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Best junji ito book

Horror mangaka Junji Ito is considered a master of his genre, with both Tomie and Uzumaki standard bearers for scare-seeking readers. In Smashed, the 2019 collection released in English by Viz Media, Ito's short stories range in tone from the slightly silly to the beyond bizarre, but all offer unique horror experiences. Here they are ranked in order from cake walk to nightmare inducing. 12. Ghosts of Prime Time What's the harm in going to a comedy show? That's the question when Keisuke joins pal Tsuguo for amateur night at the local club. As it happens, a pair of newbies to the stage really make a killing when their audience begins to laugh themselves to death. It doesn't end there as the comedy duo have dreams of hitting the airwaves. It must have heard the phrase "kill them with laughter" and took it literally when developing this story where silliness abounds. Continue scrolling to keep reading Click the button below to start this article in quick view. Start now 11. Bloodsucking Darkness Nami is a troubled teen with an eating disorder. As she becomes malnourished due to her condition, she begins having weird nightmares wherein blood rains from the sky. Things get a bit weird when she meets her fellow schoolmate Tani, who takes a liking to her and expresses a desire to help. Only his style of 'help' involves vampire bats drinking her own blood! While the premise is classic Ito, the bats themselves are cuter than they're meant to be as they "boing boing" after Nami. A creative idea worth reading more so for the artwork than the spook factor. 10. Splendid Shadow Song Ever get a song stuck in your head? "Splendid Shadow Song" makes the annoyance feel like a real scare. 9. The Mystery of the Haunted House/Soichi's Version (tie) There are no strings and levers in the haunted house that just opened up in Koichi's hometown, just horrors beyond imagination. For a steep price per ticket, folks can enter and lose their minds. Familiar faces pop up in these two stories -- specifically, Soichi, Ito's infamously deranged nail-splitting, family-torturing antagonist, only this time as an adult. Again, Ito's gruesome art shines in the various rooms within the haunted house and longtime fans of Ito's Soichi shenanigans will enjoy seeing what becomes of the troubled child, but without context, the story isn't much of a spook for casual readers. 8. Smashed The titular story of forbidden fruit received the Junji Ito Collection treatment in anime form where it shines, the violence of the act of physically being smashed jarring on the screen. In print, Ito's art manages to capture the visceral punishment of those who just can't resist a taste of a rare jungle plant. The story has a similar vibe to old horror adventure comics, a true story to tell while roasting marshmallows to listeners with strong stomachs. 7. Soichi's Beloved Pet Perhaps this short should have come before the "Haunted House" two-parter, but nonetheless, Soichi's twisted mind is on full display here. As the family adopts a cat, Soichi goes to work corrupting it until it becomes a rather evil little demon on its own right. Soichi is a weird kid who Ito has often featured as having an uncanny ability to freak people out, and in this case, his influence breaks down the barrier between animal and man. 6. Library Vision A student's worst nightmare: studying to death. A magnificent library of hundreds of thousands of books becomes one man's curse inherited from his parents. His wife, initially attracted to his intelligence, begins to realize his mania when a book goes missing. This tale acts as a reminder to take a break once in a while or risk losing more than sleep. 5. In Mirror Valley Junji Ito's "The Enigma of Amigara Fault" introduced many to his weird horror flavor, and "In Mirror Valley" captures the same level of oddity. A trio of hikers happen upon a valley covered in broken mirrors where they discover an intense hatred shared between rival villages. Ultimately, hate consumes them too, and the reader learns how and why the valley got its name. Considering that Ito's original appeal came from his knack for Lovecraftian cosmic horror, "In Mirror Valley" is a welcome return to form. 4. Death Row Doorbell Reminiscent of a ghost story told to children on the consequences of being naughty, Ito's ghoulish version of ding dong ditch is rather somber. Following the death of her family at the hands of a somewhat silly biker gang, she and her surviving brother are haunted by what appears to be the ghost of their attacker currently sitting on death row, begging for forgiveness. In the end, sadness permeates these pages more so than does fright, but it lingers nonetheless. 