



Fading Light: An Anthology of the Monstrous

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The light has failed: the era of man is at its end.

Born of darkness, the creatures of myth, legend, and nightmare have long called the shadows home. Now, with the cruel touch of the sun fading into memory, they've returned to claim their rightful place amidst humanity; as its masters.

Fading Light collects 30 monstrous stories by authors new and experienced, in the genres of horror, science fiction, and fantasy, each bringing their own interpretation of what lurks in the dark.

Contributors: Mark Lawrence, Gene O'Neill, William Meikle, David Dalglish, Gord Rollo, Nick Cato, Adam Millard, Stephen McQuiggan, Gary W Olson, Tom Olbert, Mark Pantoja, Malon Edwards, Carl Barker, Jake Elliot, Lee Mather, Georgina Kamsika, Dorian Dawes, Timothy Baker, DL Seymour, Wayne Ligon, TSP Sweeney, Stacey Turner, Gef Fox, Edward M Erdelac, Henry P Gravelle, & Ryan Lawler, with bonus stories from CM Saunders, Regan Campbell, Jonathan Pine, Peter Welmerink, & Alex Marshall.

Fading Light: An Anthology of the Monstrous Details

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From Reader Review Fading Light: An Anthology of the Monstrous for online ebook

Abhinav says

You can find the full review over at The Founding Fields:

<http://thefoundingfields.com/2012/09/...>

Shadowhawk reviews the latest horror/weird fiction anthology by small press publisher Angelic Knight Press.

“These are stories that are going to mess with your head, so bring your game face. Oh and they are also quite awesome too.” ~The Founding Fields

Tim Marquitz is another author I’ve met through Facebook/Twitter and have been interested in reading for a while now but didn’t quite get around to. Still, he is a fairly chatty person and a great guy to interact with. When he offered review copies of his new anthology of weird/horror fiction, I jumped on the chance, even though neither of those are my genres. Quite outside my comfort zone in fact, and I’ve read very, very little weird/horror fiction over the years. If I had to even take a guess, I’d say that the last truly horror fiction I read was some Hardy Boys/Nancy Drew Ghost Mysteries (?) stuff about thirteen-fourteen years ago, or some Goosebumps novels around the same time. Yeah, I know, kind of depressing to a degree. But its just not my thing. Chance to rectify was had however and I dove into Fading Light with enthusiasm, waiting to be surprised and wowed or whatever as I really had no expectations from it given my relative inexperience.

Fading Light opens with some truly fantastic stories by Adam Millard, Nick Cato, and Stephen McQuiggan. The first one is all about parasites in a soon-to-be post-apocalyptic world, the second about a man’s fear of gravity, and the third about a (sorcerous) serial killer in an out-of-the-way town. What helped my immersion into these stories was that they were all short and they set the tone and mood for the rest of the anthology. They also hint at what can be found in the rest of the pages, especially in terms of the type of stories being told. In that respect, these three stories worked really well for me and were a good intro to weird/horror fiction. Based on this experience, I’d like to read more of the same from these authors. Adam Millard and Stephen McQuiggan’s stories particularly have a strong kernel of emotion to them, the former being all about the creepy-crawly horror, and the latter about the tragedy of an entire town losing its children to a man who could give even Joker nightmares.

From then on, the anthology starts to mature in leaps and bounds. You have stories set in the depths of the deepest waters of Earth, stories about all kinds of other parasites and insects, stories about the weirdest aliens you can imagine, some Lovecraftian stuff, doom-and-gloom end of the Earth type of stuff and so on. Some of these stories were downright disgusting, some were just plain weird that I didn’t get, some offered interesting protagonists in the everyday world, some were about the most silliest of characters and so on. The mix of stories in terms of the lengths and the contents and the styles means that Fading Light has something to offer for everyone and is, to my inexperienced eyes, widely representative of the genre.

The overarching theme of the anthology is that mankind’s rule over Earth is coming to an end and that horrors from the beyond, whether a different dimension or out of the solar system or what have you are hastening that demise. The light of humanity is, literally, fading. As such, there are a LOT of stories in the anthology that deal with extraterrestrial horrors, a high percentage of those with a science-fiction bent. It

certainly is an interesting theme to stick to, however, it is not represented so well by many of the stories therein as they don't play up that angle as much as they could have.

To be fair however, while the title offers clues as to the content, I wasn't bothered that many of the stories didn't enforce that fading light theme. I gave the back-of-the-book blurb only a passing glance before I dived into reading the anthology and as I remarked to Tim at one point, there were a lot of extraterrestrial horror stories here. Bit of a slip-up on my part but there you have it! I was far more interested in the stories themselves rather than with the themes they were conveying.

Mia says

Tim Marquitz did a stellar job of collecting stories that will appeal to many. There's something for everyone in this anthology. There are aliens, environmental disasters, crisis of faith, scientific mishaps, manmade calamities. The common thread is that they are all end of days scenarios, some of which are familiar urban legends, some are new to me.

There are also recurring themes in the stories. Practically all demonstrate that things are not as they seem. A good number also espouse the idea that we may not have dominion of this world -- or the galaxy -- after all.

I enjoyed how many of the stories do not proceed to a definitive conclusion. They simply create the mood, ground the tale in a specific time and place, introduce a host of characters and an unusual occurrence, then set the stage for the reader's imagination to take over. If you're like me and are a fan of the horror genre in all forms, your imagination is like a wild flower child of the sixties which, when given free reins, can take a tale to truly horrifying ends.

I will confess that I found some tales too odd to inspire fear in me. I read horror tales with the expectation of shaking in my boots. Some were just too strange for me to suspend disbelief so I read them in a more detached manner and was not able to place myself in that scenario. There was no story I really disliked though. Many had great premises or characters but just ended rather abruptly and needed more development.

Special mention goes to Mark Lawrence's Dark Tide. The caveat: I'm totally biased because I'm a huge fan of his Broken Empire series. Dark Tide didn't disappoint -- it was equal parts tragic and hopeful, spurs the imagination and creates vivid images reminiscent of old Twilight Zone tales.

