



# The Poison Eaters and Other Stories

*Holly Black*

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## The Poison Eaters and Other Stories Holly Black

Pick your poison: Vampires, devils, werewolves, faeries, or . . . ? Find them all here in Holly Black's amazing first collection.

In her debut collection, *New York Times* best-selling author Holly Black returns to the world of Tithe in two darkly exquisite new tales. Then Black takes readers on a tour of a faerie market and introduces a girl poisonous to the touch and another who challenges the devil to a competitive eating match. Some of these stories have been published in anthologies such as *21 Proms*, *The Faery Reel*, and *The Restless Dead*, and many have been reprinted in many "Best of " anthologies.

*The Poison Eaters* is Holly Black's much-anticipated first collection, and her ability to stare into the void—and to find humanity and humor there—will speak to young adult and adult readers alike.

A Junior Library Guild Pick. Illustrated by Theo Black.

Holly Black is the author of *Tithe: A Modern Faerie Tale* (an ALA Best Book for Young Adults) and two related novels, *Valiant* (Norton Award winner) and *New York Times* bestseller *Ironside*. Her latest novel, *Black Heart* is the third of a new series, The Curseworkers. She and Tony DiTerlizzi created the best-selling Spiderwick Chronicles. Holly lives in Massachusetts with her husband, Theo, in a house with a secret library.

## The Poison Eaters and Other Stories Details

Date : Published April 1st 2010 by Big Mouth House (first published February 9th 2010)

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# From Reader Review The Poison Eaters and Other Stories for online ebook

## Darkshadow says

Holly Black'in tarzını seviyorum!

Kısa hikayelerden bu kadar hoşlanacağımı hiç düşünmezdim. Holly Black'i Beyaz Kedi'de de sevmiştim ama bu küçük hikayeler onu çok daha iyi anlamamı ve kendimle bağdaştırmamı sağladı. Elinize aldığınız anda bitebilecek, masal anlatır gibi bir kitap. Bazı hikayeler gerçek anlamda karanlıktı. Bazılar ise gülümseyerek okuyacağınız derecede eğlenceli. Aslında hepsi hoşuma gitti ancak aralarında öne çıkanlar da oldu elbette.

Soğuk Kasaba'daki En Soğuk Kız: Bir tür vampir hikayesiydi. Matilda'nın "kaybolmuşluğunu" hissettirircesine yazılmıştı. Sevdikim cinsten karanlık bir tarafı vardı.

Talihin Dönüşü: En sevdiklerimden biriydi. Arka kapakta "eytanla girilen bir yemek yeme yarışı" yazıyor. Hikaye başka türlü özetlenemezdi herhalde. Oldukça eğlenceli ve akıllıydı.

Gece Pazarı: Perileri okumayı sevdiğimden tam olarak emin deşildim. Bu antolojide Black, onlara bolca yer vermişti ve sayesinde tuhaf dünyaların dan hoşlandığımı anladım. Bu hikayede onlardan biriydi.

İn Vodka Veritas: En eğlencelilerden biri. Bakış ayını nedir bilir misiniz? Peki bir lise balosunda yapırsa nasıl olur? İçinde barındırıyor Latince cümlelerle beni kendine daha da bağladı.

Kayıt Makası Keser: Kesinlikle favorilerimden biri. İçinden alıntılar araklayıp bir kenara not etmeden duramadım. Benim gibi kitap bağımlılar için okunması şart bir hikaye.

Zehir Yiyenler: Okuyunca kapağın bu hikayeye ne kadar uygun olduğunu anladım. Tuhaftı, etkileyiciydi ve gerçekten karanlık bir öyküydü.

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## Abi (The Knights Who Say Book) says

My average rating for the stories in this book was 3.63 stars (see my reading updates on this book for the ratings of individual stories), and overall I'm very happy with it. Only two of the twelve stories got meh ratings, and there were quite a few stories I loved.

I know I'm prejudiced against short story collections because of my bad experiences with anthologies by multiple authors, but I'm still so surprised when I read a collection and enjoy almost every story. There's definitely something to be said for getting a wide variety of content by one author you already know you like in one handy volume.

