommend reading this collection, along with #1 and #2 if you haven't already, as those ones also have some stellar stories. For a series of mini-anthologies, I have been very happy with them overall.

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### **Autumn Is Azathoth The Haunted Reading Room says**

Review: DARK SCREAMS, VOLUME FOUR [edited by Richard Chizmar and Brian James Freeman; written by Clive Barker, Lisa Morton, Ray Garton, Ed Gorman, Heather Graham]

The always excellent DARK SCREAMS collection returns with five special authors. This anthology--Volume Four--ranges from the heartwarming (Clive Barker) to the cautionary (Heather Graham) to the unavoidable (Lisa Morton) to the truly scary because implacable (Ed Gorman and Ray Garton). It'll be a long while before I stop thinking about Ray Garton's story in particular.

DARK SCREAMS Anthology is a winner every time out. Don't miss any!

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### **Chris says**

Dark Screams 4

I received and ARC copy from the publisher through NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

I have read each of these story collection as they came out and have enjoyed most of them. The fourth installment is very strong and makes me look forward to new volumes.

The Departed by Clive Barker

A story from the more tender side of Clive Barker. A supernatural love story about motherly love in which a mother (the departed) seeks to reunite, in whatever way that she can, with her children, and learns some hard lessons. Bittersweet and masterful. 5 stars.

The New War by Lisa Morton

A tense story of a terrified man in a nursing home stalked by the black and shadowy figure of death. Similar to the Barker story in that I felt that it was quite literary in treatment and subtle. Similar also in that Morton masterfully drafts her protagonist to generate sympathy even as the tension rises. I felt very deeply concerned for this man, a brave veteran WWII veteran struggling for his life and his sanity. This story was my favorite

in the bunch. Lisa Morton is a very talented writer. 5 stars.

**Sammy Comes Home by Ray Garton**

Classic monster romp involving absolutely disgusting parasitic monsters. You know that this is just the beginning of the story and that it is all going to go downhill fast for humanity. I think it might be continued in or a spinoff of his novel 'Nids, which I also recommend if you like this type of classic horror story. Garton knows how to write campy monster stories that are fun yet still make them scary. 4 stars.

**The Brasher Girl by Ed Gorman**

I don't want to give too much away but I found this long story to be an interesting take on the possession concept. I was enjoying it in a "3 to 3 1/2" sort of way until the ending, which I thought was very well done and chilling. 4 stars.

**Creature Feature by Heather Graham**

As the name suggests, this is pure Saturday morning horror movie fare and a bit too Scooby-Doo for me. Tastes may differ, though. 3 stars.

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