Others I enjoyed: A Withering of Sorts by Stephen McQuiggan (creepy and reminded me of a tale of biblical doom), They Wait Below by Tom Olbert (great mood setting with a twist at the end), The Beastly Ninth by Carl Baker (another twist on the Napoleonic wars, like Naomi Novik's Temeraire series, and I can see this turned into a full length novel), Friends of a Forgotten Man by Gord Rollo (a great double revenge tale which got progressively creepier), Der Teufel Sie Wissen by TSP Sweeney (another tale grounded in a historical event, with some philosophical slant), Born of Darkness by Stacey Turner (with a familiar and definite biblical theme, believable and eerie), and Light Save Us by Ryan Lawler (good action bits).

A final note: While doom and gloom are staples of horror, the tales in this anthology seem to leave a beacon of hope. Many of the tales do end with a tragedy or downturn, but many seem to leave a strong hint or implication that the last described disaster need not be the final word on the matter. A gruesome end is indeed probable or likely but not preordained or irreversible. They always left room for some intervention that may change the tide.

Ryan Lawler says

So first up - full disclosure is that my story Light Save Us is in this anthology.

Onto the review, I really enjoyed this anthology. Tim Marquitz managed to gather a lot of great authors and everybody really delivered.

My favourite stories include The Equivalence Principle by Nick Cato, Friends of a Forgotten Man by Gord Rollo, Lottery by Gene O'Neill and The Theophany of Nyx by Edward M. Erdelac.

There are a lot of dark stories here, so it might be a downer for a few people, but there are some excellent interpretations of the theme some authors like Malon Edwards really showed some unique styles.

Oh and my story is cool, you should definitely read this for my story ;)

Mihir says

Full Review originally at Fantasy Book Critic

Overall rating = 4 & 1/2 stars

OVERVIEW/ANALYSIS: This anthology was something I was looking forward to because it played with the apocalyptic themes along with horror genre, both of which fascinate me entirely. The blurb can be read here and I'll be speaking about each story as it will be in line with the previous anthology FBC reviews and simply helps in elucidating what I liked and disliked about each story (apologies in advance for its length).

Parasitic Embrace by Adam Millard - It's a tale that begins a volcanic eruption in Spain that causes chaos on a global scale. Amanda is worried about her mother when the cloud reached the British Isles and they discover that there's something within that is much more deadly. This was a simple short story whose premise will be very familiar to most horror readers. It is a decent story that does not surprise much and ends rather suddenly. I thought it was an okay story and in line with the theme of the book.

The Equivalence Principle by Nick Cato - This was another strange story about a guy named Steve Burke who has a strange belief about the earth's gravitational force. This story has a dual narrative with the identity of the other being left up to the reader to decide. This story was a bit weird but kudos to the author for twisting his imagination and bringing about end of humanity in a way that's almost never thought of.

A Withering of Sorts by Stephen McQuiggan - The story begins with a travelling family that stops at a bar looking for a hotel. The father and mother however have no idea where they are and the barkeep along with his customers are only too happy to divulge why strangers are not welcome in their town especially children. This was the first story that I really enjoyed and one, which deviates from the theme to a certain extent.

Goldilocks Zone by Gary W. Olson - Amita Prasad is enjoying the buzz of a drunken evening when she

realizes that the stars have disappeared. Slowly and surely things start disappearing or re-forming (if that's a better word). Everyone transforms into something else. This story was a very weird one and I couldn't gel with it at all. It was perhaps too bizarre for my tastes and its reception will depend on each reader's preferences.

They Wait Below by Tom Olbert - This story was first of the several excellent ones of the collection. It begins with Corby, an ecological inspector narrating the past events occurring at an oil-rig. The hazards he had to face and the terrors he saw have lead him to doubt what is truly happening. This story was a zinger very much in line with the book theme and has shades of John Carpenter's *The Thing*, this tale ends on a nice twist and is the first standout jewel of this collection.

Blessed Be the Shadowchildren by Malon Edwards - The story carries on the excellence of its predecessor. It's a story within a story, with the first thread about Levi, the narrator and his friend Lali trying to find something in a land wherein the sun is dying. The second thread deals with the reason for the sun's death and the hubris of the god who caused it. A twisted story and very well written by Malon Edwards, this story was another one that took the book theme and played it out to a different tune.

The Beastly Ninth by Carl Barker - This was the first historical story in this collection and deals with the battle between the French and English. Napoleon has returned to France after escaping from his island prison and the person chosen to stop him, is the Duke of Wellington Lord Arthur Wellesley. This story was just an all out hit with me, drawing upon history and mixing it with the supernatural, the author really surprised me with the end twist as well. This is a story, which I hope the author decides to write more about and give us a longer story.

Late Night Customer by David Dalglish - David Dalglish is usually known for his dark fantasy tales and it's no surprise that he has a hankering for horror. The story is set in a diner wherein the protagonist waitress Darcy Evans meets a hassled traveller Brad who's running from something that catches up with him in the diner. A fast paced and dark story with an ending similar to the first *Terminator* film but one that is way way more pessimistic.

Rurik's Frozen Bones by Jake Elliot - This is the second of the historical tales and this is set in Scandinavia in the early 9th century AD. The story is narrated by Rurik, who after his most recent sea experience, refuses to go back. He recalls the past to Oslo the Boarstout. This story had a good thriller feel and ends on an uncertain note. Not among my favorites but still a very good effort.

Wrath by Lee Mather - Wrath is a story that deals directly with the apocalypse. Steven is a recovering alcoholic that just wants to reunite with his son who has been with his brother's family so far. Playing with themes of family and biblical curses, this story was another surprise and one that ended on a rather twisted note. A decent effort and a story which will be either liked or ignored depending on the reader's tastes.

Friends of a Forgotten Man by Gord Rollo - This story for me was one of the creepiest ones I have ever read in my life. It features a man imprisoned in a subterranean basement, who is perhaps losing his sanity entirely and thinks of the leeches and insects around him as his friends. Things however are weirder than they seem as the story proves. This was another deviation from the anthology's theme but the story was just so powerful in its horror that I didn't mind at all. Just a word of caution for all those who aren't overtly fond of leeches or creepy-crawlies this story is not for you.

