



Sunruined: Horror Stories

Andersen Prunty

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Seven bleak stories from Andersen Prunty. Contains "The Jackthief," "The Screaming Orchard," "Glowers Point," "Cruel Women with Whiplike Smiles," "The Smoke of Samuel," "Sad Clown, Kentucky," and "Sunruined."

Sunruined: Horror Stories Details

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Author : Andersen Prunty

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From Reader Review Sunruined: Horror Stories for online ebook

Andrew Van Slaars says

As with most collections, this one contained a few great stories and some that I didn't enjoy nearly as much. If I were rating each story individually, there would have been a couple 4 or 5 star ratings.

Clint says

I bought this on a whim for 99 cents, mainly because I liked the cover, which is funny because ebooks don't really have covers. While the writing isn't, say, up there with Clive Barker, and while the stories aren't exactly on par with Thomas Ligotti in their strangeness, these stories all kicked ass, all of them!! Weird, violent, stark horror; most stops pulled out, no futile attempt to make them weightier than they are, no attempt to explain super fucking cool shit that just happens. Great great book, and I'll be getting many more of them.

David Cluck says

Good stories, but after a few books the stories don't seem as original...

Matthew Vaughn says

Andersen Prunty's book Sunruined says it contains seven short horror stories, but these stories are more than just horror stories. Prunty has a way with dark and depressing stories, he seems to love putting his characters through some rough situations. I personally enjoyed each one of these stories, The Screaming Orchard is probably my favorite though I don't feel there is a bad one in the bunch. If you've read The Sorrow King then you've already read the story The Jackthief, but that's not a reason to not read it again. If you've never read anything from Andersen Prunty before this would be a good book to start with, between the seven stories you can get a good feel of his abilities as a storyteller.

Chris Bowsman says

This collection contains what might be Prunty's best story, The Jackthief. While all of it is awesome, that one is worth the price of admission.

MeinKampfy says

bite-sized Grimm's Fairy Tales from an author who devours tears, writes short stories, then flays the words

until the paint flakes off and show terrible white bone. expect depravities and horrors to ooze everywhere.

'Jackthief' was a surprise in this collection, due to the sadness and deep emotion not often seen in the standard Prunty. it's a shame he doesn't explore this more in his work--i feel that would easily provide the 'meat' to his plot, and carry the stories to the end of an actual full-length novel.

David says

So, these stories were good... Interesting. Entertaining. Weird.

Marvin says

I was pretty impressed by Prunty's short story collection, The Overwhelming Urge. However Sunruined and its seven pieces of fiction makes the previous collection look like a sunny walk in the park. All seven stories are horror tales of the most harrowing kind. They bring out the best in Andersen Prunty and his best may be way too strong for the casual reader. "The Jackthief" is my favorite. It was originally featured in the novel The Sorrow King but it stands beautifully on its own. I also liked "The Screaming Orchard" which gives us a taste of what Algernon Blackwood may have been like if he was a bizarro author. This is my new pick for those who have not read Prunty and want to. But read a story a day. All seven in one sitting may be harmful to your psyche.

Russell Holbrook says

Once again; beautiful, soulful, heartbreaking, nightmare inducing. This was maybe my least favorite of the Prunty short story collections. That is to say, I only love it lots and lots, but I would not kill for it.

Evans Light says

An uneven collection of stories, albeit with consistently good writing throughout. Evenly split between horror and moody-ish stories. I loved the horror-related titles, the others, not so much. I give the collection overall a 3 1/2 star rating, maked as four on Goodreads.

The good stories in this collection are REALLY good, and the others aren't necessarily bad, just not great. I'd recommend reading THE JACKTHIEF, THE SCREAMING ORCHARD, and CRUEL WOMEN WITH WHIPLIKE SMILES. The rest of the stories left me unsatisfied.

Individual story reviews:

*** The Jackthief

A Halloween fairy tale of sorts. Very poetic, but I was hoping for more depth in the plot after the excellent

opening. Worth reading. Reminiscent of Bradbury.

**** The Screaming Orchard

A great Halloween read. Dark gruesome fun, reads like a lost Laymon tale. Pure pulpy entertainment. Recommended. Looking forward to reading more of this collection.

