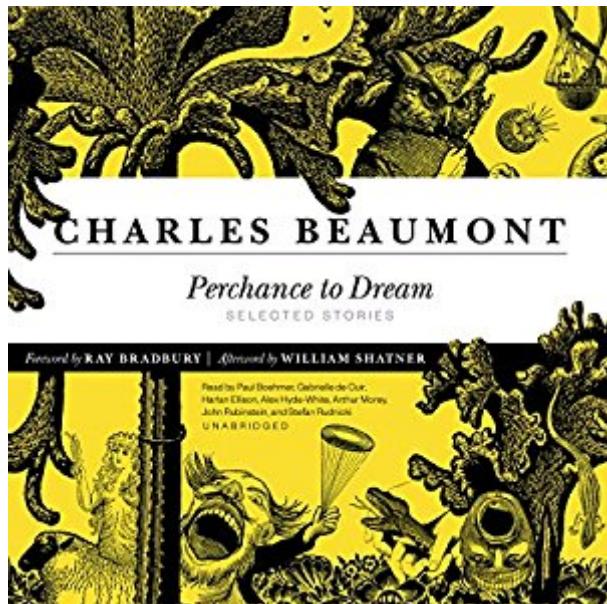


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Perchance To Dream: Selected Stories



Synopsis

The profoundly original and wildly entertaining short stories of a legendary Twilight Zone writer. It is only natural that Charles Beaumont would make a name for himself crafting scripts for The Twilight Zone - for his was an imagination so limitless it must have emerged from some other dimension. Perchance to Dream contains a selection of Beaumont's finest stories, including five that he later adapted for Twilight Zone episodes. Beaumont dreamed up fantasies so vast and varied, they burst through the walls of whatever box might contain them. Supernatural, horror, noir, science fiction, fantasy, pulp, and more - all were equally at home in his wondrous mind. These are stories where lions stalk the plains, classic cars rove the streets, and spacecraft hover just overhead. Here roam musicians, magicians, vampires, monsters, toreros, extraterrestrials, androids, and perhaps even the devil himself. With dizzying feats of master storytelling and joyously eccentric humor, Beaumont transformed his nightmares and reveries into impeccably crafted stories that leave themselves indelibly stamped upon the walls of the mind. In Beaumont's hands, nothing is impossible; it all seems plausible, even likely.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The phrase that immediately comes to mind to describe Beaumont is "a poor man's Ray Bradbury", but that's entirely too derogatory for this collection of tales. Beaumont's prose can't equal Bradbury's ecstatic, beautiful collections of metaphors and descriptions - it has a distinctly hard-boiled edge, as though his style was unable to escape the pulps to the same degree that Bradbury's did.

However, his sense of twisted fun and near-endless ability to come up with damn good "What if?" ideas are equal to that of his more famous counterpart; in that regard many of these stories would be perfectly at home in *The Illustrated Man* or *The October Country*. And he does have Bradbury's gift for evoking nostalgia and emotion; to name but one example, the aching, awful sadness of "The Magic Man" is genuinely moving. What a talent we lost when he died; who knows how many more wonderful little tales and *Twilight Zone* episodes he would have graced us with. While Ligotti is certainly more impressive in a literary sense, this was, no contest, my favorite Halloween read this October. Also, this will undoubtedly be the only time you'll see a collection bookended by tributes from Ray Bradbury and William Shatner. An apt duo, though I'm unclear where the Bradbury foreword came from as he'd been dead for three years prior to the publication of this edition. I like to think he has indeed succeeded in his goal to live forever and has been in contact with Penguin Classics from the afterlife.

Great for fans of *Twilight Zone*. You will recognize some of these. Of course, these days unless you're a TW fan, you would never heard of this guy, which is a shame. He was ahead of his time.

Charles Beaumont was really one hell of a gifted writer. This volume does a good job of showcasing some of his truly outstanding short stories. If you are a fan of Richard Matheson, you will love Beaumont. I can only hope that a companion volume is in the works.