Altus by Georgina Kamsika - Susan Mason is an oceanographer, who has been given a chance to go where no human has gone before. The Altus is a free-diving submersible that has been specially prepared to go into

the Marianas Trench. What doctor Mason finds down below is the crux of the story. This story was a bit similar to the MEG series by Steve Alten. A decent effort but with a predictable ending didn't do well for this story.

Angela's Garden by Dorian Dawes - Angela's Garden is a pleasant surprise of a story. It is another deviation from the book's theme and reminded me a bit of Stephen King's short stories and his book The Green Mile. Angela Bradshaw is a older lady abandoned by her family and she has some extra powers. She's trying to avert a disaster that can take place. This is one of the best stories of this collection as it provides us with a remarkable character, who is an older lady and yet shows spunk. This story came close to being my favorite one among this entire collection simply based on the strength of its main character.

The Long Death of Day by Timothy Baker - This story is about John and his beloved Selena who are rather distraught at the approaching darkness and have to figure out what's wrong with their relationship. This story was more of a downer for me as it focused more on the characters and they weren't that interesting IMO. The story sticks to the overall theme of the anthology though.

Out of the Black by William Meikle - This was another of the very good stories of this collection. Three hundred and fifty years after the sun dimmed, life on earth has irreversibly changed. The unnamed narrator is sent out to find out the required ore and soon stumbles upon a subterranean center. To his horror what he finds, also follows him thereby echoing Nietzsche's famous saying about an abyss. This was another story, which opened up in an exciting manner but fizzled out in the end.

Degenerates by DL Seymour - Degenerates was a surprising story. Set in 1968 in the small town of Dunwich, Diana Collins is the teacher who moves into the town, as she's impressed with the mayor's plan for racial integration. She however starts noticing a curious pattern of disappearance among the children that she teaches and soon add things up. The crux of this story is not hard to anticipate but its final twist will surely leave many surprised. Another good story and an excellent indicator about the pedigree of this anthology.

Dust by Wayne Ligon - Dust is a story that straddles the fine line between SF and fantasy and does it best to appease fans of both genres. It's about an unnamed narrator and his grandmother, both of whom are on the Oregon coastline and are trying to figure out what might be truly happening. An odd story that reminded me of the mythology showcased in the Hellboy universe but distinct in its own way. Another good effort with a somber ending.

Der Teufel Sie Wissen by TSP Sweeney - The title of the story translates to "The devil you know" and is another historical story. This one is set in Nazi Germany and features a group of youths trying to gang up on their quarry, only to realize that they have no idea about what is truly going on. This was another of the fantastic short stories and one, which I believe the author should think of expanding into a longer novel. With an ending that is not only superb but also promises of further tribulations. This story left me wanting to know more of the world within and war to come...

Born of Darkness by Stacey Turner - Another contender for the favorites title, this story strongly follows the main theme of the anthology. The story focuses on the family of Jeb & Cassie and his mother Sarah. They are surviving on their own when they when a young girl comes to stay with them. What happens next is what makes this story special. I completely enjoyed this story and this almost seems like a chapter out of a book as the way it ends, the reader WILL want to know what happens next. Possibly my second favorite story because of the characterization and the mythological aspect of the story, this one is a gem!

Lottery by Gene O'Neill - Lottery is a rather shorter story, sharing its name and premise with the famous short story by Shirley Jackson. The author has inserted his own twist over here and this story deals with more of the paranormal. However it ends abruptly and no explanation is given in regards to the events. This was one of the weaker stories of the collection because of its ending and the incompleteness it fostered.

Where Coyotes Fear to Tread by Gef Fox - This story is definitely my favorite among this collection. It focuses on two people, Lester and his ex-girlfriend, Carla who are forced to unite and save their town Knoxville from something that's out of their comprehension. Again with a terrific mythology utilized and funny characterization, this story simply shines. This also felt part of a greater story and I sincerely hope that the author considers writing the next part to this tale so I and other readers can find out what happens next. Having a very original premise and with some terrific writing, this story is truly the best of this collection.

The Theophany of Nyx by Edward M. Erdelac - The Theophany of Nyx was a highly anticipated story for me as it was written by Ed Erdelac whose previous short story (that I read) was a spectacular one featuring zombies, samurai in a Japanese prison. This danger in this story is primordial in origin and begins with the disappearance of the first lunar colony ever built. The story deals with the notion of what happens when another species tries to fight all the carbon based forms for its survival. A very academic tale (if that's the term) but an effective one, Ed Erdelac showcases his weird imagination and gives us another intriguing story.

Double Walker by Henry P. Gravelle - Dr. Maria Dobbs's newest patient Benedict is accused of the murder of his parents but he denies it and says his shadow did it. This story is focused on what could have happened as the protagonist tries to ferret out the truth. This story was an interesting one however the execution and ending didn't really endear itself to me.

Light Save Us by Ryan Lawler - Ted makes sure the generator keeps running as otherwise the compound's boundary will be over run by the creatures outside. In a recent attempt to get the machine from stopping, Ted will face homophobia, his lover Gray and much more. This story was an interesting one with shades of the Village to it but the author does his best to trip the readers by focusing the story solely from Ted's POV. Another very good story with a very good end twist. This one should appeal to lots of readers.

Dark Tide by Mark Lawrence - Dark Tide is the story of something which has been trapped in the earth's surface but has recently got out due to human experimentation. Focused on a family as they attempt to survive what they do not understand. Dark Tide focuses on the bonds of family and what happens when they get stretched. An excellent ending to this monster anthology and it ends on a bang as the story's climax leaves the reader with hope that anything is possible!

CONCLUSION: As you can see with the overtly lengthy review, this anthology definitely has something for all horror, post-apocalyptic story aficionados. Tim Marquitz has skillfully garnered a veritable host of stories to outwit and outthink the most jaded readers. I thought there were some great stories in this mix namely the ones by Gef Fox, Dorian Dawes, Stacey Turner, Malon Edwards, Carl Barker, TSP Sweeney and Gord Rollo. These ones stood out for me, not that the others were bad, I'm sure different readers will like different ones. Give Fading Light a shot if you want to read something different, you can be assured that you will not regret it!

NOTE: There is a companion piece to this anthology and I'll be reviewing that next week on Bastard Books.

