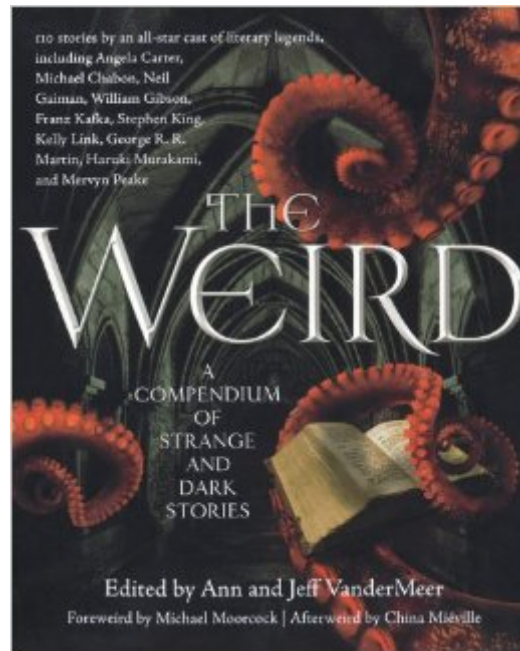


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# The Weird: A Compendium Of Strange And Dark Stories



## Synopsis

From Lovecraft to Borges to Gaiman, a century of intrepid literary experimentation has created a corpus of dark and strange stories that transcend all known genre boundaries. Together these stories form *The Weird*, and its practitioners include some of the greatest names in twentieth and twenty-first century literature. Exotic and esoteric, *The Weird* plunges you into dark domains and brings you face to face with surreal monstrosities. You won't find any elves or wizards here...but you will find the biggest, boldest, and downright most peculiar stories from the last hundred years bound together in the biggest *Weird* collection ever assembled. *The Weird* features 110 stories by an all-star cast, from literary legends to international bestsellers to Booker Prize winners: including William Gibson, George R. R. Martin, Stephen King, Angela Carter, Kelly Link, Franz Kafka, China Miéville, Clive Barker, Haruki Murakami, M. R. James, Neil Gaiman, Mervyn Peake, and Michael Chabon. *The Weird* is the winner of the 2012 World Fantasy Award for Best Anthology

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Regarding the book itself, I'd be absolutely shocked if it does not win the World Fantasy Award for Best Anthology. This is one of the strongest collections of Weird Fiction I've ever seen in my life. I don't consider myself an expert in this field but I think I've been around the block enough to not be considered an amateur either. This is the best collection of weird/strange fiction since David Hartwell's *The Dark Descent*. There have been some absolutely outstanding anthologies in the time between *Dark Descent* and *The Weird* (e.g., Sarrantonio's *999*, Datlow's *Year's Best Horror Series*,

and Pelan's Century's Best Horror Fiction which came out this year). However, I remain adamant that the VanderMeer's have created a truly awe-inspiring collection that has no peer since Dark Descent. 50 years from now it will be held in the same category as Wagner and Wise's Great Tales of the Supernatural. This is an incredible feat given the absolutely outstanding anthologies that have come out in recent years (e.g., Dead But Dreaming, anything by John Joseph Adams, and, bears repeating, Pelan's two volume Century's Best Horror Fiction). To me, it solidifies my belief that we are in one of the most exciting and impressive literary eras for Weird Fiction. Although it is hard, I will try to pause my praises for this book and get to the reason you are reading this: How's the Kindle Version hold up and is it worth the \$15? The answer is Great! and Yes! I'll elaborate. To give a little background, I have a Kindle Fire but from what I understand the book will look the same on a regular Kindle or iPad or whatever format you tend to read your e-books on. First, the "Click to Look Inside" function does NOT do the Kindle version justice. It makes it seem like the text kind of runs together (e.g., the intro's by the VanderMeers and the first paragraph of the story). This is NOT true. The Kindle version mirrors what you would find in the book. To back up a little, I own the original Corvis version of The Weird (I was REALLY eager to get this), the hardback Tor version, and now the Kindle Version. I really don't want to bend my Corvis version and the Tor version is obviously bulky to carry around with you in a diner. The Kindle version holds up VERY well and has the same formatting as the Corvis and Tor versions. There is NO running together of text. What you see in your paper copy is pretty much the same as in the Kindle copy (of course taking into account whatever font size, etc. you tend to use). The reason I am spending so much time on this aspect is because for me this was a BIG reason I hesitated so long in buying the Kindle version. I'm one of those people who tend to prefer print over e-copy in general, so that didn't help matters, but this Kindle version is truly outstanding; I cannot give it a high enough recommendation in terms of formatting and readability. It really does look identical to what you would find in the print version. Second, the Table of Contents is very easy to navigate. Some of my Kindle books are a pain to navigate with the TOC but this one is perhaps the easiest, most user friendly one I have on my Kindle bookshelf. Third, there is a "missing" story and an "extra" story in the Kindle version. The missing story in the Kindle version is "The Colomber" by Dino Buzzati (you can find it in the print version). The extra story is "The Portal" by J. Robert Lennon (you CANNOT find it in the print version). If you are a die-hard completist (I am, so it's not a knock) go ahead and buy both (I did and have no regrets). However, if you want only one version, I'd recommend the Kindle version. The print version really is a brick and can be bulky to carry around. The loss or addition of these stories does not in any way affect the overall ambience or structure of what the VanderMeer's have

accomplished. A fourth feature is that the VanderMeer's have specifically requested that there is NO DRM software. This is a bit of a technical issue and I had to look up what that actually means (not the most computer savvy person in the world). From what I understand (others feel free to comment or correct any errors I make here) having no DRM software means you can view this book on your other devices without getting an error message or something weird happening (e.g., you can go from Kindle to iPad without huge tech issues). Nice feature. They are very clear in their caveat that this does NOT mean you can start mass producing the e-copy of *The Weird*. First, it's illegal. Second, it's totally uncool. The VanderMeer's are hella cool, so be cool in return and don't take advantage of their coolness. In summary, for the Kindle version: 1) The Kindle formatting is outstanding (NO text running together or anything weird like that; only your fiction is weird, not your formatting) 2) It has a "missing" story "The Colomber" by Dino Buzzati and an "extra" story "The Portal" by J. Robert Lennon 3) Great Table of Contents; easily navigated 4) No DRM, so you can use it on any other device you want 5) HIGHLY recommend you buy this