Favorite stories:

- *The Night Market*, in which a girl tries to bargain with a magical trickster on behalf of her sister, only to find his attention turned on her
- *The Dog King*, in which a kingdom is plagued by fearsome wolves with the ability to pass as human
- *In Vodka Veritas*, in which a Latin club attempts to put a curse on the entire school at prom
- *The Coat of Stars*, in which a man sews beautiful coats for the fairies in an attempt to win his childhood sweetheart back from them

My one question is where are my wlw, Holly? There's a bisexual male main character in one story, a

bisexual male minor character in another, and gay boyfriends in two stories,, where are the lesbians and bi women, Holly Black. Why are authors always like this.

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## **Stephanie (Bookfever) says**

### **The Coldest Girl in Coldtown:**

I'm not sure what to think about this story. At first I was wondering where this would go and thinking it was a bit odd, even for me. But when the vampires started getting into the story, it was then that it started getting more interesting. Also, Belgium was mentioned, which is always funny since I'm from Belgium; 'So many of Belgium's citizens were vampires that shops barely opened their doors until nightfall.' -3/5

### **A Reversal of Fortune:**

This story was quite dark, in my opinion. I like dark stories but I didn't love it or anything. It was actually kind of weird with the eating contest but I did like the twist of the devil with it. -2/5

### **The Boy Who Cried Wolf:**

A rather short but not bad story. I loved the twist of turning into a werewolf because of the white flowers and how Alex ran away from his family to save him. I also felt it had a bit of Little Red Riding Hood at the end of the book. -3/5

### **The Night Market:**

I loved this one! I was really into it and was kind of sad to see it end so quickly. I love anything that has to be with elves, faeries, pixies, etc... in this case it was elves. Cleverly written, interesting and a great main character! -5/5

### **The Dog King:**

This was another story that I loved. It was historical in some way but also paranormal with some twists. Awesome! -5/5

### **Virgin:**

This was a great story. I really liked it because it had both fairy tale as well as real life elements. -4/5

### **In Vodka Veritas:**

This story was kind of funny. I laughed quite a lot with it, which is always a good thing. To sum it up: It was one hell of a prom! -4/5

### **The Coat of Stars:**

This one was amazing and definitely a favorite of mine. I like reading about faeries and I love how Holly Black didn't romanticise them in this particular story. -5/5

### **Paper Cuts Scissors:**

Not my favorite story out of the bunch, but it was interesting for sure. Who doesn't want their favorite book characters to come alive? -3/5

### **Going Ironside:**

Okay... this was kind of a trippy story. Very short, too, but I kinda liked it because elves, faeries and whatnot were involved. -4/5

### **The Land of Heart's Desire:**

This story was wonderful! I loved it. I really did, though it's not surprising since it's another faerie story. I love reading about faeries. And I really liked Roiben. -5/5

### **The Poison Eaters:**

This one was a very haunting story. I really liked the way it was written, all chilling and creepy. -4/5

Overall, I really liked these collection of short stories by Holly Black. I hadn't read anything by her before this book and I must say that I'm pleasantly surprised by her writing style and dark elements in the stories. I'll definitely be reading more by her. It's hard to rate a book like this because some stories I didn't like as much as the others but I'm going to give it four stars since I mostly enjoyed almost every story.

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### **Candace Robinson says**

I'm not the biggest short story collection fan! I can maybe name less than five collections on the top of my hand that I really enjoyed. This one was decent. I loved some and thought some of the others were okay. I definitely prefer Black's novels so much more!

Let me start by saying my fave was the one that featured the character's from Tithe! I could read about those characters for the rest of my life! All of the stories had fabulous writing and original character qualities. However, a few of the stories I just wanted more oomph from. But I definitely recommend it if you love Holly Black!

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### **Stacey says**

A collection of short stories by one of my very favorite authors (although that list seems to get longer and longer...Neil Gaiman, Jim Butcher, Seanan McGuire, Meg Cabot... you see where I'm going with this...?)