Jake says

I'm updating this review because my thoughts have changed.

I have a story in this anthology. 'Rurik's Frozen Bones' is my contribution. That doesn't matter, I'd have read this book regardless--I'm still giving it 5 stars.

Horror/fantasy author Tim Marquitz consolidated this anthology. Being a fan of his Demon Squad series, naturally I was interested in trying to get a story in this volume. Several talented writers from many genres came together with vastly independent ideas of how the world could end. Several stories were not necessarily about the end of the world, but about unspeakable things hiding in the darkness--sometimes physically real, but other times occupying the realm of madness.

Not in any order, my favorites in this collection were,

Parasitic Embrace by Adam Millard -- A volcano erupts, but it isn't the volcano that we must fear, but what is drifting within the smoke.

Goldilocks Zone by Gary W. Olson -- this is a crazy story about an extra-dimensional collapse that has already happened, now the protagonist must come to grips with her new reality. This is a very smart story.

Wrath by Lee Mather -- God is sick of our shit. He's going to kill all first born children in a couple of days. One man thinks he can stop it, well, he's gonna try.

The Long Day of Death by Timothy Baker -- Planet Venus is hit by a comet, which as bad as that is, isn't as bad as what the fragments have sent to Earth. What made this story so great, was the imperfection of the narrator.

and, **The Equivalence Principle by Nick Cato** -- The story of a man afraid that one day--any day--gravity might fail.

I enjoyed almost all of the stories in this volume, but the above were my five favorites.

Candice says

I received an advanced ebook copy of this anthology from my good friend Jake Elliot, who has a story featured in it. The ebook version is great, because you get an extra group of stories not featured in the hard copy edition (which I will also be purchasing).

Rather than individually review each story, I'd like to comment on the overall experience of reading the anthology. This is great horror writing. In my opinion, too many horror movies and books now-a-days are nothing but a bunch of pointless blood and gore packaged together with flat, idiotic, one dimensional characters who walk blindly from attack to attack.

What makes this great writing, in my humble opinion, is that these stories look into the dark side of human nature. Sure there are monsters: krakens, aliens, zombies, black water from the center of the moon, spirits kidnapped from the center of the sun, huge whale-like angels... but these stories are about humanity. The overreaching theme is the loss of the sun, the earth being plunged into darkness, and what emerges from that perpetual midnight. More often than not the real monster is inside of us.

The greatest compliment I can give all the writers in Fading Light is this... time after time while reading my mind went back to one of the first Ray Bradbury stories I ever read... "All Summer In A Day." A colony of humans live on Mars, where the sun shines for a half hour every 7 years. At school a girl, Margot, remembers the sun because she moved from earth only 5 years ago. The other kids are hateful bullies and lock Margot in a closet, causing her to miss the sun because they were jealous of her previous experience. As a kid, this was my first reading experience highlighting the dark, monstrous side of humanity...

Fading Light echoed my Bradbury experience in the best way possible. This is a talented group of authors, some well established and some up-and-coming. I highly recommend this anthology to not only fans of horror, but to fans of quality, thought-provoking writing.

What my stars mean:

5 stars... this book changed the way I view life. It made me a better thinker/reader/writer/person. It holds a special place in my heart

4 stars... this book is great... I would read it again, it exceeded my expectations and I would recommend it to others.

3 stars... this is a good book. It delivered what it promised. 3 stars is a good thing, not a disparagement.

2 stars... meh, I finished it, that's all I can say. It's just alright

1 star... don't even bother...

Matthew Baker says

It is official: I have found the best horror anthology of 2012. FADING LIGHT: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE MONSTROUS is the best collection of stories from last year, and I would daresay it has some of the best monster short stories I've ever read. If you knew how much I read, you would understand how monumental that statement truly is. Regardless of how much you read, though, this is one anthology you must own if you are a horror fan.

I tore through this book in about two days; it is simply that good. Every story in here is written well and the authors show uniqueness in both voice and idea. This book is crammed full of talent, both old and new; I would love for Angelic Knight Press to do a follow-up book (ahem).

One of my favorite stories in FADING LIGHT: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE MONSTROUS is titled "Der

Teufel Sie Wissen" (or The Devil You Know) by TSP Sweeney. In this story, a group of kids-turned-soldiers have a run-in with something more than human, and the results are not pleasant. I loved this story for its originality and concept.

"Dark Tide" by Mark Lawrence is another favorite. In this story, a family is caught up in an apocalyptic scenario of unknown origins and proportions. I particularly enjoy Lawrence's style of writing (I have reviewed two of his books already, both of which are extremely enjoyable), so this story is just icing on the cake.

These two tales are just a smidgen of what you can expect from **FADING LIGHT: AN ANTHOLOGY OF THE MONSTROUS**. Fans of good fiction and horror should snatch this one up immediately. The book is available now, so be sure and track it down...especially while the light is still shining...

D.L. Seymour says

Well, being biased, I thought that Tim has done an excellent job gathering together a collection of wonderful stories that fit very well together. All of them with their own slanted view of the world we live in.

Frank Errington says

Tim Marquitz has put together a beautiful anthology "firmly rooted in the imagery of H. P. Lovecraft and the stark atmosphere of Stephen King's *The Mist*."

The content is wonderfully captured in Jessy Lucero's brilliant cover art. I was thrilled when Tim offered to allow me to read an advance copy of his effort, but when I saw the cover, I couldn't wait to see what was inside.

The initial story, "Parasitic Embrace" by Adam Millard, is very true to the editor's stated vision, with a huge volcanic eruption leading to an ash cloud covering Great Britain and bringing with it much more than darkness. Well written and very effective.

One of the things I love about an anthology like this, is getting to sample new writers. Sure there are some stories in here from folks I've read before. People like Gene O'Neill, William Meikle, Nick Cato, Gord Rollo (loved his entry, "Friends of a Forgotten man." - A truly creepy story involving leeches), and others. But, some of the best stories in this collection are from people I've never read before, like Stephen McQuiggan's "A Withering of Sorts." A really disturbing tale with a Pied Piper feel to it and my favorite in the collection, from Stacey Turner, "Born of Darkness." Wow. What a story, worthy of being expanded into a longer piece. It's about darkness blocking out of the sun and a little girl who shows up at Cassie and Jeb's door, they take her in and care for her even though she cannot speak. Darkness, Light, Good & Evil. It's all there in this beautifully crafted short.

