



# Vile Men

*Rebecca Jones-Howe*

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## Vile Men Rebecca Jones-Howe

*Vile Men* is a collection of fourteen short stories that are transgressive in nature, filled with heart and emotion, leaving you sweaty and spent, your heart pounding in your chest. Stolen moments on the subway, fear of intimacy, sexual perversion and dark fears come home to roost all unite in a powerful mixture of literary fiction, contemporary fairy tales, and late night confessions. Shocking and yet touching, unnerving and yet brutally honest, Rebecca Jones-Howe is an emerging author that you'll want to keep an eye on.

## ADVANCE PRAISE:

"Rebecca Jones-Howe's *Vile Men* is an exciting, dark, sexy collection that is convulsively beautiful and bright. Each story digs a great hole and is filled with the most savage, brutal, human emotions: love, desire, addiction and the impossibility of satisfaction."

—Antonia Crane, author of *Spent*

"Rebecca Jones-Howe fearlessly tackles the ugliness most of us manage to hide. Each broken character blurs the lines between villain and victim as they bathe in sex, horror, dignity, want, resignation, and darkness. *Vile Men* is the handbook to uncovering your damage."

—Mercedes M. Yardley, author of *Pretty Little Dead Girls*

"Rebecca Jones-Howe takes you on a tour of the human psyche that is dark, disturbing, and exquisitely written. The sentences in this book are the best kind of dangerous. Just when you think you're safe another one comes along and draws blood."

—Rob Hart, author of *New Yorked*

"Rebecca Jones-Howe's *Vile Men* shows us characters driven by desperation to do violence to themselves or others, but behind these sharp stories about the horror of gender and sex is an empathetic insight into human weakness. Jones-Howe might bring us to the darkest parts of the human heart, but her stories remind us that we are all a little bit vile, too."

—Letitia Trent, author of *Echo Lake*

"*Vile Men* is dark, provocative stuff. The men found within these pages are indeed bad news, but the most dangerous paths aren't always led by them, as Rebecca Jones-Howe's narrators take us right past the expected awfulness of dead-end, drug-addled relationships, bad sex on ant hills, or navigating the treacherous rubble of the bar scene, where her women can find satisfaction and even surprise flashes of triumph amongst all the emotional jetsam. "There's a certain kind of man who goes for damaged girls," she writes. They may be broken, but as vile as these men may be (and always such needy little beasts) they don't get to have everything."

—David James Keaton, author of *The Last Projector*

## Vile Men Details

Date : Published September 8th 2015 by Dark House Press (first published August 14th 2015)

ISBN : 9781940430515

Author : Rebecca Jones-Howe

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# From Reader Review Vile Men for online ebook

## C.E. says

My actual rating for this book would fall somewhere between 3 and 4 stars.

This book was not at all what expected. Instead of dark stories about or from the viewpoint of men committing extremely heinous acts. And while you do get that (Better Places) in a few of the pieces, the overall offering is the much more mundane darkness that you find in people. Dissatisfied husbands, addicts, parents that don't pay enough attention to their kids, and some of the stories are really just slivers of a mental bad day. The stories are very well written and for the most part engaging, and certainly worth the read. I would have used a different story to end the collection on, but overall a worthwhile read.

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## Emily says

"There's a certain kind of man who goes for damaged girls."

Vile Men is a collection of 14 dark short stories, and it was so much fun to read. The stories are intense, unsettling, and haunting. I wouldn't classify these as horror, but they are still quite grim.

A lot of this book is focused on sex, and different emotions that come along with it - some stories are funny, some are horrifying, some are sad, etc. It's an intriguing way to deal with the topic.

The title "Vile Men" comes from a quote in the book; however, not only men are vile in this book. Some are just normal characters, and it's the women who are vile.

My top 5 stories in this book are Paper Bag Princess, Blue Hawaii, Grin on the Rocks, Better Places, and Cat Calls. All of these are going to stick with me, and I can't wait to read more from this author!

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## Amanda || eastofreaden says

There are spoilers in this review, as well as references to sexual assault. If you're sensitive to that, please move past this review.

