



# **I Do: An Anthology in Support of Marriage Equality**

*Kris Jacen (Editor) , Alex Beecroft , Charlie Cochrane , Clare London , Storm Grant , Lisabet Sarai , Sharon Maria Bidwell , Jeanne Barrack , more... Marquesate , Z.A. Maxfield , P.A. Brown , Erastes , Zoe Nichols , Cassidy Ryan , Emma Collingwood , Mallory Path , Moondancer Drake , Fiona Glass , Lee Rowan , Allison Wonderland , Tracey Pennington , Jerry L. Wheeler ...less*

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Do you support the right of any human being to marry the person they love? The right to say 'I Do' to a life of commitment and sharing with the that one special person? We do.

We hope that marriage will soon be a dream that everyone can share. That's why the following authors of LGBT fiction have donated stories to this anthology, in aid of Lambda Legal Fund's fight for marriage equality:

Tracey Pennington, Alex Beecroft, Charlie Cochrane, Clare London, Storm Grant, Lisabet Sarai, Sharon Maria Bidwell, Jeanne Barrack, Marquesate, Z.A Maxfield, P.A Brown, Allison Wonderland, Erastes, Zoe Nichols and Cassidy Ryan, Emma Collingwood, Mallory Path, Jerry L. Wheeler, Moondancer Drake, Fiona Glass, Lee Rowan.

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# **From Reader Review I Do: An Anthology in Support of Marriage Equality for online ebook**

## **Aleksandr Voinov says**

Nice collection; I bought it to read some things of writers I hadn't checked out before. "Snow Queen" by Erastes was my absolute favourite. What a story. The rest was solid to good.

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## **Jaime says**

Let me just say, this is one anthology I thoroughly enjoyed. There wasn't a story in it I didn't like, and that is unusual. The cause is an important one, and I'm pleased to recommend this book to any m/m romance reader.

You can see my review of the whole book at Dark Diva Reviews

<http://ddrreviews.blogspot.com/2009/1...>

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## **Elisa Rolle says**

It took me two days to read this anthology and not since it wasn't interesting, but only since it's very long, so, if you like me usually don't like anthologies since the story are not long enough, you will not have the same problem with this one.

The stories inside it are very different, most of the authors I know, and some confirmed my good opinion on them and some surprised me, but always in a good way.

The Lindorm's Twin by Tracey Pennington (m/m): This is a fantasy tale that reminds me a very happy memory, a book of fairy tales that weren't so fair, if you think well at them. The tales passed mouth to mouth, from town to town, are dark and bloody, and not always with a "disney" happily ever after. Stefan is a fair prince of a fairy tale kingdom, but his parents didn't tell him that he was not the first born; he is the second on a pair of twin, but the other son was not a "normal" baby, it was a lindorm, and when Stefan is in age to marry, the lindorm pretends to have the right to marry first, since he is the first born. And so from beloved prince, Stefan finds himself without family and kingdom, and shelter in the arms of Andor, another dispossessed prince, another man who suffered due to a wicked spell.

Desire and Disguise by Alex Beecroft (m/m): A little historical tale, but not a romance. Robert is deeply in love with his wife Lydia, even if really I don't know if he is more in love with her or with her body. Anyway, when Lydia found out she is pregnant and for all the pregnancy and also after, she refuses the access to her body to Robert, and he, worn out by desire, at the end searches solace with a demi-monde, or at least what he believes to be a woman of easy virtue... only to find out that he is no woman, but Mitchell, a man he also knows (when not dressed like a woman). Robert will learn that not all he believes is correct, and that the world is not black and white, and that maybe, he would be safer at home with his wife.

The Roaming Heart by Charlie Cochrane (m/m): Alasdair and Toby are the gold boys of the English movie industry at the beginning of the twenty century. All the fans wondering who will be their next conquest, the magazine would love to find something naughty about them, but no, they seem to be the perfect men, even if maybe with a soft point for women. What all the world doesn't know, is that Alasdair and Toby found their love, but not outside their bond, and what links them is not only a deep friendship. I like a lot this story since it has a very nice taste, a joy of life and the desire for something new and daring that often I found in tales setting in this period.

Outed by Clare London (m/m): Rob and Guy live together, without flaunting it, but also without hiding. People around don't ask and they don't tell, since the innocent remark of an eighty dear woman (not so innocent maybe) sanctions what all know. And now the two can finally flaunt, if they want.

Lust in Translation by Storm Grant (m/m): Tyler is a cop who is having a crap night. Justin is a man who doesn't know what he is having, since he is lost in drugs he didn't know he was taking. When Tyler stops Justin on the street, he thinks the man to be a rent boy, but since it's raining, and the department has other things to do, and Tyler is not on duty, why not taking the man at home with him? and when they are warm and comfortable, why not having a bit of fun? Problem is that Tyler is allergic to any drugs, and thanks to a broken condom... well let us say that he "shares" Justin's essence. From a one night stand to something more is only a brief path, in a very nice and mostly funny story.

Making Memory by Lisabet Sarai (f/f): Nicole needs good memories and Maggie has plenty to share. Two women, momentarily alone, share a sweet night of talking and something more, but for now it's not the starting point for a new life together, maybe only a nice direction toward a better life with a different perspective.

Swansong by Sharon Maria Bidwell (m/m): Richard lives in a big house full of memories of his late wife and Neil thinks that it's time for him to move on... above all since Neil is now part of Richard's life. Neil is not demanding, he is only a comforting presence that helps Richard to take the necessary steps, not only regarding his home but also his life, even his sex life. Neil is always there, always with a gentle smile, and Richard knows that he is right, it's time for them to give new life and happy memories to that big house.

