



The Year's Best Fantasy First Annual Collection

Ellen Datlow (Editor), Terri Windling (Editor), William F. Nolan, Joan Aiken, Edward Bryant, John Robert Bensink, Steven Brust, Ramsey Campbell, more... David J. Schow, Elizabeth S. Helfman, Jane Yolen, Carol Emshwiller, Harlan Ellison, Michael Shea, Charles de Lint, George R.R. Martin, Lucius Shepard, M. John Harrison, Patricia C. Wrede, John Brunner, Joyce Carol Oates, Kathryn Ptacek, Douglas E. Winter, Craig Spector, John Skipp, Craig Shaw Gardner, Lisa Tuttle, Delia Sherman, Michael McDowell, Natalie Babbitt, Alan Moore, Thomas Canty (Artist), Ursula K. Le Guin, Joe Haldeman, Jonathan Carroll, Gwyneth Jones, Susan Palwick, T.M. Wright ...less

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This groundbreaking anthology inaugurates an exciting new annual tradition—a giant collection of the greatest fantasy and supernatural stories published in 1987.

The Year's Best Fantasy First Annual Collection Details

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From Reader Review The Year's Best Fantasy First Annual Collection for online ebook

Matt says

There are some very good stories in here. I actually thought I was picking up a different volume that follows along the more traditional pairing of SF&F, rather than fantasy and horror. As a person who is more than enough terrified of everyday life events - I skipped a good 40% of the book that was exclusively dedicated to horror. The names presented were all excellent authors, and I'm certain that if I was a horror reader that I would have enjoyed them.

An exceptional look back into the 80s!

DeAnna Knippling says

When I started the anthology, at first I felt robbed.

I hadn't read this one before, so most of the stories were new to me, but I have read other books in the series, as well as other things that the editors have done together.

I wasn't prepared to come back to it. Not only have both fantasy and horror moved on since this came out, but it was kind of a game changer at the time.

I don't often say this, but--I want that world back, not the one where 80s horror novels were blunt instruments of vanity and contempt, not the one where epic fantasy was Tolkein knockoffs, but some imaginary golden age where fantasy and horror were the same thing.

Isn't that awful? People did it before, people have been doing it since, and I still felt robbed. So irrational.

My favorites are: Pretty much all of them. A couple that I wanted tighter endings on, that was all. An excellent read.

Susan says

♦ Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight by Ursula K. Le Guin
A World Without Toys • (1986) • shortstory by T. M. Wright
DX • (1987) • poem by Joe Haldeman
Friend's Best Man • (1987) • shortstory by Jonathan Carroll
The Snow Apples • (1987) • shortstory by Gwyneth Jones
Ever After • (1987) • novelette by Susan Palwick
My Name Is Dolly • (1987) • shortstory by William F. Nolan
The Moon's Revenge • (1987) • shortstory by Joan Aiken
Lake George in High August • (1987) • shortstory by John Robert Bensink
Csucskári • (1987) • novelette by Steven Brust

The Other Side • (1986) • shortstory by Ramsey Campbell
Pamela's Get • (1987) • novelette by David J. Schow
Voices in the Wind • (1987) • shortstory by Elizabeth S. Helfman
Once Upon a Time, She Said • (1987) • poem by Jane Yolen
The Circular Library of Stones • (1987) • shortstory by Carol Emshwiller
Soft Monkey • (1987) • shortstory by Harlan Ellison
Fat Face • [Cthulhu Mythos] • (1987) • novelette by Michael Shea
♥ "Uncle Dobbins Parrot Fair" by Charles de Lint RE-read 7/1/2015
The Pear-Shaped Man • (1987) • novelette by George R. R. Martin
Delta Sly Honey • (1987) • shortstory by Lucius Shepard
Small Heirlooms • (1987) • shortstory by M. John Harrison
The Improper Princess • [Enchanted Forest] • (1987) • shortstory by Patricia C. Wrede
The Fable of the Farmer and Fox • (1987) • shortstory by John Brunner
Haunted • (1987) • novelette by Joyce Carol Oates
Dead Possums • (1987) • shortstory by Kathryn Ptacek
Pictures Made of Stones • (1987) • poem by Lucius Shepard
Splatter: A Cautionary Tale • (1987) • shortstory by Douglas E. Winter
Gentlemen • (1987) • novelette by Craig Spector and John Skipp
Demon Luck • (1987) • shortstory by Craig Shaw Gardner
Words of Power • (1987) • shortstory by Jane Yolen
Jamie's Grave • (1987) • shortstory by Lisa Tuttle
The Maid on the Shore • (1987) • shortstory by Delia Sherman
Halley's Passing • (1987) • shortstory by Michael McDowell
White Trains • (1987) • poem by Lucius Shepard
Simple Sentences • (1987) • shortstory by Natalie Babbitt
A Hypothetical Lizard • [Liavek] • (1987) • novelette by Alan Moore

Richard Leis says

It took me over a year to read this 1988 collection of short stories selected by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, but it wasn't because of any problems I had with the anthology. I'm rating this 5 stars for a very good reason: nearly every story in the collection are themselves 5-star worthy. Some stories overwhelmed me so much with their greatness that I had to take a break to process them, which led to gaps in my reading this anthology when I fell into reading some other book. Every time I came back to this anthology, though, I immediately encountered another incredible, thought-provoking story.