There are all kinds of stories in *Fading Light*, a number of them deal with the darkness above, a couple with the darkness below, a fear of losing gravity, leeches, body-snatching, wars, Kraken, plagues, (did I mention leeches?), comets and more.

And if you get the e-book, there are some pretty cool bonus stories. One that I greatly enjoyed was "Torrential" by Regan Campbell.

Truthfully, not every story knocks it out of the park, but most of them do. This is one collection that is well worth your time and money. Be on the lookout for this one, real soon.

Warning: The entire anthology is recommended for mature adults. There is some profanity and plenty of disturbing images.

Chris Strange says

Fading Light is a horror anthology put together by the awesome Tim Marquitz, featuring stories by many rising stars alongside well-known authors such as Mark Lawrence and David Dalglish. I'll admit upfront that I'm not much of an anthology reader. I tend to find it a little exhausting to read a story, get invested in the characters, and then have it end, only for a new story to begin. To combat this I got into the habit of reading a story or two at a time, dipping in and out while I read other things on the side. But despite my haphazard reading style, I thoroughly enjoyed this anthology and discovered many new-to-me authors that I'd love to read more of in the future. Not all of the stories were quite to my liking, but that's expected from any anthology. I'm sure everyone will have their own favourites in this book.

A couple of criticisms first: I felt that the anthology suffered slightly by having several stories with similar themes and settings grouped close together. If some of these stories had been spread throughout the book, they probably would have seemed fresher. A couple of the stories also used framing stories, as in the case of the tale of a Viking telling his story to friends at a tavern. I'm not a fan of this technique, especially in short stories where you really need to get to the conflict quickly. But these are minor problems with an otherwise great horror anthology. I'll highlight a few of my personal favourite stories.

The Beastly Ninth by Carl Barker – This is one of a few historical fantasy stories in the collection. Set during the Battle of Waterloo, this tale focuses on the Duke of Wellington and a few of the soldiers under his command as they face off against the terrifying, unnatural might of Napoleon's beastly army. But the British are not without their own dark magic...

Late Night Customer by David Dalglish – David Dalglish is probably best known for his Half-Orc dark fantasy series, but he also writes a mean contemporary horror tale. The protagonist is an ordinary waitress in an out-of-the-way diner, going about her work as usual until a terrified traveller comes in and reveals he's running from something. This is a fast-paced little story with some great characters and lots of tension.

Der Teufel Sie Wissen (The Devil You Know) by TSP Sweeney – My favourite of the bunch. It is near the end of World War II, and a group of Hitler Youth are sent to kill a solitary Russian officer who's been spotted in the ruined city. But the tables are soon turned as the officer proves to be like no adversary they've seen before. This story is dark and brutal with an interesting setting to boot.

If you're into horror stories or dark fantasy at all, do yourself a favour and pick up a copy of Fading Light. It's sure to have something you love. Highly recommended.

Natasha McNeely says

I received an Advance Reading Copy of this from one of the contributors, Mark Lawrence, in exchange for an unbiased and honest review. I intend to give just that.

First I'll give an overview of my general thoughts concerning this anthology and then I'll delve a bit deeper into a small handful of my favorite stories. Here goes!

General Thoughts

Horror isn't a genre I've read much of; I'll be the first to admit that. However, I've been reading more and more of it lately and this is an anthology I'd recommend to anyone intending to broaden their reading horizons.

It consists of a multitude of stories, each focusing on different topics, though each with that same dark touch that makes them so interesting to read. Be prepared to read about the sun dying, darkness creeping over the lands, and even some unconventional topics that I never saw coming.

Not all stories had a chilling effect on me or kept my interest as much, but that doesn't mean they weren't all good. There's bound to be at least one story for every reading in here, so pick it up and give it a try!

Favorites

“Wrath” by Lee Mather.

A man fighting his alcoholism decides it's time to fight to regain custody of his son. What he doesn't count on is the wrath of God coming to force people to believe.

A powerful and emotional story, this tale chilled me to the bones and inspired me all at the same time. One thing's for sure: After reading this, I'd think twice about letting my potential-children out of my sight in the future.

“Born of Darkness” by Stacey Turner.

This story may be my favorite of them all. It goes from hopelessness as darkness ravages the land, to a spark of hope, a spark of light, illuminating the path that could lead to what everyone is hoping for; the light returning.

This short story has the makings of a brilliant novel, if not a series. My imagination went wild focusing on what things would happen to the characters in the months and years to come.

“Where Coyotes Fear to Tread” by Gef Fox.

This was a bit of a toss-up for me. It's a brilliant story and like the previous one, I could see it as a full-length novel. It felt more like an epic fantasy with a touch of darkness to me. Because of that, it felt a bit out of place compared to the other stories, but that doesn't mean it isn't less good.

Personally, I would prefer it as a novel. It feels too short. The world and idea is too broad to be confined in a short story. All that aside, it has amazing potential and the characters are interesting, which is why it's one of my favorites.

“Dark Tide” by Mark Lawrence.

The reason this made it into my list of favorites is quite simple. It focuses on hope - and self-sacrifice. It shows a man not willing to give up, even as darkness threatens to swallow him and his family.

The concept in this story is interesting and unique, which drew me into it immediately (and made me afraid of cellars, admittedly) and kept my focus until the very end. Speaking of the end: The ending is open and

gives readers the chance to imagine for themselves where things will go from there.

Like I said before, all the stories were good in their own way; the four mentioned above were simply my personal favorites. Again, I highly recommend this anthology to anyone who enjoys reading about the darkness, and anyone looking to try something new.

Gef says

A completely biased review coming soon.

Donald says

My original assumption about **Fading Light** was that it was entirely about the literal end of the world. A great many of the stories certainly are. "Parasitic Embrace" by Adam Millard envisions the end of the world under a mysterious cloud originating with a volcanic eruption. The threat, of course, isn't really from the darkness that engulfs the world, but rather what's hiding in that darkness.

