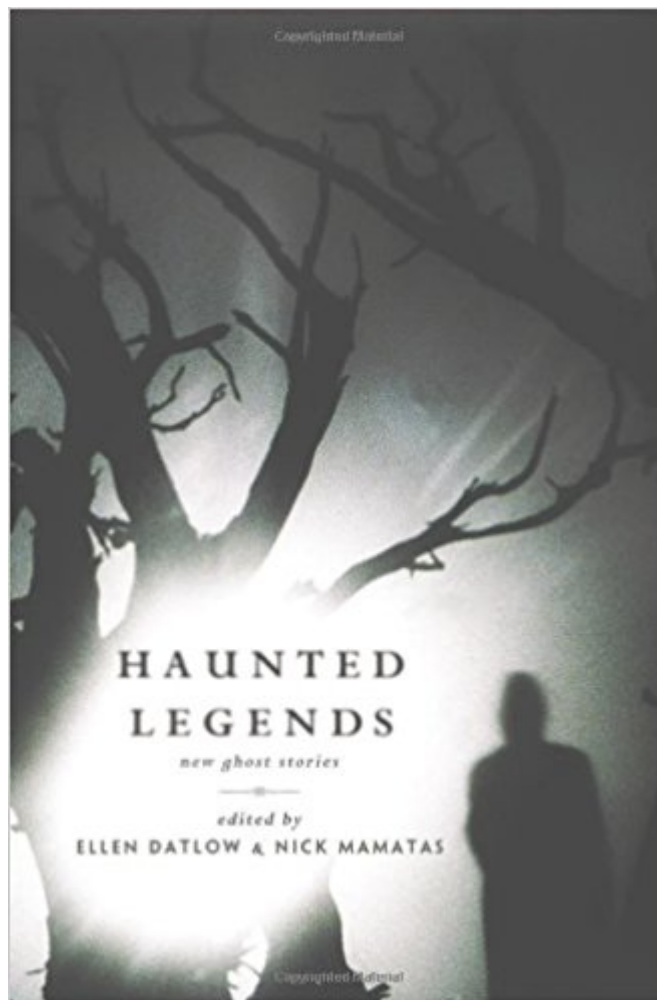


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# Haunted Legends



## Synopsis

Winner of the 2010 Bram Stoker Award for Best Anthology! Darkly thrilling, these twenty new ghost stories have all the chills and power of traditional ghost stories, but each tale is a unique retelling of an urban legend from the world over. Multiple award-winning editor Ellen Datlow and award-nominated author and editor Nick Mamatas recruited Jeffrey Ford, Ramsey Campbell, Joe R. Lansdale, Caitlin Kiernan, Catherynne M. Valente, Kit Reed, Ekaterina Sedia, and thirteen other fine writers to create stories unlike any they've written before. Tales to make readers shiver with fear, jump at noises in the night, keep the lights on. These twenty nightmares, brought together by two renowned editors of the dark fantastic, are delightful visions sure to send shivers down the spines of horror readers.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Datlow (*Lovecraft Unbound*) and Mamatas (*Spicy Slipstream Stories*) collect 20 original stories based on ghost legends from around the world. A few famous figures appear (such as the mysterious hitchhiker in Kaaron Warren's "That Girl" and Gary A. Braunbeck's "Return to Mariabronn"), and lesser-known regional tales inspire two top-notch stories: Jeffery Ford's intriguing "Down Atsion Road," set in southern New Jersey, and Laird Barron's incredibly creepy "The Redfield Girls," about a haunted lake in Washington State. International entries include Ekaterina Sedia's disturbing "Tin Cans," about girls murdered by Stalin aide Lavrenty Beria, and Catherynne M. Valente's "15 Panels Depicting the Sadness of the Baku and the Jotai," a whimsical and dreamy

foray into Japanese myth. Another standout is the riveting "The Folding Man" by Joe Lansdale, featuring a mysterious, murderous pack of nuns. Only a few weak choices feel more like rehashings than retellings. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

“Sure to provide a yardstick by which future ghost fiction will be measured.”  
Publishers Weekly (starred review) on Ellen Datlow's *The Dark: New Ghost Stories*  
“What better way to spend a cold winter night than curled in front of the fireplace with a good ghost story or sixteen?”  
The Dallas Morning News on Ellen Datlow's *The Dark: New Ghost Stories* --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

