



The Hunger, and Other Stories

Charles Beaumont

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When *The Hunger and Other Stories* (1957) appeared, it heralded the arrival of Charles Beaumont (1929-1967) as an important and highly original new voice in American fiction. Although he is best known today for his scripts for television and film, including several classic episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, Beaumont is being rediscovered as a master of weird tales, and this, his first published collection, contains some of his best. Ranging in tone from the chilling Gothic horror of "Miss Gentilbelle," where an insane mother dresses her son up as a girl and slaughters his pets, to deliciously dark humor in tales like "Open House" and "The Infernal Bouillabaisse," where murderers' plans go disastrously awry, these seventeen stories demonstrate Beaumont's remarkable talent and versatility. This new edition of *The Hunger and Other Stories*, the first in more than fifty years, includes a new introduction by Dr. Bernice M. Murphy, who argues for reevaluation of Beaumont alongside the other greats of the genre, including Shirley Jackson, Ray Bradbury, and Richard Matheson.

The Hunger, and Other Stories Details

Date : Published 1957 by G.P. Putnam's Sons

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Author : Charles Beaumont

Format : Hardcover

Genre : Horror, Short Stories, Fiction, Audiobook, Anthologies, Collections

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From Reader Review *The Hunger, and Other Stories* for online ebook

Dave Joseph says

I think it is safe to say there isn't another Charles Beaumont. His work with the *Twilight Zone* is not perfectly emblematic of his overall work, nor is any of it represented in this collection. I chose this collection because I found a vintage copy and specifically because it held no *Twilight Zone* material.

There's just something about Beaumont's style that even if you're unsure about the material, his style hooks you and takes you along for the ride until the conclusion. A lot of vague endings, but not necessarily unsatisfying. His words are poetic at times.

I'd recommend it for something very different and to experience the work of a talented writer beyond his famous TZ work.

Blair Hodgkinson says

Perhaps best known for his *Twilight Zone* scripts, Charles Beaumont was an expert at story, whistling his way through grabber beginnings, gripping middles and satisfying ends in telecasts as short as a half-hour. Now, his short stories are finding new readers, and when I saw this collection on Audible and fondly remembered reading a TOR collection twenty-five years ago called "*The Howling Man and Other Stories*" and spent my monthly Audible credit without hesitation.

While these stories vary between the mildly disturbing to the deeply chilling, they're all woven together with a thread of macabre humour. Beaumont's voice is easy to place within the same generation as other masterful story writers in the same field like Matheson and Bloch, but he's distinctive too. I'm not a jazz musician, but listening to "*Black Country*" is likely as close as I will ever hear to the authentic voice of a 1950s jazz drummer as he shares a story. Where I find Beaumont most interesting is when he finds the entrance into a character's mind and shows you around and everything seems normal enough... even as each step takes us into darker and darker territory. We all have rooms like that in our heads and Beaumont has the keys to all of them.

Stories like "*Miss Gentilbelle*", "*The Hunger*", "*The Vanishing American*" and "*Fair Lady*" give us a view into the minds of deeply alienated figures and the concepts that evolve in their minds as a result of their intense loneliness or isolation. The characters do things we tell ourselves we would never do (actually, sometimes the characters tell themselves the same thing), but as we follow them through the stories, we can all too easily imagine taking their hands and following them into the strange places they should never tread. The macabre humour of "*Open House*" and "*Free Dirt*" made me laugh out loud occasionally. "*The Dark Music*" is a particularly rich and satisfying modern gothic tale. "*The Crooked Man*" is a strange work of speculative fiction about sexuality that is as interesting, relevant and current today as when it was written in the 1950s.

I came to the collection already aware that Beaumont wrote good stories and unfolded the narratives skillfully, but the pleasant surprise here was being reintroduced to his admirable prose style: economical and Spartan at times, peppered with some enviable metaphors, but never florid or unwieldy. You don't need a

dictionary, but it's intelligent writing. His sentences have a flow and rhythm that a poet might envy, but it never sounds forced or awkward. It's very readable.

The publisher recruited three readers to give voices to the characters and narrators of the stories and they are all well suited to the material. It's a good listen.

