



# Familiar Spirits

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An anthology of ghostly tales just in time for Halloween.

Magician and story-teller William Pack conceived of Familiar Spirits as an outgrowth and supplement to his spell-binding performances of magic and ghostly tales. Connecting with Writer on Demand Donald J. Bingle, they have invited a specially selected group of extremely talented writers to craft short tales and vivid manifestations to unsettle, spook, terrify, and haunt you in your dreams and in brightest day.

Sometimes when the dead are laid to rest in peace, they refuse to go into that dark night. Instead, they lie in the cold earth, agitated and restless, angry about the past, conjuring up lists of wrongs to right and enemies to fright.

In Familiar Spirits, you will find previously untold tales of ... rainy graveyards ... musty attics ... domestic abuse ... love unending ... speaking with the dead ... vengeful ghosts ... infatuation gone wrong ... and lonely spirits. And, you will meet a mother who refuses to abandon her child ... a jealous ex ... a sailor who seeks to escape his watery grave ... and your deepest fears.

Includes stories from Sarah Hans, Dolores Whitt Becker, William Pack, Lynne Handy, Wren Roberts, Kate Johnson, Cathy Kern, Ric Waters, TS Rhodes, Melanie Waghorne, and Jean Rabe.

What makes ghost stories give readers shivers more than any other stories? After all, vampire and werewolf and monster tales can be plenty creepy, too. Perhaps it's because we always know, deep in the back of our subconscious, that vampires and werewolves and monsters aren't real. They're fiction. But, the same isn't true for ghost stories. Almost every culture believes in ghosts and has myths and tales about them. Almost everyone has had, or personally knows someone who has had, a ghostly or supernatural experience. We believe in ghosts, so we believe in ghost stories. And that makes it so much harder to go to sleep after we've read what those familiar spirits may be up to in the midst of deepest night in the woods, down the street, and in our own homes.

Join with these authors to bring Familiar Spirits to life ... or, perhaps, unholy afterlife from beyond the grave. Death is only the beginning for a familiar spirit, but it may be the end for those it seeks out on the mortal plane.

## Familiar Spirits Details

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# From Reader Review Familiar Spirits for online ebook

## Ray Ziemer says

Enjoyable ghost stories, some of them from local authors. Strong writing from Bill Pack, TS Rhodes, and Dorey Becker. I particularly liked the historic flavor of Lynne Handy's "The Green Lady." Also bringing out local color of the South was my "Cold Nosed" favorite by Jean Rabe. Some creepy stuff and a few surprises throughout this anthology.

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## Lesley Hillman says

Familiar Spirits is a lovely and very spooky read. It is an anthology of ghostly tales brought to life by some very talented authors.

First of all, many thanks go to Donald J. Bingle for my copy of this lovely collection to read in exchange for an honest review.

There are so many wonderful stories within this book, all of them I found to be good. Of course there were some which I preferred to others, but this is always the case with an anthology. I was pleasantly surprised that I in fact enjoyed them all greatly, I feel I can normally be a little hit and miss with these, I will love some, like most, and dislike the few. I love that this book hits all the right notes. Familiar Spirits contains a great cocktail of the paranormal. There is a wonderful mix of the creepy, the frightening and the strange, as well as doing an impressive job of incorporating some quite emotional stories into the mix.

The opening story in particular struck a chord with me, 'The Cold Earth', is a tragic tale of domestic abuse. Megan has been murdered and subsequently buried by her husband Tom under an old oak tree, in their back yard. This was after what felt like a lifetime of abuse, both physical and emotional. Megan is still there, under the tree, in spirit, if not more, she hears all and she is aware of everything that is happening around her, including when Tom brings home a new girl, Jessica.

Megan feels an overwhelming urge to protect Jessica from Tom. She knows far better than anyone what he is like and how far he is willing to go. This is a chilling story that comes to its conclusion in the most beautiful symmetrical way. Both the imagery and the prose merge together as one, like they are locked in a perfect harmony to create the most fitting ending.

Familiar Spirits is a perfect book for fans of ghost stories, the paranormal and anything generally spooky and haunting. It's a lovely read, and very engaging from the opening.