I mean, the anthology starts with "Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight" by Ursula K. Le Guin! This is one of my absolute favorite stories and it is one that lingers. So many stories in this anthology are like that. I sometimes didn't want to move on; I wanted to savor and think about what I had just read. Sometimes I even fell into a jealous gloom, despairing that my own writing will ever come close to the level of craft on display here.

There are other stories that simply shattered my understanding of how short stories in particular fantasy genres should work. Stories like "Haunted" by Joyce Carol Oates and "Halley's Passing" by Michael McDowell scared me half to death! These are decidedly disturbing, even icky, horror stories that showcase their author's incredible use of craft. In "Halley's Passing," for example, McDowell uses a close third-person narrator that relays real-time violence in matter-of-fact, even bureaucratic detail. That combination elevated

my terror from the very beginning, so that when I reached a horrifying further revelation near the end, it wasn't all that surprising, considering.

Yes, absolutely chilling and disturbing horror, often offset by other genres of fantasy that are more humorous, soaring, and absolutely gorgeous in setting and detail. Mood often shifts story by story, though there are also interesting pairings of stories with similar moods and subject matter throughout the anthology. Stories like "Words of Power" by Jane Yolen and "The Maid on the Shore" by Dalia Sherman offer powerful moments of empowerment and achievement soon after other stories of frightful horror.

I would love to write a review about each and every story, but the last one I'll focus on has to be Alan Moore's "A Hypothetical Lizard." Until this last story, the one criticism I had about the anthology was the lack of diversity in characters. There are (too) few people of color, though it is possible that readers could see diverse characters in stories that don't really describe the characters in great detail. Until "A Hypothetical Lizard," there are no LGBT characters; instead, there are jarring uses of "faggot" in a couple stories, though the characters uttering this word are meant to be despicable.

The last story, and Windling's pick for best fantasy story of the year, is "A Hypothetical Lizard," and it is a stunning and inclusive story to end on. Not that it has a happy ending, but Moore's characterization of the transgender character Rawra Chin is very loving, though in keeping with 1988 one would not expect Her story to have a happy ending. I think that Moore's use of homosexual and transgender characters to tell a universal story of love and betrayal is powerful and very much appreciated in an anthology of stories that otherwise ignores LGBT people.

The other thing I love about "A Hypothetical Lizard" is Moore's level of craft. In fact, he's on an entirely different level than any other writer in the anthology, and this story, at least in my opinion, seems the most timeless because of it. The cinematic vividness of his descriptions includes a scene where the character imagines the black stones of the courtyard below her as a pool of water, and what it would be like for her to dive into the water and swim away. I'm going to be studying this and other passages for years as I try to improve my own writing. Another example: a perspective change that is jarring but absolutely perfect for the story. I cannot rave enough about Moore's level of craft. It's just stunning.

So, yes, this anthology took me over a year to read, but it is also my most favorite book over that same period of time. It includes some of my favorite short stories ever. What Le Guin, Oates, McDowell, Moore, and everyone else in the anthology accomplish with their tales is so inspiring.

I'm in awe.

Kit says

I love anthologies, and I thoroughly enjoyed Datlow's *The Faery Reel*, so... ??. stars

Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight by Ursula K. Le Guin * *

A strange story about a girl who apparently falls out of a plane, and is found and helped by Coyote and other desert denizens.

A World Without Toys by T. M. Wright * * * *

Alex and Blanche from the historical society are interested in an old house found under a street. The house has toys in the attic.

DX by Joe Haldeman * * *

A day in the life of any given soldier - any given war.

Friend's Best Man by Jonathan Carroll * * *

A man saves his dog from a train, and then things start to get weird...

The Snow Apples by Gwyneth Jones * * * *

A new faery tale where a king tries to raise his son to be immune to the curse placed on his head.

Ever After by Susan Palwick * * * *

What if the faery godmother is not a faery at all, but something else entirely?

My Name is Dolly by William F. Nolan * *

A little girl plots revenge on her wicked stepfather.

The Moon's Revenge by Joan Aiken * * *

A boy throws shoes at the moon 7 nights so the moon will grant his wish to be a great fiddler.

Author's Notes by Edward Bryant * *

Strange musings...

Lake George in High August by John Robert Bensink * *

Weird, dark family vacation story. Abrupt.

Csucskári by Steve Brust * * *

A retelling of *the Sun, The Moon, and The Stars*.

The Other Side by Ramsey Campbell * *

A very freaky story about a disturbed teacher.

Pamela's Get by David J. Schow * *

The strange unraveling of the friends of the recently deceased.

