



Primetime

J.R. Rain , Tony Healey , A.W. Exley , Vicki Keire , A.E. Propher , Eliza Tilton , Gerilyn Marin , Grace Eyre , more... James Wymore , K.H. Koehler , Matthew Graybosch , Michael Panush , Michael Shean , Mike Robinson , Nathan Yocum , Nina Post , Rand B. Lee , Randy Attwood , Sharon Bayliss , William Vitka ...less

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Curiosity Quills Press brings together bestselling authors like J.R. Rain, Tony Healey, A.W. Exley, and more to create a spine-tingling, mind-blowing, quirky collection of short stories in their first ever, annual Curiosity Quills: Primetime Anthology.

10% of every purchase will go straight to animals in need. The CQ team has selected humane societies on both the East and West coast that spend well and do not stray from their “no-kill” policies.

Included Short Stories:

And Death Shall Have No Dominion - K.H. Koehler

Sometimes dead really is better... but not always attainable. A Nick Englebrecht short.

Cyber Cowboy - James Wymore

An accountant, separated from the woman he loves, must decide if he has what it takes to save her from the horrible fate dealt when the Actuator turns her half of the city into a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

Dark Orb - Tony Healey

It's 1985 and young George is going to encounter some of the darkness that people face in their lives, and come to understand how they manage to live with it... if they are able to.

Ephemera - Gerilyn Marin

While touring a house for signs of a paranormal activity, amateur psychic consultant Giselle Boudreaux has a frightening encounter unlike anything she's experienced before.

The Fridge - J.R. Rain

A man buys a top-of-the-line kitchen appliance and watches, horrified, how it quickly puts his life on ice. But when he wins and manages to put himself out of its reach by what most would call spectacularly losing, the FRIDGE has the last laugh.

Ghost Placers - Nina Post

When the owner of a ghost relocation service gets the chance to land a lucrative contract that would change his life forever, he must decide if achieving the success he's always dreamed of is really worth the cost.

Gothic Gwen - A.W. Exley

It's not the constant taunts from the other kids driving sixteen year old Gwen bat shit crazy, but the white hot pain spiking through her brain. Seeking refuge in her small sanctuary, she wants to know why, just for once, can't the cosmos cut a girl some slack?

How I Killed the Drama - Mike Robinson

A traveling salesman, staying overnight in an out-of-the-way hotel, stumbles upon the astonishing secret of humankind's every teardrop and every turmoil, and resolves to take advantage.

Mad Science - Sharon Bayliss

Nothing can stand in the way of Heather marrying her true love. Even her fiancee's death. Both love and science are best when done madly...

On the Rocks - William Vitka

In the quest for Earth's resources, there is space...and there is madness in the black.

Razor Child - Michael Shean

In a society so glittering, it feels like shards of ice cutting through tender skin, there arises a Mother that feeds Her Razor children enough of a pap of truth and lies to make them do anything with a madman's smile. Literally anything.

Sinergy - A.E. Propher & Grace Eyre

Antoine DeLongville, once a high-ranking member of the Catholic Church, flees from the secretive Order after he discovers their plot to target the only woman he's ever loved. His journey is marked with both extreme danger and remarkable fortune, as if unseen forces are waging a war over his fate.

Tell Us Everything - Randy Attwood

Goth girl connects her piercings to perceive the truths around her and starts broadcasting the news.

The Caw - Eliza Tilton

Lena's plan is to spend one perfect night with Johnny Ridge; regardless if it's in a creepy cemetery, but as the night twists, and her best friend disappears, Lena discovers some things are more terrifying than the dead.

The Damned and the Dangerous - Michael Panush

La Cruz looks like an average Southern California small town, but it has some dark secrets - and it has its guardians. They are the supernaturally adept drivers of Donovan Motors, including zombie greaser Roscoe, who stand between La Cruz and chaos with only their wits and some fast hot rods to help them.

The Last Carnivale - Vicki Keire

Roaming the forbidden surface of her burnt and twisted world, the princess of ash and cinders finds hope one day too late.

The Milgram Battery - Matthew Graybosch

Obedience isn't always a virtue, and defiance isn't always a sin.