In Mark Lawrence's "Dark Tide", scientists awaken something while doing research at the bottom of the Marianas Trench, something that is antithetical to life and light, something that quickly begins to cover the world. Alan, a typical middle class husband and father with a typical middle class family, must navigate the new reality he's faced with in order to save himself and his family.

"Out of the Black" by William Miekle isn't so much about the end of the world as how mankind adapts following the end of the world. The sun has gone out, though not in an expansion of nuclear fire like scientists say will happen. Rather, the sun, and the Earth with it, has grown cold. Almost four centuries later, an underground enclave of survivors is searching for a new vein of the ore (coal, I assume) that provides light, keeps them warm, and runs the machinery necessary for survival. Our protagonist does indeed find a new source of ore, as well as something far worse.

Then there are stories that are more subtle with the "fading light" theme. "A Withering of Sorts" by Stephen McQuiggan is not about the end of the world. There's no swarm of ravenous insects. No Cthulhu-esque creatures have taken over. The sun hasn't gone out, nor has anything obscured it. No, this is a story about a tragedy in a small town. The nature of that tragedy, however, has robbed the survivors of their future, killed whatever spark for life they may have once had.

Carl Barker's "The Beastly Ninth" is a retelling of the Battle of Champaubert, though with some major differences. First, it's between the French and the English. More importantly, however, is that the battle is fought not just with swords, rifles, and cannons, but also with necromancers, zombies, and werewolves. The relevance to the central theme of the anthology in this story is more inferred than outright stated. Mankind is harnessing powers it does not fully understand, powers that dwarf traditional weapons, all in the name of war. At the time of the story, these powers are ostensibly under man's control. But what happens when the slaves grow tired of being such? A silver bullet may stop a werewolf, and destroying a zombie's head will give it a second death, but what do you do when both are attacking you? And what of the things you can't see, forces that aren't harmed by bullets and blades?

Tim Marquitz, the editor, also uses his anthology to showcase what I feel is going to be a real strength for ebooks. My understanding is that publishers typically put an upper limit on how long an anthology can be, largely due to printing costs. There's no reason for such a limitation on ebooks, however. Marquitz has taken advantage of this and released a companion to **Fading Light** that collects five more stories. Each of these is just as good as anything in the anthology itself, perhaps even better than a few.

"Evensong" by Alex Marshall is my favorite of the additional stories. Humanity has been forced deep underground by a failing sun and the monsters it allows to roam the surface. Society is divided into castes, with one (the Seers) ruling over all others through advanced technology and, perhaps, some magic. We aren't told how long things have been like this, though it is hinted that a great deal of time has passed; the caste responsible for burrowing ever deeper into the earth has started to evolve to better accomplish this task. Enter Morya, a nurse who has learned something that could change everything. The Seers, of course, want things to remain as they are and cruelly punish anyone inciting rebellion of any sort.

Tim Marquitz has accomplished something truly special with **Fading Light**: there are no bad stories in this anthology. Some are perhaps weaker than others, but even those are far beyond some of what I've encountered in other horror-themed anthologies, even the various "year's best" books. It is my ardent hope that Mr. Maquitz will be the editor for future anthologies. With time, I can easily see his name being mentioned in the same breath as Ellen Datlow, Stephen Jones, and Karl Edward Wagner.

Paulo "paper books always" Carvalho says

So, this one heck of a ride. A interesting compilation of short stories that deal with Monstrous beings that would wipe out Earth. Some were pretty good that even made me look for other stories from those writers, others I didn't feel that they capture the monstrous bit and even if a good story it didn't belong here. And fortunally small ones weren't that interesting. Overall thumbs up.

Note: Interesting or not some writers wrote the title of this anthology in their works... Fading Light. A bit of coincidences don't you think?

Parasitic Embrace by Adam Millard What a way to start. In my opinion probably one of the best tales in this anthology. A volcano A volcanic eruption in Spain draws a cloud of ash to Great Britan but not everything is at it seems. A good horror story that ends suddenly to make you wonder. This story is also a "Dust" variant as you understant what I say 9/10

The Equivalence Principle by Nick Cato A man believes that the gravitational force is going to dissapears so he walks around with a rope in his waist. Even at work. There is small paragraphe about a being talking. Who was it? Too much unknown and even if in my opinion is a good story it was to vague to be included in the monstrous anthology. 7/10

A Withering of Sorts by Stephen McQuiggan This tale in my opinion didn't fit here even if it is a nice horror story. A family arrives at a small city where they don't like strangers and so the barkeeper explains why. 7/10

Goldilocks Zone by Gary W. Olson This is one of the most bizarre stories in this anthology. As the stars begin to dissapear people are transformed into odd beings (everyone is different type of beings). I enjoyed

the conversation between the being and our main character but at the same time I must say that it was a bit too bizarre but nevertheless it belongs here 6/10

They Wait Below by Tom Olbert This tale remind me of a mix between "The Thing" and some odd creature from a lovecraft story. A inspector is working on a oil-ring when he starts to see transformation of some of the workers. As he tries to uncover what its going on he understands that not all things are as they seem. Very nice story. 7.5/10

Blessed Be the Shadowchildren by Malon Edwards This story is somewhat a bizarre tale. I really couldn't get into the tale even if I am to say it was well written unfortunately I couldn't get into it. The characters didn't appeal to me (even I enjoyed the second part of the story) 5/10

The Beastly Ninthby Carl Barker A historical fiction with a twist of occult fantasy. It depicts a battle in the napoleonic wars between the french and the english. The author brought those vivid images we have of those battles but with occult beings like werewolves. Quite good book. There is some fiction out there with the same premises (Dragons in this case) 8/10

Late Night Customer by David Dalglish This tale remind me of one of those tales in the Twilight Zone. I really think there was one where a man arrives in a diner trying to escape his nightmares (which in that case was the vietnam war) and everything goes downhill from that. In this case the man is running from a odd nightmarish being and everyone who sees it must start running also. And he really wants to talk to someone. 8/10

Rurik's Frozen Bones by Jake Elliot This tale is another tavern/inkeeper/barman tale. It's an historic tale about a man who went fishing and lost most of his crew to a kraken and now he is scarred. A berserker hears the tale before setting sail. Good story. 6.5/10

