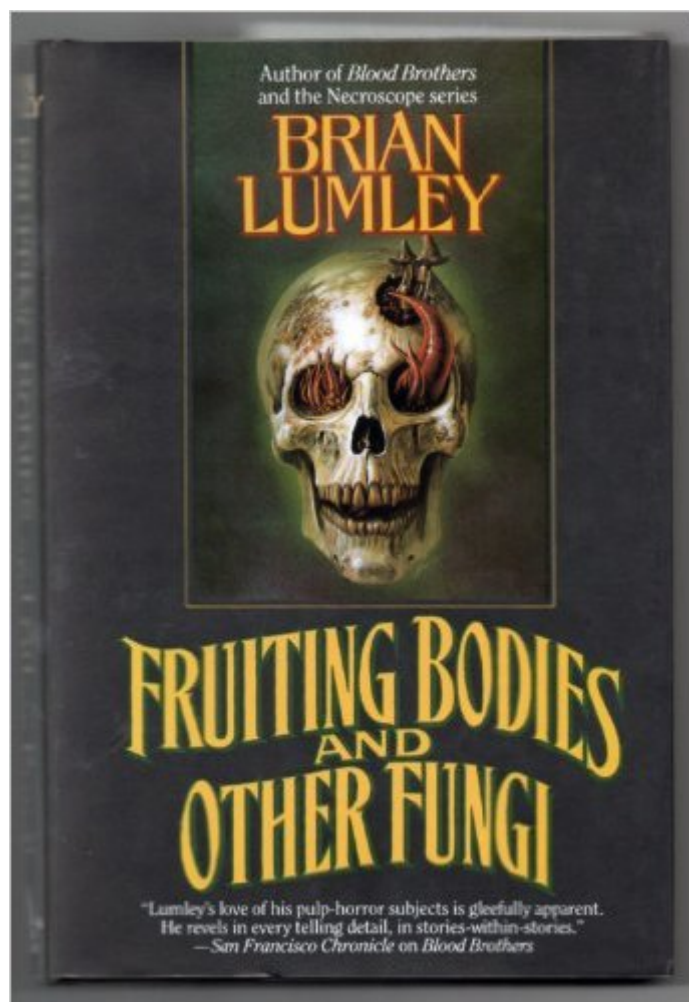


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Fruiting Bodies And Other Fungi



Synopsis

Thirteen tales of terror by the author of *Blood Brothers* features a story about two boys who learn about fear and death and a quiet country lane that becomes a trap for an unwary motorist. By the author of *Demogorgon*.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having only recently been turned on to Brian Lumley, this is my first purchase and first read of Lumley; and all I can say is Wow! His writing phases from ethereal to direct impact, flowing with style and a flair for the creepy things that go squish in the night. Beginning with the best story of the collection, "Fruiting Bodies", Lumley takes us on a trip through a small, dying town that is slowly falling into the sea. But will the sea claim its victim before the Dry Rot does? Seemingly, a new and mutated type of dry rot, it is as hungry as the sea. Lumley does not deny the imagination in this tale, leaving you searching the nooks and crannies of your house for any...well...nasty accumulations. "The Man Who Photographed Beardsley" is a short but sweet sabbatical into a demented and twisted mind, which has managed to retain its sense of propriety. "The Man Who Felt Pain" is a tale told by the protagonist, of his twin brother and the bond they shared, through life and death. If one twin suffers, will not the other twin feel his pain...sooner or later? "The Viaduct" reminds me of Stephen King back when he still had tight and compelling stories with real-life characters you could relate to immediately. Children can be cruel, but just where is the line drawn when one doesn't understand the rules? This is an excellent story, in which I could actually feel the desperation and the slippery palms of true terror. "Recognition" is a ghostly tale of a haunted place, and a firm argument as to why some things are best left alone. "No Way Home" is a surreal nighttime journey

through both familiar and unfamiliar territory, with a surprise ending that is unexpected...and worth the trip.

Amongst the most notable horror writers that have picked up a pen and crafted, Brain Lumley the short story writer (not to be confused with Brain Lumley, the novel writer, whom I really can't speak on because of lack of general knowledge on him) has to be mentioned with awe. I'm not certain if his allure is in the way he crafts situational happenstance, with the pages of foreshadowing seamlessly meshing with the way he flawlessly enacts characterization, if it's the way his peaks and valleys, his towns and villas, dance so vividly that my mind can walkabout and taste the air that even the shortest of tales seems to craft, or if it's the ideas for his stories themselves. It's strange how he accomplishes that task, though, approaching horror and punctuating it with an air of newness that banishes many of the classically shallow pits we've seen a million times before. Honestly, every time I read one of his shorts I find myself wondering exactly where his mind will allow him to approach even the most basic idea from. In this collection of short stories, I've found many and many a tale that merits and actually demands acclaim. Some, like *Fruiting Bodies* and *The Thin People*, teem with topics that are frightening in their flavors, wearing masks that I can't recall reading anywhere else. Others, like the Lovecraftian tales he forged, most notably *Recognition*, wear dread like familiar sweaters. Now, for a listing of the stories here and a synopsis of some that no doubt does them an injustice: *Fruiting Bodies*, one of my favorite pieces in this book, incorporates the disappearance of a town and the tales of a kindly old man into a tale of a mysterious fungi that seems quite extraordinary in its abilities. In fact, as it consumes more and more, it seems downright horrific in its reproach.

Aside from having one of the coolest titles ever, this is one of the best collections of short stories in the vein of H.P. Lovecraft. Ah-ah-ah, but wait. This isn't to say that Mr. Lumley writes in a thick prose which could bore you to death while speaking of "indescribable horrors" - rather, Lumley takes every bit of that "I never really thought about how little man knows about anything" kind of chill that Lovecraft is famous for, and injects it into his own kinds of ideas and situations. There are also a few non-supernatural stories here, which show that a person doesn't need to transcend space and time in order to find true horror - again, we know SO little about anything, including what we're capable of. "*Fruiting Bodies*," the titular opener, is one of the most singularly creepy stories you might ever read. I won't say much except that you'll never again walk into your basement without thinking about this story...and if it's musty and moldy, you probably will try to find any excuse you can to NOT

go."The Man Who Photographed Beardsly" is a quick first-person narrative, detailing...well, it's an artist talking, and he...hm, well, without ruining it, it's a quick narrative of "what happened." This might be considered a little weak, but it's still good."The Man Who Felt Pain" is a future-set tale of twin brothers, one of which has the ability to feel the pain of others from all around him...and suffers greatly from it. The other, who tells this tale, raises a good point from this: that "if we all felt everyone's pain, why, then there'd be no more wars or cruelties or hurtfulness of any sort...

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