Anyhow, most of these stories have been printed in other anthologies, but it's definitely much easier in this one volume. I like this trend of collecting previously-anthologized stories; especially when it's in the context of the Sookie or Dresden books... I think my two favorites here were "The Coldest Girl in Coldtown," "Coat of Stars," and "The Land of Heart's Desire." I wasn't exactly a fan of the title tale, and another I had previously read (from Magic in the Mirrorstone), "Virgin," still flummoxes me a little. Like, I think I know what happened, but I'm not 100% sure, and if it's what I think, then it's amazing, and if it's not what I think, then I'm confused. Eh, it happens.

If you're a fan of Black's Modern Faerie Tales, definitely pick this up.

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### **Buget says**

Çok ilginç ve güzel bir kitaptı. Do?rusu bekledi?imden daha iyiydi. Sanki ben çocukmu?um , kitapta korkunç hikayeler anlatmay? seven büyükannem. Biliyorum saçma bir tan?m oldu ama gerçekten bunu hissettim. Özellikle ?eytanla olan yemek yar??mas? , So?uk Kasaba , Köpek Kral ve Ka??t Makas? Keser hikayeleri çok ho?uma gitti. ?u al?nt? o kadar do?ru ki , bir kaç dakika kitaba öylece bakmama sebep oldu.

'Korunmas? gereken okurlar ... Okurlar kitaplar?n kurban?yd?. Makul giyinmi? nemrut suratlı? kad?nlar içeriye girer sevgilerinin hayat? için yalvar?rcas?na kitab?n devam?n? isterlerdi.Çocuklar kilimin üzerinde oturur tav?anlar?n annelerini kaybettikleri resimli kitaplar için teselli edilemez bir ?ekilde a?ırlard?."

Böyle dü?ününce gerçekten bir kurban oldu?umu dü?ünmeden edemiyorum. Ama mutlu bir kurban. Eh demi?ler at?n ölümü arpadan olsun.

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## **Nicole Field says**

This anthology packs a punch. An amazing first story to pulls you in, an amazing final story leaves you thinking.

I had many things to say through the course of reading this book. Let me summarise some of them now:

The main reason I read this book was in the lead up to Holly's release of *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown* as a novel. That was the first story in this anthology and, boy, is it powerful. A completely different story than what I'm given to understand from the spoilers out at the moment, but if Holly manages to keep the same level of intensity in her world, her novel is going to be a smash hit, no doubts.

Only because of how amazing this first story was did the following two shorts seem a little bit slower. Still enjoyable, but just not the same pace.

There were a couple of short stories here that seemed like they could have been a part of the popular *Tithe* universe, but 'The Land of Heart's Desire' brings back our favourite characters and far and away blows out the previous fairy stories of the set.

For fans of the *Curse Workers* series, there is also a story set in Wallingford.

Only 'The Dog King' was at all disappointing for me. It's written in quite a different style from the rest, so it's just possible that I didn't understand it ;)

The story that really surprised me out of this anthology was one called 'Paper Cuts Scissors'. A boy starts a library club to find and bring back his girlfriend who has the ability to put things, and herself, into books. I don't know what it was about this story, but there was something about it that was so evocative... maybe just the idea of being able to interact with some of my favourite fictional characters.

I think I've said before that a short story anthology is only as good as its weakest story, and for that reason, this book is a solid 4 stars for me.

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## **Anna says**

i like the stories and the writing is much better than the last holly black short story anthology i read, but they were all so similar.

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## **Kirstine says**

After reading, and really liking, *The Coldest Girl in Coldtown*, I kind of wanted to read more of Holly Black. And as I was researching what to read next, I realized I already owned something by her. This book, which I've had for, umh, a few years.

I'm not good with short story anthologies, switching from one story to the next after only a few pages is really difficult for me. But it wasn't a problem here. Each story was a delight in its own way, and all where properly magical, and blended reality with the fantastical in a strange, but natural way.

They were urban stories, old-school fantasy stories, and mostly the stories of young adults getting into trouble - wanting to or not.

The devil shows up, there's shapeshifting, poisonous sisters, a coldtown short story, occult rituals and fairies. And each story managed to draw me in almost immediately.

Honestly just a very magical, interesting collection of tales. I felt her urban-fantasy stories worked the best, but I can't recall a single story I didn't like. They were all great. Although I had a soft spot for the queer ones, and was sad there wasn't more of them.