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## Ashley says

I saw William Pack at my local library last year. He was AWESOME! He was selling books, so I bought it.

This book is a collection of "ghost" stories, but some of them center around other spooky tales.

Many of the short stories are well written and really entertaining. That being said, some of them are just "meh."

It's a short read, so I like to pick it up and skim through my favorite stories and read them around this time of year. Spooky!

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## Christine says

I'm not a fan of short stories or the horror genre, but must give spectral love to these ghost stories, especially "The New Girl" by my sister, Kate Johnson.

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## Red Lace Reviews says

Eleven tales of shadowy encounters with those yet not moved on. Unfinished business, the need for revenge, or never-ending loneliness keeps them tethered to the plain of the living. Including works by Sarah Hans, Wren Roberts, Jean Rabe, Dolores Whitt Becker, Kate Johnson, and others.

(WARNING: This review contains **minor** spoilers.)

I received this book in exchange for an honest review. I thank Donald J. Bingle for giving me the opportunity.

I didn't altogether dread this read, but I knew there was a good chance I wouldn't connect with it due to my personal thoughts on ghost stories; they tend to bore me with their predictability, and even though I don't avoid them, I'm forever in search of something new to the premise. To put it bluntly, I didn't anticipate my enjoyment of this at all. I'm happy to say, much to my delight, that **Familiar Spirits** added a great deal of variety, and I got the impression the intention was to include more unique and imaginative voices. The majority packed some form of emotional punch, be it domestic abuse, the loss of children, or the consequences of past crimes. More than once I almost teared up, and that's something I treasure in my reading experience.

Whilst I didn't outright dislike any, I considered some a bit weaker than others. *Stepping into October* by William Pack, *Green Lady* by Lynne Handy, and *Legend of the Sea Captain* by Ric Waters just didn't tickle my fancy all that much. They were wonderfully written, like all of the additions, but for me they didn't entail anything special.

My top three:

**The Cold Earth by Sarah Hans** - *I have power in death I did not possess in life.*

This was the first story in this anthology - a tale of vengeance from the grave - and I found myself glued to every word. The narrative was captivating, and the writing engaging. It was told from the perspective of the deceased, which immediately appealed to me. Who cares about the living? The dead are far more interesting; what they feel, how they think. They're often the villains, the evil force intent on causing harm, but what if there's more to it? I want more like this; short pieces that leave a mark.

**What Happened at the Lake by Wren Roberts** - *She would play with him forever, if he would just come home.*

Initially, this one actually shocked me. I didn't expect such painful honesty regarding the parenthood of

disabled children. It definitely pulled on the heartstrings, and the aspects of horror were subtly weaved into a story of loss. This is where I first felt that nip at the back of my eyes, especially when it came to the ending.

**Cold-Nosed and Cold-Hearted by Jean Rabe** - *"Troop's throaty sound had a way o' pulling in all the sadness in the world and sending it back out like a thousand women was wailing for men never coming home from war."*

How could a story about ghostly dogs not make its way onto my favourites? I found the style of writing a little jarring at first, what with the emphasis on the accent, but I got used to it. One thing I should mention however, is that I wish it had ended differently. I think I would have really cried if it hadn't went down the path it did - the moment was ruined.

More of note: *All I've Got is a Photograph* by Dolores Whitt Becker, *The New Girl* by Kate Johnson, *The Hut* by Cathy Kern, *Statuary* by T.S. Rhodes, and *Irene* by Melaine Waghorne.

In conclusion: I was hoping my last read of 2018 would be a good one, and that came true. I thoroughly enjoyed the focal point on spirits affecting the lives of characters - there was a lot of emotion, proving that ghosts can indeed do more than move furniture.

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## **Keith West says**

This collection was funded through Kickstarter, and I supported it. I chose both the electronic and a signed print version as my rewards. I think I got my money's worth.

I've always liked ghost stories, although they used to scare me to death when I was a kid. I'll admit when I pledged this particular project that I was expecting a slightly longer book. I guess I've gotten spoiled by the Ragnarok Publications doorstoppers.