Bree says

Personification is ingenious and really captures the essence of horror ... And what horror books were like in the 1950's. It's not much about the supernatural but rather the evils human beings bring to our world. For me it, it is more about his writing and commonly his opening lines, give you the chills. The themes are based mostly on the dangerous fantasies of disturbed people. Since it was post WWII, the horror is actually in humans themselves rather than the supernatural

Maureen says

this is the first Charles Beaumont book I've ever read, and I must say I'm bowled over. The very first story, Miss Gentilbelle, was so creepy that I consciously held myself aloof from it, trying not to absorb the fright, and the madness. Happily the second story, The Vanishing American reminded me of other stories I have loved, despite the creepiness of it, so I could allow myself to fully live in Beaumont's world.

I always suspected I would love Beaumont's stories: I love his Twilight Zone episodes, and he hasn't disappointed. I'm looking forward to more.

Steve Carroll says

the first collection of short stories by Charles Beaumont who is probably best known today for having written a large number of episodes of the original Twilight Zone. I had read a best of collection and liked it enough to track down all the original collections it was drawn from.

Joseph Patchen says

The true master of the weird and wonderful. This may be old school to some but Charles Beaumont is the foundation for many, many writers. Taken too soon he left us with this marvelous and classic collection that is timeless.

Jason Feters says

Just finished reading The Hunger and other stories by Charles Beaumont, a great short story collection that was out of print for over 50 years. Do yourself a favor and read it. Delicious horror and science fiction tales

that make the skin crawl.

Tom Breen says

This collection of short stories feels very much of its time: the 1950s, when there were still large-circulation publications that paid well for short fiction, and when contes cruels and morality tales with twist endings written in clipped Hemingway prose were mainstream entertainment.

Beaumont was one of the best exemplars of this style, and his most lasting work can be found in the scripts he wrote for "The Twilight Zone." Too many of these stories read like half-formed versions of those scripts ("The Murderers," "Free Dirt,") while others are bogged down in a kind of Benchley-esque whimsy that ill suits their often dark premises. A few stories are terrific ("The Hunger," "The Dark Music"), but anyone looking for the best of Beaumont's short fiction would be better served by the later collections "Yonder" and "Night Ride."

Amberae says

This has been one of the best short story collections I have read in years. It was my first Beaumont book I have read, I will actively pursue much more of his writing.

Debra says

Stephen King recommended book. Noted as "important to the genre we have been discussing" from Danse Macabre, published in 1981.

I really enjoyed this collection of horror stories. Some of them were down-right creepy, others very strange. Many have psychological aspects. I can see why King recommended this book.

Bob Rust says

Miss Gentilbelle • (1957)
The Vanishing American • (1955)
A Point of Honor • (1955)
Fair Lady • (1957)
Free Dirt • (1955)
Open House • (1957)
The Train • (1957)
The Dark Music • (1956)

The Customers • (1957)
Last Night in the Rain • (1956)
The Crooked Man • (1955)
Nursery Rhyme • (1957)
The Murderers • (1955)
The Hunger • (1955)
Tears of the Madonna • (1957)
The Infernal Bouillabaisse • (1957)
Black Country • (1954)

Ben Loory says

"I like to think of our stomachs," Mr. Frenchaboy said, in conclusion, "as small but select museums, to which a new treasure should be added at least once a day."

Eric Steele says

A superb collection of beautifully written dark fantasy and horror stories by the author of several of the best Twilight Zone episodes. They range from the grotesque (Free Dirt) to the sublime (The Hunger). An important horror author who died too soon. Well recommended.

Christopher Sword says

Some brilliant stories here that recall the wonderful storytelling of Shirley Jackson. Free Dirt and The Dark Music were particular highlights.

Robert says

Well-crafted, literate short stories ranging from speculative fiction to horror. The author (who died in 1967) is best known for penning many classic Twilight Zone episodes, and he was well-respected by his peers, including Ray Bradbury and Richard Matheson. Standouts here include the title story and the striking, jazz-inflected prose of "Black Country."

Craven Lovelace says

Hard to find these days, but the short stories of Charles Beaumont (perhaps better-known for his screenplays and TWILIGHT ZONE work on television) remain milestones in the sort of magical realism for which Ray Bradbury is often cited. Highly recommended.

Ed says

If you're a fan of, or even familiar with, Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*, you've probably already seen some of Charles Beaumont's work. He and Richard Matheson were responsible for the majority of stories in that series not written by Serling himself, and his reputation for short, pithy stories with lyrical prose and horrific, haunting elements is served well by this collection.

Some of the stories here have that signature *Zone*-like twist, but most don't. They are simply beautifully told tales of horror, desperation, psychological breakdowns, and haunting memories. Beaumont's imagery will haunt you indeed, long after you have finished the last of these stories.