3. I Don't Want to Be a Ghost A traditional ghost story takes a startling twist when a roadside hitchhiker is given a ride. Though not a ghost herself, her desire to see ghosts really turns up the notch on bizarre when she attaches herself to her would-be savior, Shigeru. Mysteriously appearing blood, odd women with strange eyes -- this story is reminiscent of Ito's seminal work Tomie, and packs a punch a similar punch. 2. Roar Losing a loved one is often at the heart of horror, as many people cannot imagine a world without, say, their parents. In "Roar," a young man whose parents were swept away by a flood uncovers a macabre residual spirit of the very flood itself as it carries screaming souls down a phantom river. When he discovers that his father is, in fact, alive but dedicated to saving the ghostly visage of his late wife from the raging waters, a rather melancholy and tragic story unfolds. This may be one of Ito's most heartfelt stories -- and most dreadful to conceive. 1. Earthbound Quite possibly one of the darkest of Ito's shorts, "Earthbound" tells the tale of individuals who, while striking a pose as if they had been crucified upon an invisible cross, gradually begin to solidify. Case worker Asano is tasked with helping these individuals, one of which seems to haunt her as well. The subject matter makes a disturbing turn and the imagery is truly macabre -- this one isn't for the faint of heart. "Earthbound" ranks high not only in Smashed, but in Ito's entire morbid library. 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To vote on books not in the list or books you couldn't find the list, you can click on the tab add books to this list and then choose from your books, or simply search. The term master of horror is often attributed to American author Stephen King without any argument. Turn your eyes to Japan, however, and you'll discover a writer and artist capable of injecting a far more potent amount of fear into his readers' veins. Junji Ito is a mangaka who understands phobias, existential anxieties, and the terror of the unknown better than any other horror writer on Earth. Combining a deft artist's eye with a boundless and terrifying imagination, Junji Ito stands head and shoulders above every other horror writer around. Born in 1963 in Gifu prefecture, Junji Ito is Japan's most successful and lauded horror writer. What makes Ito unique in the horror world is that he isn't a novelist or a short story writer in the traditional sense; he's a mangaka. His horror stories, both short and long, are all written and drawn with a surreal, off-kilter, otherworldly eeriness. Ito's debut story, written when he was only 24 years old, was Tomie, a series of stories about a young woman who defies death and ageing. Over and again, Tomie drives the men who fall for her into madness. Despite its success, Tomie did not project him into the world of famous writers and artists immediately, as it worked for several years as a dental technician. Eventually, though, Ito left his almost comically bland career (especially considering how he is known today) behind and Tomie proved to be the beginning of a phenomenal career as Junji Ito steadily made a greater and greater name for himself as the king of terror, not only in Japan but across the world. Junji Ito's Themes, Skills, and Influences Ito has cited his largest influences as Kazuo Umezu and Hideshi Hino, as well as legendary American writer and creator of the cosmic horror genre, H.P. Lovecraft. Kazuo Umezu is one of the great horror mangaka, responsible for Ito's success. In interviews, Ito comes across as a mild-mannered, calm, charming, and sweet man who exists in remarkable contrast to the themes and content of his art and stories. What sets Ito apart from other horror writers is a one-two punch: his ideas and his execution. It's in his short stories where we best see both of these unique Ito qualities. Junji Ito is a master of body horror, of suspense, and of otherworldly supernatural wrongness. Ito very much understands that the quickest way to spoil tension and mystery is to give the mystery away, and so he never does. His stories often begin in normality, descend into madness of a supernatural, monstrous kind, and are never resolved, leaving the shivers running up and down your spine long after the story ends. Ito's ideas often come from ordinary fears, both physical and existential: the unknown depths of the ocean, claustrophobia, the fear of being watched. Or they come from small discomforts like a sweaty mattress. From there, he expands on these little sparks and turns them into wildfires of deadly and terrifying proportions. And it's in Ito's art that we really feel this terror. Ito has an uncanny ability to draw human eyes. In the moments where nothing supernatural has yet happened, a shiver of discomfort can be felt when looking at