Wrath by Lee Mather This tale was a christian apocalypse of some sorts. Quite interesting. The main character really well developed (within a short story possibility). A nice twisted tale. 8/10

Friends of a Forgotten Man by Gord Rollo Well this is it. This is a tale that you will want to forget because it's creepy as hell. Imagine a man imprisoned in a subterranean basement who is losing his sanity. Every day leeches are coming to suck his blood and they are their only friends who whisper things to him. Nice ending. Gord Rollo really nailed it. 9.5/10

Altus by Georgina Kamsika This tale depicts something like Meg or something like that. An oceanographer goes where nobody has went. There she finds some begins that nobody knew they existed. Interesting but rather bland story. 6/10

Angela's Garden by Dorian Dawes This was one of those stories or you love it or hated it. It's a story about a woman that thinks that she has the power to keep at bay some nocturnal evil beings. A nice interesting tale with a great main character. There aren't many out there where the main character is a female grandmother. 8/10

The Long Death of Day by Timothy Baker Skyline & Day Earth Stood remix. 6/10

Out of the Black by William Meikle This tale was one of the most interesting. This is set in the future where humanity has gone underneath our soil because the sun has stopped shining. A man goes to the surface for the first time in several generations and what he finds almost kills him. Nice tale. 8/10

Degenerates by DL Seymour This is one of the biggest tales in here. It's a tale set in the Lovecraft mythos but thirty or forty years after his stories. How can you not like it? A woman teacher goes to work in Dunwich where people are starting to disappear. Nice twist. 7,5/10

Dust by Wayne Ligon I enjoyed this one. It has something of a pseudo-scientific explanation about it. Really interesting. Migration patterns in space. What a thought. 8.5/10

Der Teufel Sie Wissen by TSP Sweeney This tale is set in the WWII where a group of Nazi soldiers are trying to kill some man. But this is more than a man. Quite good story and ending. 7/10

Born of Darkness by Stacey Turner This tale is another about the Christian mythology. Something happens and only a handful survive. A man, his woman and his mother survive and are trying to survive in their isolated house until a little girl arrives. Nice tale and nice characterization. 8/10

Lottery by Gene O'Neill This tale is a remake of Lottery by Shirley Jackson and I really didn't enjoy it because I didn't know where it was going. Weak ending. 5/10

Where Coyotes Fear to Tread by Gef Fox Nice story that has some other reviewers said it's missing a larger novel behind it (or in front of it). I enjoyed the tale and the mythology behind. 8/10

The Theophany of Nyx by Edward M. Erdelac This tale sets in the moon where the first colony base is setting. But the base disappears in an explosion and a dust is coming to earth. But it seems it's more than Dust (like the first tale). Quite good story (and dialogue) 7,5/10

Double Walker by Henry P. Gravelle This story is a nice psychological tale but it doesn't fit here in my opinion. A man thinks his shadow is more than it seems. And you know what? It really is. 7/10

Light Save Us by Ryan Lawler This tale is quite good. A man is in charge of keeping the generator working but when he goes to get some more oil something happens. Someone says that he is a victim of homophobia but I don't think so, because you can't really understand what is happening. My belief is that he was some sort of mutant. 7/10

Dark Tide by Mark Lawrence This tale is by a famous author and almost all other tales end badly but this one doesn't. Something liquid/slime is coming from beneath the earth and is engulfing people. A man tries to keep his family far from risk. It's has a brighter ending leaving you thinking that sometimes good triumphs (even at the expense of sacrifices). I really don't think this should be the last tale because I expected "bad endings from it". That's my opinion but I cannot argue that is a bad story because it isn't. 8,5/10

Overall, it was a nice anthology with good stories and only a couple bad ones. My only question is.

I pay more from this paper book than those people buying e-books. Why are they favoured? It shouldn't be the other way around? Damn e-books. I really hate them

seak says

I picked up this anthology not only because it was an ARC given to me by a favorite author of mine, Tim Marquitz, but also because I felt like it would be some fun to read ... and the story by Mark Lawrence may have helped as well.

Anthologies, for me, are going way out of my comfort zone. I'm typically a lazy person and can only take so much "new" at a time and anthologies are always filled with "new," each and every story in fact. But, I love a good monster story, be it zombies, vampires (maybe not as much), or other ghoulies, but I had no idea what I was in for.

Fading Light blew my mind in terms of monsters. This anthology covers them from small ones to large ones and even sometimes asks the question about who the real monsters are, is it us? Humans can easily fall in the category all too easily.

I don't think I can really describe how good this anthology is. It kept me up at night and not only because I was shaking under my blanket, it had me constantly thinking, and it was oh so easy to come back to. I can't praise this anthology enough, just go read it, you won't regret it.

Short reviews:

“Parasitic Embrace” by Adam Millard - What a great start to the anthology. It had me from the very beginning as a mysterious volcanic cloud sweeps the world. What could it be bringing? (4.5/5)

“The Equivalence Principle” by Nick Cato - This was a very interesting story with a great protagonist who seems to be a paranoid schizophrenic who thinks that gravity is about to give out any second. He races from his home to his car with an actual rope tied between just to get to and from work. Great story, but I didn't quite “get” the monster all that well. (4/5)

“A Withering of Sorts” by Stephen McQuiggan - So far, this was the most atmospheric and scary of the bunch. A guy walks into a bar (this is not a joke) with his wife and kid outside in the car. He's then told why strangers aren't welcome in these parts, especially children. (4.5/5)

“Goldilocks Zone” by Gary W. Olson - This was an all-out, everyone's a monster story. It quickly jumps into the premise that everyone starts becoming a monster from a mysterious such-n-such. While good, I don't know if I got this one all that well either. (3/5)

“They Wait Below” by Tom Olbert - This was a creepy story of an ancient monster slowly taking over the crew of a deep sea oil rig. I thought the monster was great although the story seemed to take a few leaps and bounds in logic that I wasn't willing to go to. Still a great story. (3.5/5)

“Blessed Be the Shadowchildren” by Malon Edwards - This story was both impressive and entertaining. There's a TON of world-building about how this particular being left his home on/in the sun and became a god. In the end it all works. (4/5)