The Notebook - Randy Attwood

College professor returns to his student apartment to see if a notebook he left in the attic is still there; some truths are better left untold.

The Pearl - Rand B. Lee

Fantasy lovers are inexorably drawn to the borderlands of consensus reality. In this story, Rand B. Lee explores the twilight realm between death and afterlife from the viewpoint of one of society's most despised castoffs.

Trevor - Nathan Yocum

Cargo Specialist Trevor Ponsi wakes up for his shift--just like any other day. Oddly enough, the crew has vanished, the vessel is wildly off-course, and the ship's AI insists on holding Trevor hostage until he can win a round of tic-tac-toe. What exactly happened while he was asleep?

Primetime Details

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From Reader Review Primetime for online ebook

Denise Keef says

This is one of the best collections of short stories I have ever read. I had only read anything by two of the authors...JR Rain and James Wymore before I purchased this and knew I would love their stories and had hoped I would find something by others with twenty stories in this book. I have to say that I loved every one of them! From a fridge with a mind of its own to a Goth girl who can talk to ghosts...the stories are so very entertaining and engrossing that I wanted them to be longer! I am so glad I bought it because I have found so many new authors that I haven't read anything by but will be searching out their books! Definitely a great book for that in between novels when you don't really know what you want to read next or for times when you don't want to get into the long story you are reading when you are at the doctors or dentist office or maybe even the commute on the train. Another good thing about this book is that 10% of the proceeds is being donated to a few No-Kill animal shelters across the USA. So it is win-win situation. You are not only getting great stories by some amazing authors but you are also helping to save animals lives with your purchase!

Jane Caruana says

Good taster for a number of other authors :)

Lynn K : Grimmedian says

As always, AWExley brings a very unique perspective to her work. Gothic Gwen is a short story, a wonderful read full of quirks, humor, pain and truth. It's a paranormal, includes a gargoyle, and a lonely, bullied teen who can see ghosts. But that seems to be just the beginning of Gwen's awakening to who and what she really is. It is also full of mysteries yet to unfold. It will leave you anxious for more!

Marianne says

This rating is for K.H.Koehler's Nick Englebrecht novella: And Death Shall Have no Dominion. I love that series, and even though I soon discovered I'd read it already, I didn't feel too bad, as this is a charity anthology where the authors donate part of their profit to animal shelters with a no-kill policy. A worthy goal, and one I suspect Nick would approve of... Even though his deadbeat dad - who split when Nick was very young - and later abducted his mother, happens to be the devil...

Nick is an ex cop who quit when mysterious people started eating his friends (!) and now runs a holistic shop & works as a medium.

This time he's called upon by the local police to aid them in their search for a killer of organ recipients. I'm not going to disclose why the killer does what he does, but needless to say, the guy's reasoning is a little

twisted and creepy. (Think necrophilia) There are a couple of scenes where Nick proves he is indeed the unwilling heir and son of the devil, and I always enjoy those. But despite all that, Nick is a decent guy who holds a too low opinion of himself.

This story takes place between book # 1 & 2 where things start to heat up for poor Nick. I am eagerly awaiting the third novel. Let's just see how long poor Nick will be able to hold onto his moral decency now that his pop wants him to take a more active role in the family business...

From one animal lover to another: Thanks for your donation to fur-babies who haven't found their fur-ever homes just yet. I will probably read your story at some point too. I promise! ;-)

Katy says

Book Info: Genre: Anthology, dark fantasy

Reading Level: Adult unless otherwise noted in specific story review

Recommended for: People who like odd/unusual/creepy/strange and wonderful stories.

Trigger Warnings: Story 1: necrophilia, suicide, mention of child molestation; Story 2: violence, killing; Story 4: suicide, murder both in historical context; Story 5: violence, murder, almost domestic violence situation with MC being terrorized; Story 6: mention of murder in historical context; Story 8: murder, suicidal ideation; Story 10: murder; Story 11: murder, violence, mutilation; Story 12: violence; Story 15: violence, killing, murder; Story 16: murder of the entire royal family (almost), destruction of the planet and tyranny by invaders, killing, violence; Story 17: several simulations are put to the character to test his integrity, including temptation to mass murder and rape, torture; Story 18: suicidal ideation, suicide, murder, rape (in past); Story 19: suicidal ideation, suicide, drug abuse/overdose, child molestation, rape (m/m), violence, statutory rape, implied murder

Language Trigger: Story 11: "cunt"

My Thoughts: "*There is much to this world that we don't understand.*" ("Dark Orb" by Tony Healey, pg. 55) That quote fairly well encapsulates what these stories are all about. A number of my favorite authors have stories in this anthology, so where applicable I'll be making links to reviews of their other work. I will also say that there is some really sweet artwork scattered through this book and I desperately want a paper copy so I can see them better.

