



The Sleep of Reason: An Anthology of Horror

C. Spike Trotman (Editor) , Carla Speed McNeil , Britt C.H. , Randal Milholland , Greg Stolze , Der-shing Helmer , Hillary Blair , Evan Dahm , more... Kristin Cheney , Meg Gandy , Blue Delli quanti , Melanie Gillman , Gerry Swanson , K.C. Green , C. Spike Trotman , Savannah Horrocks , Gabby Schulz , Jason Bradley Thompson , Sophie Goldstein , Brittney Sabo , Kit Goode , Liz Edwards , Lety R-Z , Stevan Zivadinovic , Isaiah Smalley , Kev Anderson , Rachel Edidin , Kel McDonald , Ainsley Seago , Tristan Harrington , Lin Visel , J.R. Cullen , Ty Blauersouth , Lee Blauersouth ...less

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The Sleep of Reason is a 360-page black-and-white anthology of horror comics for mature readers. Inspired by likes of Taboo, Uzumaki and Black Hole, this collection is devoid of the familiar by design. There are no garden-variety monsters in The Sleep of Reason; no well-worn terrors from film and television. This is an anthology of comics that strive to inspire unparalleled dread.

No monsters with a rule book. No easy answers.

The Sleep of Reason: An Anthology of Horror Details

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From Reader Review The Sleep of Reason: An Anthology of Horror for online ebook

Gabriel says

A few items in this anthology were kind of spooky, but altogether they kind of highlighted how repetitive body horror is as a shock twist--and how repetitive short-form horror is in general. Ah, well, not everybody can be Junji Ito.

Brian O'Connell says

An incredibly disturbing journey into the darkest regions of weird/horror comics. For a while I was genuinely afraid to even touch this book (no joke).

Alex says

Amazing art and many chilling stories!

Gayle Francis Moffet says

Well, that fucked me up but good.

Iron Circus is absolutely stellar at anthologies, and this book is no exception. I didn't love everything equally, but man, there were a lot of pieces here that left me terrified or disquieted or grinning in a bit of messed-up delight.

The horror runs the gamut and shows how much you can do in a genre that is generally considered to be lower tier. Great horror has themes and ideas, the same as other great works, and this anthology shows off a lot of great horror.

Darren says

Some great stories, some incredible art, sometimes both at the same time. I loved the challenge of creating horror stories without any familiar monsters. The collection made me think of how much we carry with us from stories we've heard, and how we relate to stories that don't give us anything familiar to hold onto. How much do we take for granted?

P. says

This is the horror anthology I meant to buy when I bought the other horror anthology. This one is much better. I thought the stories were more fleshed out and the point of the thing was to not rely on the same old characters/tropes. The paperback, black and whiteness of it made it feel satisfyingly pulpy.

Maija says

1.5 stars

There were, like, two or so comics in this anthology that I liked. A lot of body horror / gross-out stuff, which I don't care for. Got this in a bundle of Kickstarted works and have been slowly reading it, a story or two at a time. I can't even remember most of the comics now, so they didn't stick with me.

Kathryn Kania says

I found these to be hit or miss. Some were totally worth it and some were... less so. Anthologies!

Bishop says

Horror black and white comics anthology from ironcircus.com (got it at Push/Pull in Ballard) with the constraint that zombies, vampires, werewolves and other standard monsters are disallowed, and as far as I can remember, there can be no escape or happy ending from the bad thing (stories always end Lovecraft style, descending into the worst possible outcomes). Really love the premise, and it definitely produces new feeling stories like I haven't read before. But it made me realize comics are a bad medium for horror. At least for producing that direct, cold sweat, wake-up-from-the-nightmare-in-fright-in-a-dark-room feeling of horror. I like a lot of the art, some of it is super impressive, but line art has to be almost transcendently, groundbreakingly scary to evoke the kind of gut reaction a filmed image or photograph or written words can get relatively easily. Savannah Horrocks's Faerie Ring is the only one here I think pretty much makes it to this level. Her drawings are just that chilling. And it helps that she uses a really heavily textured, dynamic, watercolor-looking shading, the most sophisticated and labor intensive-looking shading of all the comics here as far as I can tell. There's still a lot of good stuff in the rest though, the scenarios themselves are memorable and intense and unpleasant in other ways besides just the direct evocation of fear. Like the visceral depiction of spousal and child abuse in Meg Gandy's Child Eater or the horror of being a mother in Weft by Liz Edwards & Kit Goode and Miracle by Spike, or the drawn-out, sick horror of unwanted, obsessive love in Anniversary by Sophie Goldstein.