“The Beastly Ninth” by Carl Barker - Barker takes us back to the 19th century where Napoleon is a sorcerer for the French and wages war against the English. The entire story is one battle with all kinds of undead monsters. It was enjoyable but not quite my favorite. (3.5/5)

“Late Night Customer” by David Dalglish - This was my first taste of Dalglish although I own a couple of his other books. I have to say I’m impressed and looking forward to the rest. I was sufficiently creeped out in this story about a waitress at a diner who serves a customer who’s at his wit’s end. All I can say is, “Don’t look!!!!” (4.5/5)

“Rurik’s Frozen Bones” by Jake Elliot - You had me at Vikings, sailing, and Kraken. This was really a story within a story. Rurik, a Viking who looks exceptionally haggard is asked his story. The story itself was great and the main bulk, but it was dimmed a bit by the outer story, which ending didn’t seem to fit these rough and tumble Vikings. (3.5/5)

“Wrath” by Lee Mather - I’m pretty sure I should suffer some type of damnation for liking this story, but it was really good. A priest starts going crazy, Biblical stuff goes down, nobody’s safe. (4/5)

“Friends of a Forgotten Man” by Gord Rollo - Leaning more toward the gross-out horror for me, a man is unjustly imprisoned and conditions are just barely enough to keep him alive. He makes some...friends while contemplating his revenge. (3/5)

“Altus” by Georgina Kamsika - A woman attempts to dive the deepest any human has dived, doing so aboard the Altus. Maybe there’s a reason we’re not meant to dive so deep. (4/5)

“Angela’s Garden” by Dorian Dawes - This story definitely has a place among my favorites in the anthology. A woman in a retirement home sees things that others can’t, dark things that only bode poorly for anyone in the vicinity. (4.5/5)

“The Long Death of Day” by Timothy Baker - Another story that tops my list of favorites, a comet comes close to Earth only to miss it...and completely destroy Venus. I thought the cover of this anthology was just some random monster, but turns out that’s from this story. (4.5/5)

“Out of the Black” by William Meikle - The world’s gone cold, only a few survivors live underneath the frozen surface. But the ore’s running out and must be replenished. “Out of the Black” is another favorite in this anthology that’s full of favorites. What great setting and atmosphere in such a small package. Loved it. (4.5/5)

“Degenerates” by DL Seymour - Set in the 60’s amidst racial segregation, the town of Dunwich is looking to come back to its former glory. I really didn’t expect this story in this collection, it’s quite the deviation, but still good. It almost doesn’t belong, until we find out about Dunwich’s disturbing secret. (3.5/5)

“Dust” by Wayne Ligon - There’s kind of a theme of dust or particles being the cause of some type of apocalypse for the earth. It provides a good setting for some monsters to come out of the closet and each one of these types of stories takes the concept in a different way. “Dust” really takes the concept in a whole new direction and inserts some really interesting ideas about space and aliens. I’m a big fan of this one. (4.5/5)

“Der Teufel Sie Wissen” by TSP Sweeney - I was really looking forward to this one - you had me at the German. Set during WWII, some Hitler Youth are assigned the simple task of taking out an enemy. Just one guy, it’s almost too easy...right? The monster in this was great the story entertaining. Great work. (4/5)

“Born of Darkness” by Stacey Turner - Another of the “Dust” variety, a man is able to prepare his family for the ending of the world in a dream. They’re doing okay until they take on a mute girl and suddenly they have another visitor at the door. A preacher who the mute girl obviously dislikes. Who can you trust at the end of

the world? I enjoyed this one and it seemed like it could become a bigger project, at least from the setup at the end. (4/5)

“Lottery” by Gene O’Neill - I know Stephen King tells me it’s juvenile to want things wrapped up nicely, but I really wanted a lot more information in this story. It was good, but then I had no idea why things happened how they did. (3/5)

“Where Coyotes Fear to Tread” by Gef Fox - I didn’t know what to expect from his one at first, but I really liked it in the end. The Moon and the Sun are gone and monsters have taken over. The Moon has a plan to destroy them and a dangerous mission for Coyote and Eagle. (4/5)

“The Theophany of Nyx” by Edward M. Erdelac - I had to look up the title to see how it actually fit the story. Yes, it does. In this one, the moon is being colonized by earth, but the colonists may have gone too far and put the earth in big trouble. (4/5)

“Double Walker” by Henry P. Gravelle - If your shadow is killing people how do you make someone believe? It’s not easy. Another good one. (4/5)

“Light Save Us” by Ryan Lawler - I was not expecting this ending. Great story, I’ll say no more. (4/5)

“Dark Tide” by Mark Lawrence - This story, by the author of the excellent Prince of Thorns, did not suffer for my lack of anticipation (since I jumped ahead to read it). Wow, what a powerful story. I was up late and could not put it down, talk about creepy. I will say no more for fear of ruining it. (5/5)

The following are bonus stories, available only for NOOK and Kindle:

“Torrential” by Regan Campbell - Wow, I’m so glad I have the Kindle version because this story blew my mind. Great stuff. An obviously exhausted mother and son enter a diner with an unusual request. (4.5/5)

“Roadkill” by CM Saunders - Taking place with a couple of amateur ambulance drivers in Brazil, they find a motorcycle accident that no one could survive...or could they? Another solid entry. (4/5)

“Night Terrors” by Jonathan Pine - Not one to read in the wee hours of the night, this took me back to my childhood frights and that’s a good thing. “Night Terrors” also reminded me a bit of Odd Thomas by Dean Koontz, but way scarier. (4.5/5)

“Final Rights” by Peter Welmerink - In a future earth, giant wolves and bears roam the earth and civilization is barely keeping it together. Lots of action and lots of bloody monsters. (4/5)

“Evensong” by Alex Marshall - I would be very interested to read a full novel based on this world where civilization has moved under the earth and is solely governed by The Seers. Great read and great ending. (4.5/5)

If you’re looking for a great Halloween read, it would be hard to find better. If you’re looking for an excellent anthology in general, you’ve found it. Fading Light is easily one of the best anthologies I’ve ever read, second only to Songs of the Dying Earth.

4.5 out of 5 Stars (Very Highly Recommended!)