In the end, the only problem was that they were a little predictable at times. I enjoyed them immensely, but they never took my breath away or shocked me.

Still, it was a delight to read. And gave me some taste for short story anthologies. Perhaps they aren't as bad as I tell myself.

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## **Mauoijenn ~ \*Mouthy Jenn\* ~ says**

A couple of these stories were enjoyable. The rest just fell flat.

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## **Kendare Blake says**

There are too few short story collections by single authors, and this one is incredible. It came highly recommended by Caitlin R Kiernan (herself a master of short fiction) and certainly didn't disappoint. These stories are sharp, with varied styles and tones ranging from gritty to ethereal to satirical.

"A Reversal of Fortune" about a deal with the devil and a wounded dog, was probably my favorite. But "The Night Market" about a girl trying to free her sister from an elf curse and "Paper Cuts Scissors" were also great. As was "The Coat of Stars". You get the idea. They were all good. A number of them were Faerie stories. And I didn't think I liked Faerie stories.

There is imagination here to spare. Read this one. You won't be disappointed.

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## Cyna says

The Poison Eaters is a collection of short stories, most of which have been published in various anthologies over the years. They are all supernatural in nature, though the subjects vary wildly, from faeries to werewolves to normal human beings with extraordinary abilities. I'm a fan of short story compilations, because you're almost always guaranteed to find at least one that suits your taste (plus, they fly by). I was lucky this time - there were several stories I thought were exceptional, and though Poison Eaters did fly by, I was very sad to see it go.

There were two aspects of Black's writing that had me hooked from page one, and they're qualities you so rarely find anymore that I'm actually kind of excited to move on to some of her older books. For one, she does an excellent job of creating an atmosphere and conveying emotion. Each story in The Poison Eaters had its own distinct feel, a mood, that emanates from the story. It draws you in and firmly plants you in its world, in its protagonist's head. You feel what the characters are feeling, and get an amazingly resonant portrait of who they are, what their experiences have taught them, what the world is like from their perspective, simply by the way they act and interact. Without once being told, you get their sense of loneliness and desperation, or bittersweet nostalgia, or helplessness, or stark determination. There's no need to relate to them, because you are them. They feel like real people, not characters. I'm always impressed by authors who manage to convey and create so much in so few pages, and how they put to shame other authors who can't do that over the course of a whole book (or worse yet, a series). HI PEOPLE, THIS IS HOW YOU DO IT.

The second aspect I really appreciated about Poison Eaters was Black's ability to beautifully weave her metaphors and plots into one seamless, unified being. We've talked before about how many paranormal romances use the supernatural as a method of addressing cultural or social issues (some more blatantly than others), but...well, let's just say subtlety isn't usually their strong point. Most of the time they feel the need to spell out the message they're trying to get across, or so thinly veil it that there may as well not be a veil at all. Other times it's so painfully shoehorned in that a Wheel of Morality segment would often be less jarring. But that's not an issue Black seems to have. Here, for the most part, the characters, the story, and the world are the metaphor.

Reading The Poison Eaters was very much like reading a book of classic fairy tales and folklore - those too were dark, often horrific, but crafted to embody a specific message. It seems to me that the same goes for Black's tales in The Poison Eaters...

Continued at [You're Killing Us](#).

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## Amy says

This is a short story collection written solely by Holly Black. There is everything you could ever hope for from a paranormal book packed into this small but entertaining set of stories.

A few favourites of mine include -

'The Night Market' which is about a girl called Tomasa who tries to save her sister from a elf's curse but ends up falling for him in all the wrong ways. Tomasa wasn't afraid to stand up to the elf even though he had alluring qualities.



'In Vodka Veritas' Which is about a boy who walks in on the Latin club putting a seductive curse on everyone at prom.

'The Coat of Stars' which is about Rafe, a man who lost the love of his life when he was young to fairies and may just have found a way to buy him back.

I was a little let down by some stories like 'A Reversal of Fortune' and 'The Land of Hearts Desire' as a few of these are extremely short and didn't hold enough information for me to feel connected to the story. A few stories were definitely not up my alley as they were quite gruesome but it was worth reading the not-so-good to find the amazing.

I do love Holly Black's work and paranormal is one of my favourite genre's so there are some gems amongst this collection!