The **first** short story, "And Death Shall Have no Dominion," is in the Nick Englebrecht universe, stories by K.H. Koehler, including *The Devil You Know* (review linked here), *The Devil Dances* (review linked here), and *The Devil's Companion: A Guide to Nick Englebrecht's World* (review linked here). This is a super creepy story, please note trigger warnings above.

The **second** short story, "Cyber Cowboy," is set in James Wymore's Fractured Earth universe from *The Actuator* (review linked here). Wymore's imagination again comes into play with this fun short. I see a lot of books he's written that look good, and I have a few more of his that I have and need to read, so I'll need to do a marathon one of these days.

The **third** short story, "Dark Orb," by Tony Healey, hit me right in the feels. I see Healey has a number of published works, but this is the first thing I've read from him, and it was a gut punch since it deals with cancer. Nicely done story about coming of age, and coming to terms with death. I did notice that, while the story is set in the US, a lot of Britishisms are used, such as "garden" rather than "lawn" or "yard" and saying

“Cheers” rather than “thanks.”

The **fourth** short story is “Ephemera” by Gerilyn Marin. I have not read any of her works before, and it appears she writes romance, so it’s unlikely I will. However, this is a delightfully creepy short story, especially if dolls give you the wiggins. This is a galley (uncorrected proof), so I’m assuming the typos I’ve seen will be fixed, but there was one in this short that made me laugh: “*Something was washing her harm.*” (pg. 69) It just made me giggle picturing someone washing harm. Then I thought, “I hope whomever is washing her harm doesn’t shrink it; those things are a bitch to replace...” Those with the final copy probably won’t have this to chuckle over: an unintended benefit to uncorrected proofs, I guess.

The **fifth** short story, “The Fridge” by J.R. Rain, has a surface resemblance to Mark Rayner’s *Fridgularity*, only this story veers off more into the creepiness of an AI refrigerator rather than the ludicrous aspects thereof. And it was very, very creepy. I have a number of books and stories by this author to read, and now I’m more interested than ever in doing so.

Story **six** was “Ghostplacers, Inc.” by Nina Post, of whom I’m quite a fan. Most of her stories include slightly surreal humor, and I was not disappointed in this short story, in which the competitors in the ghost displacement business simply “exterminate” the ghosts with toxic chemicals, while Ghostplacers, Inc. uses the more eco-friendly relocation technique... Still, overall this story was more creepy than funny and a great little piece. It made me wonder what happened 10 years ago to make ghosts so suddenly prevalent in Chicago. Maybe if we ask nicely she will write the full story? **Note to author:** Please write the full story!

The **seventh** story, “Gothic Gwen” by A.W. Exley, is a departure from the other stories in that it is obviously a young adult, paranormal romantic fantasy. The main character is almost laughably Mary Sue-ish, and the tropes used are uninspired. A sour note in an otherwise entertaining anthology, although I’m quite certain this character and series of books (if there is such) probably has lots of devoted fans. It’s just not the sort of thing I like.

“How I Killed the Drama” by Mike Robinson is the **eighth** short story in this collection. A very weird little story where a man ends up in a position he never expected. I’ve also read *The Prince of Earth* (review here) and *Negative Space* (review here) by this author, and quite like his style.

Story **nine** is “Mad Science” by Sharon Bayliss. Sharon Bayliss recently released her second novel, *Destruction*: book 1 in the December People series, which I have and plan to read and review in the future. This short story has made me more eager to do so, as it is very well written and awesomely creepy.

A wonderfully twisted science fiction story, “On the Rocks” by William Vitka, is story **ten**. What if, in Earth’s mad quest for resources, we reach too far? Absolutely chilling story.