Voices in the Wind by Elizabeth S. Helfman * *

An unusual story about a fisherman and his wife trying to listen to the wind.

Once Upon a Time, She Said by Jane Yolen * *

A poem sprinkled with faery tale fodder.

The Circular Library of Stones by Carol Emshwiller * *

An

Soft Monkey by Harlan Ellison * *

An

Fat Face by Michael Shea * *

An

Uncle Dobbin's Parrot Fair by Charles de Lint * *

An

The Pear-Shaped Man by George R. R. Martin * *

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Delta Sly Honey by Lucius Shepard * *

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Small Heirlooms by M. John Harrison * *

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The Improper Princess by Patricia C. Wrede * *

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The Fable of the Farmer and the Fox by John Brunner * *

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Haunted by Joyce Carol Oates * *

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Dead Possums by Kathryn Ptacek * *

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The Maid on the Shore by Delia Sherman * *

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Halley's Passing by Michael McDowell * *

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White Trains by Lucius Shepard * *

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Simple Sentences by Natalie Babbitt * *

An

A Hypothetical Lizard by Alan Moore * *

An

Honorable Mentions: 1987 * *

An

Millerbug says

This anthology was ok. I was expecting more I think. It was more horror than fantasy, and even the horror was questionable, there were a lot of stories about serial killers. My favorite stories were Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out Tonight by Ursula LeGuin. DX a poem about Vietnam by Joe Haldeman. Ever After by Susan Palwick, Cinderella and Vampires...

Csucskari by Steven Brust. Uncle Dobbin's Parrot Fair by Charles DeLint, Words of Power by Jane Yolen and The Maid on the Shore by Delia Sherman. Other than that all the rest of the stories were OK or just depressing.

Eeiko says

So many stories but hardly any of them good

John says

Sorry for virtually the same review on whole anthology set

I own a *Book Club* hardcover edition.

I started this anthology with the 5th Annual and I loved it so much I started collecting the whole set including finding copies of those before it.

What sets this anthology apart from many others is that I always find two or three gems within its pages, many liked stories and very few I have to force myself through. More importantly, from those people I have noted who read these anthologies too, they say the same thing. I rated this whole anthology based on the variety of the stories within, how many people seem to report finding the same ratio of gems & well received stories.

I am happy to own this whole anthology and keep them in excellent shape, no matter how many times I have

read them.

Kenny says

Great Anthology, first of the series. All the stories are worth reading, but some I like more than others. My favorite is "Fat Face" by Michael Shea. Also has an excellent year-in-review for an introduction. Highly Recommended.

Shawn Thrasher says

All the stories are from 1987, and a few feel that way. Mostly in a bad way, although "The Other Side" by Ramsey Campbell has a 1980s Stephen King feel that was deliciously creepy. Ursula K. Le Guin starts the collection off with the fantastic "Buffalo Gals Won't You Come Out Tonight;" it's the highest point in the book. Like all short story collections, the rest is a roller coaster, some stories great fun (and/or great literature) and some (dated) duds.

Deirdre says

I didn't expect this anthology to be fantasy *and* horror and I'm still a bit confused by the decision to anthologize both genres together. Mind you, I don't love horror, and this anthology is pretty old, so things may have been thought about differently back then. I'm not ashamed to say that I skipped virtually all the horror by the simple method of seeing which editor had written the little blurb before the story and avoiding all the ones that were signed 'E.D.' It did feel rather unsatisfactory to finish a book half of which I hadn't read, but there you go.

I really can't say there were any stories that made me think, 'Wow! I must go find more of this author's work!', which was also slightly disappointing. I'm interested in the development of the genre, though, so I will probably continue to read these if the library has more.

Chris says

So I can say that I liked George R.R. Martin before it was cool because his story "The Pear Shaped Man" is the story that I remember the most from this collection. And it is one of those stories that holds up to a re-read. Yolen's short fiction and poetry are also good. But watch out for these cheese curls with Martin. Honesty, you thought you get worried about characters dying? You have to worry about cheese curls now.

There are several quiet fantasy stories here as well and a Le Guin that is quite lovely. Charles de Lint is also here.

Jake says

Poised on the brink, he looked forward.

O. Ouellette says

Some of the short stories were very imaginative, funny or even a little inspirational, but most of them were mediocre and seemed either half-heartedly thrown together or not very well developed. Some of them were just plain random. It makes me sad when I read an anthology and feel like I could have done better than the writers in the book...and I don't think I'm too arrogant, so I don't feel this way often. At times, I almost felt like I was reading contest entries for the L. Ron Hubbard writing contest than professional works from published authors. I didn't finish this book because it was overdue back to the library and accruing fines...and honestly I didn't see any reason to go through the trouble of keeping it or getting it back later.... It wasn't really worth it.

Entertaining, but not particularly memorable.

Erik Graff says

This is a creditable attempt to do for fantasy collections in the eighties and beyond what Judith Merrill did for science fiction collections decades before. I don't usually like fantasy very much, but a lot of these items were quite good.