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## **Gemma says**

Until now, I was convinced that short stories really weren't my thing.

I mean, Lips Touch Three Times was okay; the writing was pretty and I enjoyed it. But other short story collections (see: Kelly Link's highly disappointing Pretty Monsters) just leave me scratching my head and wondering why someone would bother to write that out at all.

Short stories are hard. You have to develop a plot, a setting and characters, and you don't have a huge number of words to do that. And with a lot of them, they don't seem to have that. They might get one (usually setting, sometimes characters), but leave out the other three, and it's just bland and pointless.

But then I read the Poison Eaters, and Holly Black now has me convinced that short stories are my thing, if they are done right.

And the stories here... they are done very right. Some are funny, some are thoughtful, some are very heavily fantasy and others are more reality with a touch of fantasy to keep things interesting. I loved almost all of these.

Which is funny, because I didn't think I would. It promises 12 short stories in 212 pages (that's about 18 pages per story; very short indeed. That's like a chapter for most authors). I didn't think she would be able to develop any of them in any of the areas, and it would be more overhyped 'this is literature, even though there's no visible plot or premise' stuff.

Wrong. Wrong, wrong, wrong. These are some of the best short stories I have ever read. She sets up everything excellently, and I think the longest story in here is 27 pages. She doesn't waste words.

I believe this is proof of the 'quality, not quantity' theory.

Do I wish the stories had been longer, maybe individual novels. Yes and no. On one hand, I would like more time with the characters and the world and the writing, and maybe a little more resolution to a few of them (not that there wasn't resolution, but I wanted... elaboration on it). But no, I do not want these to be longer, because they stand beautifully where they are and anything else would just dilute it and serve as filler.

Individual story reviews:

**The Coldest Girl in Coldtown** : 5/5. A cross between 21st century vampire obsession and the zombie apocalypse. It was creepy and dark and fascinating. An excellent way to start off the collection.

**A Reversal of Fortune** : 5/5. A girl challenges the devil to an eating contest. I felt that this one was more whimsical, and very fun to read. It was pretty short, but I really enjoyed it. Points for the descriptions of the candy.

**The Boy Who Cried Wolf** : 5/5. The shortest story in here, about a geeky boy who reads somewhere that there are flowers that turn you into a werewolf. I found it to be very amusing.

**The Night Market** : 5/5. One of the most gorgeous settings in the book. About a girl looking for an elf to cure her sister, but there's more than that. The words here were beautiful and atmospheric, and the story had a fairy tale feel to it that made it all the more enjoyable.

**The Dog King** : 3/5. I was on skim mode for this one, not sure why, so I feel like I missed something (aka, the story) but that might just be me.

**Virgin** : 2/5. It starts out well, about unicorns, but I don't feel like the plot was resolved at all, and this was one that left me scratching my head and wondering what the point was.

**Vodka Veritas** : 5/5. Maybe my favorite story in the entire book. I loved the narrator; he has one of the best voices I've read in a while, and the story was fun and whimsical, about an orgy that breaks out at prom due to someone spiking the punch (it sounds worse than it is), and boys who have to run around kissing everyone to give them the antidote. I thought it was very clever.

**The Coat of Stars** : 5/5. Another beautiful setting that felt like a fairy tale. About a guy trying to win his lover back from faeries. It was really cute, and sad and beautiful, and I liked the ending.

**Paper Cuts Scissors** : 4/5. A bit muddled in the beginning, but I liked the crux of a bunch of different stories combining (especially when they talked about Indianna Jones sleeping his way through Jane Austen characters. That was funny). Another whimsical one.

**Going Ironside/The Land of Heart's Desires** : 2/5. I haven't read the Modern Faery Tale books (except for Ironside, which I skimmed through), so I wasn't really into these. The first one was confusing, and the other one was... well, I skimmed through it, too. I don't know; not the best.

**The Poison Eaters** : 4/5. About girls whose kiss will kill. Another fairy tale feeling one, interesting and fun to read.

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## TL says

For me, a couple of the stories were mildly interesting but I found myself mostly bored. Not Miss Black's fault, she's very talented but I just couldn't continue with this one.

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