But like I said, I think I got my money's worth. With the exception of Jean Rabe, all of the authors in this volume were unfamiliar to me. All of the stories were of professional quality. With the exception of Jean Rabe's offering, none of them tried anything fancy with voice or style. The authors, while each having a different voice, told their tales in a straight-forward manner. There were plenty of chills to be had, and none of the ghosts could be mistaken for Casper. That's a good thing.

Here's what you get:

Sarah Hans tells of a battered wife's revenge from the grave in "The Cold Earth". A wife's ex-husband still blames her for his troubles, even after he's dead, in Dolores Whitt Becker's "All I Have is a Photograph". William Pack gives us a teenager's first experience with the dead when he helps to clean out his recently deceased aunt's house in "Stepping into October". "Green Lady" by Lynne Handy tells the story of a new wife's encounter with a vengeful ghost after she moves to America to take up residence on her new husband's estate.

In "What Happened at the Lake", Wren Roberts gives the terrifying account of a mother with two autistic

children, and what happens when the older child demands to know where his younger brother is after the brother has drowned. This was one of the most chilling in the book because so much of the horror isn't supernatural. Kate Johnson's "The New Girl" goes exploring where she shouldn't. "The Hut" by Cathy Kern deals with a ski trip gone bad and a haunted ski hut. In "Legend of the Sea Captain", Ric Waters lets us know why you shouldn't go walking along the beach before dawn.

I've always had a fondness for cemeteries in my fiction, and T. S Rhodes delivers with "Statuary". Melanie Waghorne shows us how "Irene" can find meaning in her life when the ghosts that only she can see and hear won't leave her alone. And finally, Jean Rabe gives us some canine ghosts (and a pet cemetery) in the dark "Cold-Nosed and Cold-Hearted". This one was written in a bit of dialect, something that's fallen out of fashion, but I thought it added to the story and gave the narrator a unique voice.

Not all of the stories are scary, and some of them have a rather upbeat tone and/or ending. But the ones that are scary are quite chilling. Like I said, the book isn't long, which means the stories are nice little October treats, just like all that candy you used to get on Halloween. But without the stomach ache the next morning.

As I mentioned earlier, I got both the print and electronic editions. I bounced back and forth between them, reading some stories at home in the paper book, and some in electronic format as I had a few free minutes throughout the day. The print book is a high quality product. The pages are sturdy paper, the cover has a deliciously creepy (and somewhat disturbing) cover, and the print has a font size that's easy on my aging eyes. The electronic book is well formatted. The links in the ToC take you where they're supposed to. All in all, both versions are a good buy.

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## University of Chicago Magazine says

Donald J. Bingle, AB'76, JD'79  
Editor

From the editor: "A darkly unsettling ghost anthology just in time for Halloween. Sometimes when the dead are laid to rest in peace, they refuse to go into that dark night. Instead, they lie in the cold earth, agitated and restless, angry about the past, conjuring up lists of wrongs to right and enemies to fright. In Familiar Spirits, you will find previously untold tales of ... rainy graveyards ... musty attics ... domestic abuse ... love unending ... speaking with the dead ... vengeful ghosts ... infatuation gone wrong ... and lonely spirits. And, you will meet a mother who refuses to abandon her child ... a jealous ex ... a sailor who seeks to escape his watery grave ... and your deepest fears. Includes stories from Sarah Hans, Dolores Whitt Becker, William Pack, Lynne Handy, Wren Roberts, Kate Johnson, Cathy Kern, Ric Waters, TS Rhodes, Melanie Waghorne, and Jean Rabe."

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## Robin says

a great seasonal read!

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## **Paul says**

Fun little collection of ghost stories from a variety of authors. Contains a nice range of stories ranging from the creepy and disturbing to the somewhat touching (in a way). Worth picking up if you want some good spine-chillers. I enjoyed it quite a bit.

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## **Angela says**

First let me state that I was a Kickstarter backer for this anthology. I came across the project by accident in a search for horror projects. I had never heard of any of the author's before. Typically I find that anthologies are filled with some great stories and some weak stories, but not here! Every story was attention grabbing and delightfully haunting! Green Lady was a delight in it's unfolding, and The New Girl was delicious in it's ending. Statuary by T.S. Rhodes was my favorite in the whole book. While this book may be small in size (164 pages), it is big in it's literary telling. I loved it!

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