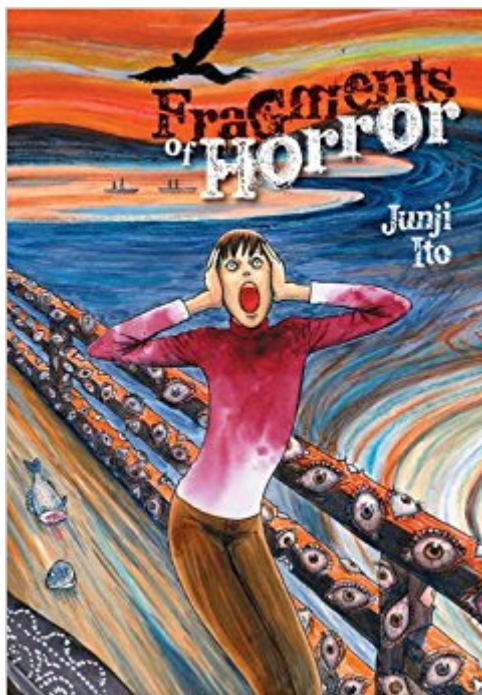


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Fragments Of Horror



Synopsis

A new collection of delightfully macabre tales from a master of horror manga. An old wooden mansion that turns on its inhabitants. A dissection class with a most unusual subject. A funeral where the dead are definitely not laid to rest. Ranging from the terrifying to the comedic, from the erotic to the loathsome, these stories showcase Junji Ito's long-awaited return to the world of horror.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Junji Ito debuted as a horror manga artist in 1987 with the first story in his successful Tomie series. Uzumaki, drawn from 1998 to 1999, was adapted into a live-action movie, which has been released in America by Viz Films and Tidepoint Pictures. It's influences include the classic manga artists Kazuo Umezu and Hideshi Hino, as well as authors Yasutaka Tsutsui and H.P. Lovecraft.

After an 8 year Hiatus, Junji Ito returns to horror. He was anxious about it, but it's excellent. Is it equal to Museum of Terror Vol 3? Maybe not, but his one shots are strong. The best one in my opinion is Blackbird, about an injured mountaineer, who while completely immobile, is inexplicably fed chewed up food by a woman passing by. She literally pours it down his throat, like a bird. Hence the title. The twists after that I will not say. Not only intriguing plots, but his art style is incredibly detailed. Even the worst story (in my opinion) Magami Nanakuse, has an incredibly disturbing facial disfigurement portrayed that makes it all worth it. Ito has a good sense of humor that translates well. You're guaranteed to have fun. The bar for some manga is low to the point where any one that has

characters that are above 12 and aren't little girls, are trying something different.

Longer waits breed high expectations. It's been eight years since Ito did horror manga and even longer since the West got a title of his in English. This collection came out last year in Japan and gives eight stories varying from ghost stories to gore/exploitation. It's nowhere near the neurotic intensity of Gyo and especially not near his masterpiece, Uzumaki, but more along the lines of the stories presented in Vol. 3 of Museum of Terror. Many of the stories kind of build up to one big reveal, shown to us in a full-page drawing (or sometimes double page) of some specific horror. "Futon," "Wooden Spirit" and especially "Dissection-chan" have really good centerfolds. The latter story, maybe the worst of the collection, rides the line too close to past Tomie works and comes off dull. "Blackbird" has the most surreal atmosphere of the collection, dealing with birds and the cyclical dread of time-bending storytelling, leading up to a conclusion that seems outwardly frightening and mystified enough in being satisfied with its non-ending. "Megumi Nanakuse" and "Tomio - Red Turtleneck" have the most Ito-ish elements of the group (Ito himself admitting in the afterward his work with cat manga kind of dulled his Id a bit), giving the readers endings that are disposably horrific and critically post-modern in their resolution to let fear of the known carry over into what we would see as the "unknown" ie what goes past the final page; maybe it's almost pre-modern (there is no binary, just fear). "Tomio..." is my favorite story and closely tied to a certain delirious Umezu comic I cannot think of the title of right now. Equally suspenseful and gory it ends with a panel that almost made me laugh. I was mildly disappointed with this collection but I'm so eager for more. Itosan, don't make us wait, dawg.x-posted from my goodreads acct

Overall this is a wonderful book and I highly recommend it, especially those who are fans of Junji Ito's previous works. The only reason I am giving the book 4 stars as opposed to 5 is I found the stories to be hit or miss. Now when a story hits, it will get you at your core. When it misses, there are still some aspects in the story that will be interesting. Without spoilers here are what I felt about each chapter...
The Futon - Hit. Starts off a little weird, but the ending got me good.
Wooden Spirit - Miss. It's just a really bizarre story without any real substance or stakes for the characters
Tomio: The Red Turtleneck - Hit. This story is gruesome at parts and the creepiness factor is turned up to 11. Get ready to have some chills.
Gentle Goodbye - Mixed. It's like a really good twilight zone episode where you can see the twist coming a mile away.
Dissection-chan - Hit. The sadistic/masochistic nature of "dissection-chan" is completely engrossing.
Blackbird - Hit. Damn you blackbird, you are going to give me nightmares! I loved it!
Magami Nanakuse - Miss. It's a very stupid

premise. The things that happen to the main character is interesting, but I found the whole thing to be silly and not even remotely scary. Whispering Woman - Hit. Another one of those stories where you know what is coming because of the title, but damn it, it still got me good. The girl's condition is bizarre, but unlike Wooden Spirit, it actually serves a purpose.

Anthology series and short stories has always been my favorite medium for horror whether it be literature or comics/manga. This is hands down one of the best anthologies of comics, each containing a unique story, I have ever owned. The stories are very Lovecraftian in a sense that they read more like weird tales, since some of them are so bizarre, are not overly gorey, and leave you with a very unsettling feeling. This book was Junji Ito's return to horror, for he had not had a horror book released for American audiences since Gyo which originally came out well over a decade ago. Nearly every story in this book is 5 out of 5, which such a wide range of topics and some are so bizarre that they are hard to describe in a review. The book is greatly priced and should be on the shelf of any horror or manga fan. The book has a lot of re-read value too since the art is so beautiful and some of the stories so short and poignant. Highly recommended.

Not really the best stories from Junji Ito, but they are still gems. Junji Ito is my favorite horror manga author. Actually, I don't know anyone else. The stories here are straight from the mind of a mad genius. And the artworks will give you nightmares. I am excited to get his other works when they become available here.

As a long time fan of Junji Ito, I was looking forward to this collection. But having gone through all of his work except for Cat Diary, it is becoming difficult to find new angles that hasn't been visited in his previous work. Still, the artwork and draftsmanship is as good as it ever was and it's hard not to recommend anything done by Junji Ito. Of the collection, Lingering Farewell is my favorite. It's the one that seems to have a fresh angle into traditional ghost stories.

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