Charles Beaumont is a five-star talent and hopefully this Penguin Classics retrospective of his work will go a long way to bring his fine work to a wider audience. Unfortunately, this collection, due to some questionable omissions, is only partially successful in encompassing the best of his work, and I can't imagine the goal would have been otherwise since the author's work hasn't been in print in nearly twenty years and is unlikely to remain in print hereafter. The best part of this collection is that it includes seven stories that were later adapted for television on Rod Serling's *The Twilight Zone*, almost all of which were adapted by Beaumont himself for the show. For those interested, these stories are: "The Howling Man," "The Jungle," "Perchance to Dream," "In His Image," "The Beautiful People" (filmed as "Number Twelve Looks Just Like You" from a teleplay by John Tomerlin), "Song for a Lady" (filmed as "Passage on the Lady Anne"), and "Traumerei" (filmed as "Shadow Play"). This collection should also have included the stories, "The Devil, You Say?" and "Elegy," both of which were also adapted for the show by Beaumont, "The Devil, You Say?" as "Printer's Devil," for no other reason than to completely collect the Beaumont stories associated with the show. The

collection also neglects one of Beaumont's finer stories that is also connected to *Twilight Zone*, "Gentlemen, Be Seated," which Beaumont also adapted into a teleplay and submitted to the Zone before, incredibly, it was rejected for production by the show's fifth season producer. It would have been interesting to have all of this *Twilight Zone* material in one collection since his connection to the show is the primary reason he is remembered and read today. Along with the *Twilight Zone* material, this collection also includes many of Beaumont's finest stories. I would direct the reader to "A Death in the Country," a suspense story about one of Beaumont's favorite pastimes, auto racing, "Free Dirt," a surreal and highly original horror story, "Place of Meeting," a clever horror/science fiction short-short, "Night Ride," about another of Beaumont's passions, jazz music, "The New People," a tense story of domestic terror, "Last Rites," an examination of religion through a science fiction lens, and "The Magic Man," a heart-wrenching story about the power of belief. There are included some stories that don't show Beaumont at his best but were presumably included to both fill out the collection and show a little of the author's range. These include "Fritzchen," and "The Monster Show," two satirical fantasies, and "A Classic Affair," and "The Music of the Yellow Brass," two marginally successful non-genre stories. Alas, the collection also include some poor stories, such as "Sorcerer's Moon," "You Can't Have Them All," "Father, Dear Father," "Blood Brother," and "The New Sound." What's baffling about the inclusion of these stories is what was left out of the collection so that they could be included. Left out were essential stories such as "Miss Gentilbelle," Beaumont's devastating tale of the horrors of a twisted childhood, "The Hunger," an intense noir tale, "Black Country," a prize winning story about the power of jazz music, "Mourning Song," a powerful dark fantasy about choice and destiny, and "The Vanishing American," his classic fantasy about the effects of American society on the identity of the individual. If the reader enjoyed this collection I highly recommend they seek out these stories as they are better than almost everything else included in this collection and are stories that I, as a longtime Beaumont reader, feel are stories that simply must be included for a one-volume collection of the author's work to be considered definitive. I'm at least hoping this means there is a proposed second volume in the future that will collect the remainder of Beaumont's wonderful short fiction. Overall, this is a fine primer on Beaumont's unique style but ultimately it's a missed opportunity to collect all of Beaumont's best work in one easily accessible collection. I highly suggest Beaumont biographer/editor Roger Anker's 1988 volume "Selected Stories" (Dark Harvest), reprinted in paperback as "The Howling Man" (Tor 1992). It includes all of Beaumont's best work as well as personal essays by Beaumont's professional friends. Get it while it's still relatively affordable, for it remains at this time the definitive collection of Beaumont's wonderful short fiction..

Good book

A truly gifted writer responsible for many Twilight Zone episodes and still worth reading today.

This is just a great set of short stories--read it.

He wrote some of the best and memorable weird and strange science fiction and fantasy and scary short stories ever put on paper. Several of which were shown on the Twilight Zone. And he wrote the screen plays to boot. Its about time a collection of his tales was brought out such as this. They are ALL wonderful. If only he lived longer. (he was 38 when he passed away) But lets enjoy what he did write. VERY HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

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