Michael Shean builds on his Wonderland Cycle with the **eleventh** story in this collection, “Razor Child”. The Seattle of the late 21st century is divided by the Verge—the glittering inner city full of the rich and powerful, and the outskirts where living is done by one’s bootstraps and wit. Novels in this series are *Shadow of a Dead Star* (review here) and *Redeye*, as well as related book *Bone Wires* (review here).

“Sinergy” by A.E. Propher and Grace Eyre is story **twelve**. This short is written in present tense, which any writer will tell you is one of the most difficult ways to write. At least it was third person point of view—I think the only thing worse than present tense would be present tense in first or second person! There are tons of levels to this story, which makes me think this is set within a universe where other books are available and written, which I now must find, because the writing on this is just gorgeous, such as, “...despair is akin to

lethargy, the kind that sets in when all hope is lost." It also contains the Polish name for Christmas—Holy Szczepan Day—and that alone led to long moments of amusement as I tried to a) figure out how to say that and b) say "Holy Szczepan Day, Batman!" Yes, I'm easily amused. Unfortunately, it appears that A.E. Propher has only written short stories for Curiosity Quills Anthologies—this one, and the *After Dark* one.

Randy Attwood's "Tell Us Everything is the **thirteenth** story (lucky 13!) in this anthology. I've actually read this one a couple times, but I really enjoy it, so I read it through again. I was bothered by the fact that the artwork looks like a punk guy rather than a gothy woman, but that doesn't take away from this story about truths and how they affect the inhabitants of one small town named Peculiar. It can also be found in *Three Very Quirky Tales*, which is where I first read it (review linked [here](#)).

Story **fourteen** is "The Caw" by Eliza Tilton. I see that I have her book *Broken Forest* in my files to read, and featured it on my blog, linked [here](#). This is a strange little story, lots of teenagers making googly eyes and freaking each other out in a cemetery. I never did quite figure out what it was all about, or at least what the crow was all about, but if you like ghost stories, this one might amuse you. It's another YA story, only the 2nd so far in this anthology.

The **fifteenth** story, "The Damned and the Dangerous", is by young up-and-comer Michael Panush, of whose pulp stories (The Stein & Candle Detective Agency and the Jurassic Club; there are five books, too many for me to link in here, but you can easily find them where reviews are found) I'm quite a fan. This is listed as a "Rot Rob" short. This is a new series that features a "zombie gearhead" who helps solve crimes. Like all of Panush's stuff, this is pulp fiction, high action, low introspection, mostly telling and very little showing. Enjoyed for what it is, it's very fun. I was somewhat weirded out by the fact that Betty always smiles "weakly" for some reason.

"The Last Carnivale" by Vicki Keire is the **sixteenth** story in the anthology. It is a very dark science fiction, post-apocalyptic, dystopian story, not easy or pretty, but beautifully written. I would love to see more stories from this author.

Story **seventeen** is "The Milgram Battery" by Matthew Graybosch, a story in his Starbreaker universe, as developed in his book *Without Bloodshed* (review linked [here](#)). There are a number of triggers in here due to the nature of the "experiment" being run on Stormrider. I also love his oath as Adversary: "*I swear eternal hostility towards every form of tyranny over the human mind.*"

Randy Attwood's "The Notebook" is number **eighteen** in the anthology. This is another of his I've read multiple times and still am chilled by it. His writing is something that really needs to be experienced. For instance: "*I... watched her stare off into space. I knew the space into which she gazed. The middle ground of emptiness, where people search for answers when they don't even know how to frame the questions.*" It can also be found in *Three Very Quirky Tales*, which is where I first read it (review linked [here](#)).

"The Pearl" by Rand Lee is number **nineteen**. There are a lot of triggers in this story, so be warned. I'm not certain what to make of this story. It actually has left me quite befuddled. The fact that it makes me think and wonder is a terrific thing. It also ends with a message of inclusiveness that I find intriguing in its completeness and lack of judgment. The story is described as "unsettling." I agree with that term.

