



Reader's Choice Literary Reviews

An Exceptional Collection Of Short Horror Fiction

On the Verge of Madness by author George Wilhite is like a perfectly cooked steak...dark on the outside and a little bloody in the middle. This collection of fiction features eight very different stories, each showcasing Wilhite's considerable talent and vast knowledge of the horror genre. His work has already drawn comparison to Poe and Lovecraft. But let me tell you, Wilhite's own twisted style and warped voice is evident on every page.

The opening novella, *Victor Chaldean and the Portal* is worth the price of admission. Victor is desperate to solve the disappearance of his wife. After he begins to have strange visions, he seeks help from a psychologist studying the paranormal. An experimental drug takes Victor into a fractured realm, into a place trapped between life and death where he struggles to find his lost wife and each day is more convinced he is insane.

Next up is *Murmurers*. I settled in for a great read as Wilhite hooked me quickly with a story of an Earth all but stripped of human life. A former combat soldier and a teenage girl find a special bond after he saves her life. To survive they must trust each other and keep moving to avoid the mysterious Murmurers. The only problem for me was how quickly this one ended.

In *Checks and Balances*, alcoholic John breezes through the first of the twelve steps to recovery. It is step Eight – making amends with those he has hurt – with which he struggles the most. If only he could make a trade, a deal, to skip this step. But who or what would make such a bargain?

Lars kills for money. He is very good at what he does. When it comes to clothes, only the very best will do for Lars. In *The Gangster's New Clothes*, Wilhite attempts a short in the style of the old Twilight Zone TV show. The result is a fun, frightening tale. A second after Lars puts on his handmade suit, he finds himself facing his checkered past and, step by step, is pushed closer to insanity.

Wilhite then gives us two amazing examples of the old adage: less is more. *A Plea From the Cradle* and *Cast of Characters* are "flash fiction" at its finest. Not a word is wasted – both of these tales will quickly put a shiver up your spine if not a smile on your face.

All good things must end, and I believe Wilhite saved the best for last. *A Tale of Two Moons* is a Werewolf classic and could possibly explain the origin of these legendary monsters.

Masque Profane takes us beyond the "Verge of Madness," delving straight into full blown insanity. Rhonda and Jeff are happy newlyweds...or are they? Rhonda becomes obsessed with the fact that Jeff has never spent a Halloween night with her in their time together. This fixation takes Rhonda to the gathering place of a strange ritual one Halloween night. Her experience there, and later the birth of her child would one day take her to madness and a horrific murder.

In all eight of these stories, whether novella or short, the author's skill at character development, crisp dialogue and page turning suspense is forefront. He captivates the

reader with intriguing characters and fine plotting without the pointless brutal violence and gratuitous sex that has become so common in horror today. I highly recommend *On the Verge of Madness* and I look forward to the follow up, *Silhouette of Darkness*. I doubt that it will be long before a major publisher signs Wilhite, as his work deserves to be on shelves next to the likes of Peter Straub and Thomas F. Monteleone.

Highly Recommended by William Potter for Reader's Choice Reviews

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