I was incredibly disappointed with this book. The title and synopsis are incredibly misleading. I was expecting a collection of relatable short stories in which, as the title suggest, men were vile – sort of a celebration of women overcoming issues caused by and interfered with by men. But instead I got a collection of short stories where one girl masturbates while people browse at the sex shop she runs (and she subsequently uses a log of fucking salami, and films it for a customer) and another where the female character is trying to survive a zombie apocalypse and she's taken in by a man only to be repeatedly raped by him and the men that he sells her to. I wanted to DNF this book, but it was short enough for me to just power through. At least now it's off my shelf and I know to avoid this writer in the future.

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## **Andrea says**

Great title, great stories, great book!

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## **Dino Parenti says**

Vile Men, Rebecca Jones-Howe's astute and cutting first collection, expands the animalistic, often anxious sexualized worlds found in her stories previously anthologized in *The New Black and Exigencies*—venal tales where the disfigured and insecure find temporary empowerment through humiliation, in the process highlighting the even greater humiliations of the respective male counterparts. And much like the men in those tales, the “vile” men of this collection are not so much perpetrators of pain and insecurity as they are catalysts for female self-exploration or self-annihilation, a fine line Jones-Howe dances very successfully for the most part—not an easy feat when dealing primarily with sexual violence, though even in questionable moments, her ladies are never want of agency and dimension. *Thinspiration*, *Masturbating Megan's Strip Mall Exhibition*, and *Modern Beasts* are real stand-outs here—a trifecta kick to the groin and soul where impulse and misunderstandings lead to tragic results. *Vile Men* even comes with a zombie and ghost story (*Better Places* and *Ghost Story*, respectively) to demonstrate that even in heightened, supernatural situations, issues of power, violence, and the carnal are never far removed from the human animal. Rebecca Jones-Howe is definitely a writer to keep your eye on.

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## **Michelle Campbell says**

Dark stories of love, loss and humanity. I found myself identifying on some level with a character in each story. We've all been ashamed, felt angst, and anger and disgust in ourselves and those around us, this collection has all of the above and much more. Well written, I found myself running the gamut of emotions while reading these. Be warned you have to be able to deal with language and dark themes to enjoy these stories.

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## **Kyle says**

i am thinking really 2.5 but rounding up i suppose -- first and foremost, i have never been so utterly distracted by a title in all my years of reading -- found my self too often angry and confused and incredulous that the book is so mis-titled -- it's not a book about vile men at all, false advertising, and i simply cannot believe the title -- in most stories it is the woman who is the aggressor, the egregious, the villain, the vile -- just a few in which it is indeed the male -- the stories themselves were widely varied in quality and effect, some of which i'd say could be found in any college creative writing class across the country to a couple that i would dare say were raymond carver-esque (which is extreme praise, carver being my first ever "favorite" writer) -- the two best "paper bag princess" and "plot points" (brilliant) i still can't get out of my head -- and the last has remained with me as well -- hate to sound so unsophisticated a reader with my preoccupation with the title, but read it and you'll see what i mean -- it makes one wonder if the writer is in touch with her own work -- which really kinda ruined my experience, and which is an obstacle i just too hard a time trying to shake, especially as story after story repeatedly made me question it -- change the title? 3.5-4 stars --

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### **David Keaton says**

Dark, provocative stuff. The men found within these pages are indeed bad news, but the most dangerous paths aren't always led by them, as Rebecca Jones-Howe's narrators take us right past the expected awfulness of dead-end, drug-addled relationships, bad sex on ant hills, or navigating the treacherous rubble of the bar scene, where her women can find satisfaction and even surprise flashes of triumph amongst all the emotional jetsam. "There's a certain kind of man who goes for damaged girls," she writes. They may be broken, but as vile as these men may be (and always such needy little beasts) they don't get to have everything. (from my blurb)

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### **Grant Reynolds says**

One of the best collection of short stories I've read in a long time!

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### **Katrina K says**

goodreads win. Will read and review once received.

I am sometimes a very picky person when it comes to books. Mainly when it has to deal with short stories. This book definitely lived up to my expectations for short stories. I found my engaged in all fourteen of the short stories. The book as a whole was well written and thought out. It held my attention from the start of each story to the very end. I would highly recommend this book.

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### **Taran Clarke says**

The stories in Rebecca Jones-Howe's "Vile Men" were well-written, gripping, courageous, and powerful, and the fact that I had such a hard time trying to pick out less than half the stories as my favorites is a testament to its overall quality. Fair warning, though: this collection is not for the faint of heart.

The Paper Bag Princess starts the collection off with a bang (no pun intended), and is one of the strongest stories, with a haunting premise that stuck with me long after I finished it.