** Glowers Point

This one started out strong. A woman cheating on her out-of-town husband gets a call from him while still in bed with her lover. Her husband says he's in the middle of nowhere, wait, there's a sign...he's near Glowers Point. Her heart sinks she knows the place, from her past, a bad place. From the receiver, her husband screams and then phone cuts off. And the reader is hooked.

The first half of this story is perfectly paced and plotted, but about halfway through the style seems to shift and the tension evaporates along with plausibility. I suspect that perhaps this story was written by a younger Mr. Prunty, although that's pure speculation on my part. The primary flaw with the story is that it reveals its hand prematurely, and by the reveal of the big bad (pulled straight out of SWAN SONG), the reality of the story has transformed into dreamland. Could be better with some work.

***** Cruel Women with Whiplike Smiles

Quantum leap in quality from the preceding story. This story ranks way up there as one of best written things I've ever read. Flowing, lyrical, magical, like a dose of salvia in written form. Though the ending was not a surprise, the trip getting there was so perversely beautiful I was sad it ended. I will be reading this again, many times, I'm sure. Well done.

*** The Smoke of Samuel

A newly wed painter loses his muse, then finds it again in the semi-living corpse of a man's daughter, hidden inside an abandoned mill...or something reasonably close to that. A bit of a muddled mess of a story, beautifully written in spots and baroquely overwritten in others. Characters don't ring quite true and motivations seem off. If I was to guess, I'd suppose that this story was written early in the writer's career and was possibly based on a dream. Some interesting set pieces (well, one - inside the mill) but not much else to recommend it.

*** Sad Clown, Kentucky

The odd title of this story had me excited to read it, but really is no indication of what lies in store. A severely average man divorces his average wife, quits his average job, and moves in with his elderly mother and wastes his days staring at the TV in a stupor. When he finds her dead in her bed one morning, he can't quite muster up the energy to do the things he needs to do to deal with her loss, so he brews a pot of coffee and settles back down in front of the TV. A hallucinatory sequence suggests that perhaps the man is dead, too, but that never seems to go anywhere and the story goes on to a decidedly average conclusion. An average tale of self-inflicted pathos that may be a good cure if you happen to be feeling a little upbeat at the moment.

*** Sunruined

My parents never really loved me, the story. An unloved child, now grown and moved away, returns home to dispose of the family home after the closely-timed deaths of his parents. At night he revisits the mysterious unused nursery they had kept unoccupied since his older brother had died as an infant, and discovers the answer to the mystery of why he was unloved. Spoiler: the mystery is about as unlikely as the man never looking into the nursery more than once during his entire life. The tale started of intriguing enough, but ultimately ended up in a very silly place.

This is the first collection I've read by Andersen Prunty, and it may be an early example of his work. I'm definitely now a fan of his writing, and will read more of his stories to see if I can find others that live up to the best found here.

Bryan says

Great collection of horror stories. By far, my favorite Prunty work to date

Jessica T. says

Trees... churches... crazy kid rooms and dead mothers..... yes please!

Dan says

Most of the stories are really good, highly recommend this book.

Melki says

Prunty is just the master of creepiness and creeping sadness. All the stories in this book deal with memories, pain, and regret. Some explore change and escape. And they're all so damned well-written! The fact that this man's name is not up there with the greats of horror writing, I can ascribe only to nepotism, intrigue, and some sort of conspiracy cooked up by Rush Limbaugh and Michele Bachmann.

Lessons learned?

- 1) When a creepy old man tells you, "She died in there. Still in there." --- for God's sake - don't go IN THERE!
- 2) If someone says "Can't catch me!" --- don't chase them!
- 3) You can go home again, but you're likely to regret it.

Dave says

Andersen Prunty writes horror stories that really aren't horror stories. They are poetic prose that have an otherworldly quality. Often, there is a supernatural thing in them, often at the end of a story, but the stories are far richer than you would think if you merely labelled them horror stories.

This is an excellent collection and if you have never read Prunty before, you are in for a treat. The seven stories are about lost childhoods and things that live in the woods and succubus witches and enchanting places. There is a darkness and a sadness in them and people lost and all alone, so desperate for that human touch that they would risk everything to enter the deep pits and the witch's embrace. I didn't think there was a single clunker here.

Beware of people who pick up hitchhikers. Beware of locked rooms. Beware of sexy women who are just too good to be true. Remember those things you were scared of when you were a child. You were right to be scared. Right to run away. Right to stay away. Your instincts were on the ball.