the eyes of Ito's protagonists. And when the supernatural really hits, it does so in grotesque and uncomfortable detail. Ito understands the human body and is able to disfigure it greatly or twist it ever so slightly as to deliver enormous shocks or to drop the reader into the uncanny valley, there leaving them with an itchy tingle of discomfort at the sight of his monsters and nasty creations. Sometimes there is no great cosmic horror in Ito's stories. Sometimes they are simply impossible mysteries that are explored but never solved. The mind of Junji Ito books. His longer horror stories -- Tomie, Uzumaki, and Gyo -- are each available as solo books. Then there is his phenomenal adaptation of Frankenstein, which is perhaps the best adaptation of Shelley's original novel that's ever been made. Finally, there's a wide selection of short stories. Junji Ito's short stories do the best job of showcasing the diversity of horror in his ideas, his writing, and his art skills, and they can be found in collections. Shiver, Fragments of Horror, and Smashed, as well as featuring as bonus stories in the previously mentioned full-length books. Here are the 10 Junji Ito short stories that most exemplify the breadth of his talent and the real horror that lies at the heart of his words and his artwork. 1. Hanging Blimp Hanging Blimp (found in Shiver) is Ito's eerie and chilling storytelling skills at their absolute peak. While his art is praised most often for its body horror quality, Hanging Blimp is what most expertly shows off his plotting and the strength of his mental forge. In this short story, ominous and enormous balloons -- in the shape and facade of real people's faces -- appear floating across the sky over the entire country. Their gaunt and fearful but unchanged expressions, coupled with the mystery of what they are and where they came from, makes for a terrifying premise that's only worsened when it becomes clear that the balloons are hunting down the people they resemble, and hanging from each balloon is a noose. 2. The Enigma of Amigara Fault This is another short story (found as a bonus chapter in Gyo) that lacks the quintessential body horror stamp of Junji Ito. Instead, it's a terror masterpiece that relies on mystery, intrigue, and a slow-burning plot to lure the reader in. A recent earthquake has shifted the earth and raised a long strip of rock at the base of a mountain. Along this newly unearthed rock is a series of holes that disappear into the mountain. But these holes are human-shaped, carved by people unknown and hidden in the earth for what surely must be thousands of years. And yet, people are being drawn to this phenomenon once they find what they believe to be their hole -- a hole that fits them and only them. 3. The Long Dream Nowhere is some imaginative and original body horror by our master of terror. The Long Dream (found in Shiver) tells the story of a man in a hospital bed who lives years -- sometimes entire lives -- every time he sleeps. When he wakes up, the time he spent in the dream is worn on his skin and his body slowly degrades and morphs into something alien and frightening. There's nothing threatening in this story -- no monster or otherworldly creature -- only a man who slowly succumbs to eternal dreams and wakes up to find his body sunken and immobile. This is what makes The Long Dream one of the most harrowing and haunting Ito stories, while also being so cleverly static. 4. The Thing That Drifted Ashore (found in the Slug Girl collection) taps into our discomfort when considering the infinite size and depth of our dark oceans -- how close they are and yet how unknown. Ito also uses Ito's signature aesthetics to design a truly disturbing creature that never looks too far beyond the realm of possibility. That's what's truly frightening: this thing could exist, it could be out there, and it could do what it does in this terrifying story. Greased (found in Shiver) is, perhaps, Junji Ito's most disgusting story. It was inspired by the discomfort he himself went through when studying at a dental school. While there, he had to sleep on a futon that had been stained brown from the sweat of former students. From sweat came oil and from oil came zits. And so, this story was born! In it, a young girl and her brother live above their father's yakiniku restaurant which has slowly and steadily covered the interior of the house with grease and filled it with oily fumes. It's a story of sibling rivalry soaked in grease: truly, one of the most unpleasant and squeamish stories you can imagine reading. And with the attention to detail Ito brings to his art, some of the panels can leave you feeling incredibly nauseous. 