Sooraya Evans says

The Child Eater by Meg Candy was a rather poor opening. From there, it continued to fall downhill. The consistently poor drawing made it hard to figure out what was going on in a panel. Abrupt ending with no resolution was a common theme. In a collection featuring 26 comics by 34 different creators, only two stood

out. Grackles had a decent story. Faerie Ring had decent art.

Ross says

Spike and the assembled artists behind *The Sleep of Reason* did a fantastic job. Each horror story has its own unconventional threat - monsters seen and unseen that pursue, invade, and forever change their victims.

Refreshingly, these tales do not rely on gore, torture, or other cheap tricks to spook you. Violence and blood happen but they are incidental tools; the authors never ask you to be frightened by a swinging hatchet or a severed head. Instead they grope deeper to court your fears of abandonment, authority, disillusionment, pregnancy, infection, and ... Well, the list goes on. Gore and violence happen only after your vulnerable fears are led into the open, pushed to the wall, and surrounded.

The storytelling quality in this anthology covers a wide terrain, unfiltered and raw. Some pieces fell flat for me but I wouldn't change them; the total effect of the mixture is an unignorable authenticity of voice. A creepy tale ending with a gallows-humor joke is followed by a mercilessly professional and hard piece that unflinchingly saws you open. Others draw you into a diffuse, eerie confusion that defies logic, and yet others lay out a nightmare so brazen and vivid and clear it makes you cry. You won't enjoy every story but standing among them will be at least one, pitch black, that stares right into you.

It is an adventurous collection. the stories that held nothing back in their devotion to drive headlong over the edge of sanity will be with me for years.

Michael Siebert says

it's an anthology, so it's bound to be hit or miss. slightly more hits. you can see that steven universe style creeping in and i do wish that would stop.

Jesse says

This anthology, collecting stories from a slew of young horror authors, gave me just what I wanted from it: serious, challenging, unexpected approaches to a genre that's become overrun with cliché.

It proclaims on the back of the book that there are no vampires or werewolves or zombies, which was already a promising pledge for the collection to make. Even more impressive, there's nary a lonely ghost or haunted house. I can't begin to say how nice this is, when even the most current horror (i.e. *American Horror Story*) is built around repeating and exploiting the same horror tropes.

In a way, by avoiding the clichés, *Sleep of Reason* ends up creating some NEW tropes, which become motifs in this book: psychologically damaged children, birth as a form of body horror, and uncontrolled organic growth... those are three that I can identify, right off the bat. In this way, *Sleep of Reason* is actually a gallery of purer, more immediate horror devices... not mediated by convention, but drawn directly from the real-world anxieties of the creators (and, by extension, of culture at large... or at least a certain young, creative demographic).

Not all the stories in Sleep of Reason were home runs (or headshots, or whatever). The ones that were: The Child Eater, The Untimely Death of Smokey II, Do Better, Old Echoes, and Four PM is Tea Time. Those were perfectly crafted, innovative, and genuinely horrifying.

That's already a pretty good record, but even beyond that, there are many more stories... probably 50-80%... that I remember with mild dread, and looking back through the book, they still jump immediately to mind and give me some shivers.

An excellent, well-selected survey of trauma and catharsis... highly recommended.

Michael Adams says

This was an excellent comic-book anthology of horror stories. A couple were fair and didn't quite work perfectly, which is to be expected in an anthology, but by-and-large these were some very dark and highly effective stories. These are mostly tales of body-horror and personal tragedy, with a few that strive for a deeper socio-political message that are quite haunting. Highly recommended to fans of dark and troubling works of visual storytelling

David Schaafsma says

C. Spike Trotman is a Chicago-based artist and publisher who edited this volume of 26 horror shorts, 360 pages of disturbing in a variety of ways. Variety is Spike's principle. No typical scary monsters but real dread, and in a short space. And though all of them are in black and white (except Michael DeForge's creepy cover), there is a diversity of styles, with a diversity of characters, sexual orientations, races, and so on. Not familiar horror. Trying to take horror in new directions. It's not for kids, it's not R. L. Stine, as some of the stories get into pretty dark territory. Spike's blurb for the book says it was "inspired by likes of Taboo, Uzumaki and Black Hole," so not kid stuff.

The work in the volume is done by people I had not heard from before (save DeForge and Spike). I like that principle of introducing new cartoonists, but then as you can expect the art styles and stories, varied as I said, are also uneven, sketchy, rough sometimes. It took me a couple weeks to get through it, taking my time with it, and I liked it. I would say 3 stars for the execution of the work overall, which means I think it is good, 4 stars for the admirable conception and principles. Five stars for the great title, but it led me to expect something even more amazing. I expect to see the work of these folks for many years to come, yay.