On the whole, I enjoyed this collection a lot. Almost all of the stories were very well-written and wonderfully creepy, but each in its own way.. and some of them were even more than that. "Oaks Park", for example, was intentionally somewhat disjointed in narrative, but was one of the finest fictional depictions of dissociation I've ever read. Most of the others, though, were satisfied by sending shivers up one's spine, and that was completely what I wanted this Halloween season. Personally, I did have trouble with both of the stories based on Japanese legends. They were nicely written, but just were not compelling to me; I think here the disjointed narratives failed to work for me. I'm not generally a fan of such anyway, but it can be used to good effect, such as in "Oaks Park". In any case, on the whole I very much enjoyed all the stories here, and it does make great spooky reading!

This past Halloween, I participated in a lot of chatter about that scariest of spooky story collections - actually, it's a trilogy - compiled by Alvin Schwartz and terrifyingly illustrated by Stephen Gammel: *More Scary Stories to Tell in the Dark - Collected From Folklore and Retold* (Scary Stories). Recently, the publishers re-released it, but with tamer illustrations - a complete travesty to the horror genre and disservice to children everywhere. All this talk of frightening stories put me in the mood for a new collection, and the fact that some of my favorite authors have contributed to this collection made this seem like a perfect fit. Admittedly, Schwartz's collection set the bar high, but I felt sure that this talented bunch of authors could meet those expectations... And some of the stories definitely are strong - my favorites were the stories by Catherynne M. Valente, Caitlin Kiernan, M. K. Hobson and Laird Barron. But there were some others that really fell flat to me, too. The collection finished stronger than it started and really the collection took a rather loose definition of legend as

the cohesive theme of the book. Stories that stretch that convention (like "The Foxes") just didn't quite measure up against those that did. I had hoped for some nightmare-inducing stories, but none of these fit that bill. There were some creepy moments, and eery atmospheres set up, but ultimately nothing that frightening. So while the book had its ups and downs, on the whole, this was a pretty solid collection of short stories. Some definitely appealed more than others, but it was entertaining and certainly engrossing.

About half of the stories are good, some are excellent, but the rest was predictable or just boring. Still, there are some very good stories in there.

I have long been a fan of Ellen Datlow's editorial skills. I own many of the anthologies she is associated with. She always seems to have her hand on the pulse of the new, up-and-coming authors and she understands how to puzzle together disparate collections to make a seamless read. That said, I didn't enjoy this collection as much as others she has put together. Maybe I had the wrong expectations. I automatically assumed "haunted" equals "horror." That is not necessarily the case with the collection. The stories were more literary than fantastic, too subtle for my taste. There is very little of the New Weird here. Instead, the stories portray quiet desperation, misery, regret but in an awfully pedestrian fashion for a book claiming to be about haunted legends. Growing up, infertility, and old age are frequent themes, leading me to feel like I was reading a stack from a graduate writers workshop on human frailty. I'm not sure that is universally a bad thing--but for me, it was a disappointment. Perhaps the topic--a renewed look at local, urban and folk legends was the problem here. Since I knew many of the legends already, I found it hard to be pleasantly surprised by any of the endings. In the end, it's better than a Dean Koontz novel, but I wouldn't pin your hopes on any late-night chills.

Ellen Datlow collections are always great.

I very, very much enjoyed Haunted Legends. I'm a sucker always for great short stories, ghost stories and creepy stories and found a lot of entertainment in this selection - highest marks to the marvelous Caitlin Kiernan (for the wonderfully eerie "Red As Red"), Ekaterina Sedya's Stalin-era horror ("Tin Cans"), Cat Valente's gorgeous Japanese myth ("Fifteen Panels Depicting the Sadness of the Baku and the Jotai"), Jeffrey Ford (for "Down Atison Road" which makes me want to explore the Pine Barrens right now) and Laird Barron (for the wonderfully ominous "The Redfield Girls"). And

Richard Bowes "Knickerbocker Holiday" too - and since these are my favorites, you will find your own too. Datlow has given us numerous terrific anthologies before - Haunted Legend will be up with Lovecraft Unbound on my shelf of diverse winners containing a few stories I will re-read again (and again) when I want a good creep.

Couldn't get past the second story.

complex psychological ghost stories. Would not recommend....

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