The final, **twentieth** story, is "Trevor" by Nathan Yocum. This science fiction short will, I think, end up giving me nightmares. I think this is probably the ultimate fear of any deep-space traveler, or should be. That said... I want to know what happens next. I have read a couple of Yocum's books previously, *Automatic*

Woman (review linked here) and *The Zona* (review linked here) and find him eminently readable.

I very much enjoyed most of the stories in this anthology, and it appears that it will lead me to other, new books by several of the authors. There were a couple stories about which I was ambivalent, and one I just downright didn't care for, but I still think it's fair to give the anthology itself, overall, four stars. I know this has been an incredibly long and detailed review and I thank you for your time. There are synopses for each individual story below if you want to read them, but otherwise there is no need for you to continue past the "Please Note" section below as the same information can be found on the book page. I recommend this anthology to fans of the odd and unusual and creepy and downright strange.

Disclosure: I received an ARC in PDF format from one of the authors in this anthology in exchange for an honest review. All opinions are my own.

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Raven Reviewer says

An anthology of 20 unique, creepy short stories by 20 talented writers. The entire book is 325 pages. I have read this and reviewed a couple of these short stories for you below:

Dark Orb by Tony Healey (@Fringescientist, @CuriosityQuills, #BookLove, or check out his Far From Home series beginning with Legend)

A boy befriends his neighbor next door and discovers they share a love of books. He is a reader and the neighbor is a horror writer with a horrific story of his own.

I loved this short tale. The style here, while I would not say it was one of those that I could not put down, was definitely one where you continue following along to see where it is leading and are hooked right up until the very end. Most science fiction or paranormal stories of late seem to involve vampires or werewolves or fairies. This one reminds me there are other creepy creatures out there that go bump in the night too.

Beautifully written, I found this a quick and interesting read. I learned The Hobbit was written in 1930s. How did I not know this before? It is always a plus when you walk away learning something new from a book. But from a short story? Kudos to the author! If I had to offer feedback for the writer, watch the use of descriptions. The school uniform was great, the glasses not so much. Think about this from the point of view of the character.

This story had the perfect mixture of truth, reality, the mystic and myth. It is the kind that in the end you wonder if it is a true story and if so, how much is actually true. You shiver. Then, shake your head and say, "Naw! It's just a story!" Just like real urban legends. Loved it!

The Caw by Eliza Tilton (For more on her: @ElizaTilton, @CuriosityQuills, #BookLove, Her Website or check out her book: Broken Forest)

Two young, teenaged couples are getting all hot and heavy in the cemetery late one night. One disappears and they discover something quite strange.

Can you picture yourself sitting around a campfire listening to a story like that? Does that not sound just like how a good scary story would begin? This was a cute thrills sort of spooky tale meant to raise the hairs on the back of your neck.

The author painted a wonderful picture of these four teens making out. Dialogue felt authentic and young. The descriptions were spot on, not giving too much or too little details. I bet the story could go on and become something more. Questions were raised here and I was left wondering.

This was also a quick read. I read it one sitting, swatting away distractions. I just loved it. How could I not? Read the title!

All in all...

These were nice quick stories for a busy mom of a two year old like me. I was able to read these in between doing other things. The stories I read were clean – no sex or gore. Just all around good spookiness. Based on what I read, I highly recommend this for everyone, from young adult to adult.

Disclaimer: All books reviewed by me have been received via purchase, lending, or given to me by an author or publisher for the purposes of an honest review. No reviews are purchased. They are my own opinion. For more reviews such as this, please visit <http://ravenreviewer.tumblr.com>

Matthew Cox says

A collection of compelling short stories that leave you wanting more; Primetime is studded with gems. (Plus it helps animals!)

Carlyle Labuschagne says

What a way to find a new author! A great collection of talented writers with an amazing way of telling a story. This is one of the rare anthologies where I can honestly say I enjoyed every tale in the collective. I thoroughly enjoyed the theme of the bizarre, it had elements of so many genre's from horror, to science fiction. A great read for the holidays, only thing is you might be disappointed that it ended.

If that does not persuade you enough - do it for charity!

Check out IndieGogo campaign to fund the hardback editions, with all money collected (minus production fees) going to no-kill animal shelters across the U.S. <http://www.indiegogo.com/projects/quiet-time>