Once again, I cannot say enough good things about this book as a whole but as many other reviewers have already said those things (far more eloquently than I can), I won't recreate the wheel. Happy reading and thank you Ann and Jeff VanderMeer for your truly outstanding contribution to the field. Good luck at the World Fantasy Awards; I already have \$50 on you to win.

When I first saw the box containing this book, I got excited. Then I opened the box, saw the cover with the Lovecraftian cover and some of the contributors and gave a squee of excitement. Then I read the index. My first response was "I am in love!" This is not just another anthology, with representative samples from 1908-2010 the VanderMeer's managed to give us a sense of the evolution of the horror/thriller genres. If you read "The Man Who Sold Rope to the Gnoles" by Lord Dunsany, you will be happy to know that there is another tale dealing with the Gnoles. You will also be pleasantly surprised by the translated stories, too. A worldwide tour de force of the wonderfully weird with translated tales from as far afield as Germany, Russia, Iran and China not just limited to the English speaking world as most of these collections tend towards, also refusing to limit themselves to the usual vampire, werewolf, zombie and sex stories. While these genres are enjoyable in their own right, it is nice to see a collection not limited to the themes that have permeated the horror/thriller section of the book stores. With contributions from the premier authorities of the eerie tale such as Saki, Lovecraft, Bradbury, Campbell, Ellison, King, Gaiman and many more, the VanderMeer's do their best to find new stories and new authors that you may not have been introduced to before and it is well worth the time to meet the group. If you loved the

delightful creepiness of *The Twilight Zone*, the weirdness of *Fringe* and wish to expand your collection and enjoyment with something that manages to stay pretty strong throughout and different from the normal, run of the mill stories, then you will definitely want to add this to your collection. I did receive this book to do a review (but still loved it!)

I haven't actually read every page of *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories*, yet I'm giving it my highest recommendation. Edited by Ann and Jeff VanderMeer, Master and Mistress of Weird, *The Weird* is 1126 pages long and should really be considered a textbook of weird fiction. It contains 110 carefully chosen stories spanning more than 100 years of weird fiction. Here's what you can expect to find in this massive volume: A "Forweird" by Michael Moorcock gives us a brief history of the weird tale, discusses how it has defied publishers' attempts to categorize it into neatly-bordered genres, and gives examples of writers who are revered by modern readers but whose weird fiction caused them to be marginalized during their lifetimes. Moorcock also attempts to explain why we like weird fiction and relates the affinity for strange tales, at one time or other, to the popularity of psychoanalysis, the development of easily-consumed mass communication, and the desire to rock the literary boat once in a while when genres become staid. Or, Moorcock suggests, perhaps we just occasionally like to be disturbed. Next, Ann and Jeff VanderMeer's introduction begins to define "Weird" by reminding us of H.P. Lovecraft's 1927 definition: "something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains." The VanderMeers suggest that weird stories are dark and make us uneasy, but can at the same time be beautiful. They also discuss the influences of surrealism, Decadent Literature, New Wave and Gothic and then offers a detailed history and evolution of the weird tale with recommended authors and stories (most of which are included in this volume). Then come the stories -- 110 of them arranged chronologically starting with stories from 1907 and 1908 from Alfred Kubin, F. Marion Crawford, and Algernon Blackwood and ending in 2010 with a story by K.J. Bishop. In between are stories by men and women from all over the world including Lord Dunsany, Abraham Merritt, Franz Kafka, H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Fritz Leiber, Ray Bradbury, Jorge Luis Borges, Shirley Jackson, Robert Bloch, Mervyn Peake, Daphne du Maurier, James Triptree Jr., George R.R. Martin, M. John Harrison, Octavia Butler, Clive Barker, Lucius Shepard, Harlan Ellison, Elizabeth Hand, Poppy Z. Brite, Haruki Murakami, Lisa Tuttle, Stephen King, Angela Carter, Tanith Lee, Kelly Link, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Michael Chabon, China Miéville, Neil Gaiman, Jeffrey Ford, Jeff VanderMeer, Daniel Abraham, Margo Lanagan, Laird Barron, Liz Williams, and so many more... Each story is introduced with a paragraph explaining the author's credentials, awards, and influence in the field. Last comes

an "Afterweird" by China Mięville which is just weird enough to deserve a place in this anthology. Mięville, not surprisingly, discusses the etymology of the word "WEIRD" and, as he recaps some of the unsettling things we've encountered in this compendium, wonders how useful etymology is when defining something as "weird." Instead, he suggests that weird is personal, state-dependent, and "We know it when we feel it." Lastly, Mięville proposes that "weird" is contagious, infecting your brain and the stories you read from now on. *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories* is not meant to be read front to back all at once, but is rather more like a manual or primer in the scholarly field of Weird Fiction. I read many of the stories (most of them were stories I had not previously read) and familiarized myself with a few authors I'd never heard of before. I look forward to reading all of these weird tales eventually and I'm glad to have this text on my shelf. *The Weird: A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories* deserves a place on every speculative fiction lover's bookshelf. Originally posted at FanLit.

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