6. Fashion Model One of Ito's most famous single panels is that of a tall, thin, middle-aged woman with a long head and a monstrous mouth. She is the titular fashion model of this story (found in Shiver), a woman hired by a film crew. The story's protagonist is frightened of her looks and confused as to why the crew has hired her to be a model. All the while, as we read, we wonder whether or not there is anything to be scared of -- if she is, in fact, simply a scary-looking woman. This doubt comes with the guilt of judging her too harshly. This is what makes Fashion Model such a stand-out Ito story: it's not only an unexplained natural mystery, a piece of terrifying body horror, or a supernatural phenomenon. It's a story that makes you doubt, feel guilty, let your guard down, before it really lays on the terror. 7. Slug Girl This story (found in the Slug Girl collection), while not a particular revelation of psychological horror like Hanging Blimp or The Long Dream, is an excellent example of Ito's unsettling body horror. It's gone down as one of his most beloved stories for its absurd nature and the empathy it demands from the reader. Slug Girl tells the story of a young girl whose family's backyard has been overrun with slugs for most of her life. As the story begins, she finds that her tongue is swelling, and she is feeling sick. While at home from school, she is bedridden and, soon enough, finds that her tongue has transformed into the head and body of a slug. Her condition worsens but what really gets to the reader is that feeling of, "what would I do in her position?" and the sheer panic that comes with it. Army of One What really makes Army of One (found in Hellstar Remina) stand out from the crowd of claustrophobic, discomfiting, unnatural and inflated Ito comics is that it has an entirely other kind of atmosphere and tone. Army of One, right until its very end, has the story and pacing of a very un-supernatural and groundless thriller. People are going missing, and turning up soon after, dead, and stitched together macabre poses. The number of people going missing gradually increases, from couples to groups to entire mass gatherings. And when they're found, they're stitched together as a web made of people. It's horrifying, but it seems to be the work of a serial killer or a group. It's a very different kind of Ito story. That is, until the very end, of course. Dissection Girl (found in Fragments of Horror) is an Ito story that combines all the best aspects of Ito's artistic and literary skills: it's a personal and human tale with an ordinary protagonist and an extraordinary subject character. It considers a real-life issue -- in this case a kind of body dysmorphia -- and plays with it in a terrifying manner. It also explodes with a resolution moment of exaggerated and absurd body horror that's as gross as it is thrilling. Dissection girl, in many ways, is an excellent entry point to reading Ito's work. It's unsettling but not ghastly. Its imagery is disconcerting, but not something that makes you writhе with chills and goose bumps. It's a perfectly crafted and unsettling tale of Ito at his most approachable, yet still wholly wicked. 10. Honoured Ancestors There's a funny anecdote surrounding this tale (found in Shiver), which is that Ito created something here that he was very proud of: a person running whilst lying on their back in an uncanny spider-like fashion. That is, until he at last saw the director's cut of The Exorcist and was disappointed to see it had already been done. Nevertheless, it's still a terrifying scene that comes at the end of this, one of Ito's most viscerally unsettling and monstrous tales. When a high schooler brings a girl he likes home to meet his dad, she has already suffered memory loss and trauma in the form of a dream about an enormous caterpillar. When she meets the boy's dad, he enters the room in a spider-like fashion and the top of his head is never shown. Eventually, the reason why is revealed and it's one of the most shocking, eerie, and unnerving moments in an Ito comic. It's a true moment of grotesque body horror that will stay with you for a long, long time. Get to know some of Japan's other greatest mangaka in the 10 Best Female Manga Artists You Need to Know! JO SELECTS offers helpful suggestions, and genuine recommendations for high-quality, authentic Japanese art & design. We know how difficult it is to search for Japanese artists, artisans and designers on the vast internet, so we came up with this lifestyle guide to highlight the most inspiring Japanese artworks, designs and products for your everyday needs. All product suggestions are independently selected and individually reviewed. We try our best to update information, but all prices and availability are subject to change. As an Amazon Associate, Japan Objects earns from qualifying purchases.

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