Some of my other favorites were Blue Hawaii, Tourist, Grin on the Rocks, Better Places, and Cat Calls, but, again, there were very few stories that didn't stand out to me.

I'll also say that I love the title of this collection. Yes, these stories often include vile women as well, and good men, and mostly just complicated people trying to deal with their various shades of damage. But the impression I got upon reading the title was that these stories would feature various men labeled "vile" throughout society, and would sink into the depths of their psyches and unpack that "vileness" in a nuanced but unrelentingly honest manner. And overall, that's what I got.

This is a powerful debut collection with stories that will stick with me for some time.

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### **Steven says**

After reading it a couple of times I woke up in the middle of the night thinking about the first story in this collection: "The Paper Bag Princess." I've read thousands of stories and that one is vaulted right into the top-ten best stories I've read. I mean holy crap! I'd F her with a bag over her head is a kind of a sick joke right? But as a premise for a story? READ THIS STORY. If it had been written by a man he'd be strung up, but written from the woman's point of view by a woman writer? This is one of the great stories. This is the kind of story that demonstrates why we need stories. And the rest of the collection kicks ass, too.

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### **A.E. says**

\*\*\* Review copy from the library \*\*\*

A few people recommended "Vile Men," a short story collection by Canadian author Rebecca Jones-Howe, when it first came out at the end of last year and they mentioned how impressed they were with the writing, so I recently had the occasion to read it and I'm glad I did. Far from being simply a short story collection that revolves around the theme of terrible things happening to women, the stories are a heady mix of different perspectives that will have you reeling after you've finished each one. It's a quick read, but these stories are very heavy and will definitely make an impact on you.

One of the things that stuck out most about this collection for me is how painfully accurate the author's depictions were when it came to the decay of relationships between couples who have been together for a while. It's inescapable in some ways, but there's nothing sadder than one person in the relationship who is still completely head-over-heels for their partner but the other person hasn't reciprocated that in a while.

The unifying thread of the entire collection is how unflinching and honest these stories are. They are raw. The author does not hold back her punches. At all. They are devastating and they can contain many triggers for women, but they are a fascinating look at what happens when characters do the things they know they are not supposed to, but they do them anyway and cross the lines into the furthest reaches of themselves, which makes for a gripping and fascinating book.

I would not classify this book as a horror collection, but many fans of horror, mystery and suspense will enjoy it. Others still who like contemporary pieces of women's fiction that are the furthest thing from romance will also enjoy this book. But really, anyone who wants a substantive collection of short stories that explores the furthest depths of the human psyche needs to pick this book up. It is a book that will challenge you as a reader. It is not easy to get through, but ultimately it provides a cathartic reading experience.

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### **Richard says**

*There's a certain kind of man who goes for damaged girls.*

This is a collection of Rebecca Jones-Howe's unflinching short fiction, brave tales about damaged people and

their dysfunctions. Mostly the stories focus on sexual dysfunction, but also emotional and social impairments as well. If you go strictly by the title, you would jump into this book thinking that the stories are about all of the shitty things that men do, but in reality, Jones-Howe equally examines the scarred and emotionally crippled women that are involved with these same men.

*The cab driver is the kind of guy I'd fuck in my dreams. He's got dark hair and olive skin and thick bench-pressed triceps. He's probably got a monster dick, a big dick that's actually a monster, a throbbing snake with a face. That's just the way my dreams are. They've been nightmares since I started university.*

*I pop another pill.*

Rebecca writes with serious courage and an unrelenting eye for illuminating issues that both sexes should be tackling. In "**The Paper Bag Princess**," she takes the infamous saying, "I'd only fuck her with a paper bag over her head," and focuses on that woman that would take that phrase to heart, desperate for affection. The book is filled with stories like this, ones not for the easily offended and prudish, stories that are uncomfortable but provocative and thoughtful. "**The Paper Bag Princess**" is good, but tales like "**Thinspiration**" and "**Masturbating Megan's Strip Mall Exhibition**" are particularly memorable.

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## Nicole Lyons says

Intense doesn't even begin to describe this book, I am in awe of the power behind these words. This book left me reeling and wanting more... after I took a break between each story. It was impossible for me to read these stories back to back, there was just too much feeling and emotions evoked in each one.

Yes, this collection is dark, but it is also unflinching in its honesty, one book I will definitely recommend to everyone, it's out of this world amazing.

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