Finally Forever by Jeanne Barrack (m/m): a very funny and tender telephone call between Manny and Rafe, long distance lovers that finally will move together: from utility to the big question, LOVE, Manny and Rafe check the list for the recipe of how to build a perfect life together.

Code of Honour by Marquesate (m/m): Joe and Roux, legionnaires and lovers, show that once a soldier, you are always a soldier, even in your private life. And so Joe, that is Roux's subordinate, at first follows Roux's rule, like a good soldier, but it's not love since the day that Joe will learn that, in love there are no rule. Joe is young and not so steady on his feet; he has a lot to learn, not only as a soldier. Roux is more experienced and willing to share his knowledge with Joe. Maybe at first it's only lust, but with time, both men will discover that also for them there is a change to be happy and in love.

Tango and Temptation by ZA Maxfield (m/m): Gabriel teaches tango to the future brides and grooms, eight lessons and they will be perfect on their wedding day. It's not expected, and also quite a disaster, that Gabriel falls in love with Xander, one of the groom, above all since Gabriel really believes in love and family and all, and Xander has no intention to break up with his future spouse... but the ballroom is a sly devil, and a move here, a slow dance there, and a near proximity that allows Gabriel to "feel" something he is not suppose to feel, and Xander plans maybe have to be revised...

The Mistake by P.A. Brown (m/m): Very nice little story about a young guy, Rusty, who finds himself in a very bad situation and of the big but good cop who helps him. Rusty is not an hustler, but to be hungry is not good, and when he is offered a lot of money for a night, well, let say the pags decide for him. Obviously is not a situation fated to end in a good way if not for the cavalry that arrives in his rescue, a big knight in shining armor named Hank. From letting someone having his way with him for money, to almost offer himself to Hank is a short distance, and this time the right decision also.

Holy Macaroni (and Cheese) by Allison Wonderland (f/f): for Teri and Ariel marriage was not an hard decision, at six years old they were very firm in their decision. Confirm it in the later years maybe was harder, but they manage. And nor Teri or Ariel ever regretted that long time ago children ceremony, that would be glad to have also now.

The Snow Queen by Erastes (m/m): Josh lost his lover Sam and he is not sure to be ready to love again. He is cold and the cold outside well reflects his mood. But then he meets Sean and his daughter Bess, and maybe a sparks of light enter the icy prison around his heart. Open up, let the ice melt... maybe is not a bad idea. Erastes almost surprised me with this story: cute little kids and happy penguins in the snow? I was almost expecting for an Harlequin type of ending, with a commitment ceremony and the little daughter with the pillow and the rings on it...

Better Than Beautiful by Zoe Nichols & Cassidy Ryan (f/f): Charlotte is the famous top model and Becca her little secret. Becca is always there, always supporting, always waiting for Charlotte to be ready to be off the scene, no more available to all the world, but finally only her. But Charlotte fears the day in which the world will no more see her, since she is a model, and being beautiful is the only thing she always did good. It's up to Becca convinces her that she is better than beautiful.

Semi-detached by Emma Collingwood (m/m): James and Thomas have a real strange relationship; James is an apparently happy and openly gay man, with a beautiful apartment and friends and comfort life. Thomas is an average man who said he is not gay and neither bisexual, he only loves James, and well, even if James is a man, that doesn't mean he is gay. How they met I don't know (even I'm very curious), but they seem to have a pretty ordinary life, they seem happy, but maybe James is afraid of the day when he will ask something more to Thomas, something that maybe the man is not ready to give him... and maybe Thomas will surprise him.

Rules of the Game by Mallory Path (m/m): Charlie plays along the rules, and since Noah prefers to be a top, Charlie never asked him to be a bottom. But Charlie is wondering, if maybe, sometime the rules can be changed...

Templeton's In Love by Jerry L. Wheeler (m/m): A very nice tale, both sad and tender. Tom and Stan were happy together, but they were also young and careless. When life asked its toll, it was heavy and neither of them was strong enough to save what they have. Regrets and remorses didn't help, and years later Tom is still wondering how it could be if... One thing they had in common, Carmine's supper Club and Ristorante and Templeton who sang there for his lover Taylor. But Taylor died and Templeton's songs with him. So when Tom sees that Templeton is singing again, he thinks that maybe Templeton is in love again, and if he can still love, maybe also Tom...

True Love by Moondancer Drake (f/f): Shona and Kai are finally having their baby, and this gives all another perspective in what they believe. In different way, both of them want to shout to the world that they are in love, Kai wants to marry Shona with a big ceremony, and Shona wants to have her name on their son's birth certificate. For now it's only a dream, but if something changes...

Salad Days by Fiona Glass (m/m): A little family scene, Tim and Jake, living together. Jake is a tornado, always chatting, always moving. Tim is quiet and shy, barely speaking... but Tim is always thinking, always wanting to say something, that instead he takes aback, fearing to upset Jake. But a stupid accident breaks lose Tim's restraints and for once he will let Jake without words.

Wedding Announcement by Lee Rowan (m/m): barely a scene, actually a telephone call, with two characters I know well, Kevin and John from Walking Wounded. In my previous review of that book, I stated that, according to me, Kevin had some unresolved trouble with his father and this influenced his present life. Here probably there is a confirmation of my idea, with Kevin that has to find the courage to call his father to tell his that he is having a commitment ceremony with the man he loves.

All profits from the sale of this anthology will be donated to the Lambda Legal Defense to fight Prop 8 in support of marriage equality for all.

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/1934531707/?...>

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### **Anna says**

For anyone who's not aware, *I Do!* is an anthology of LGBT stories, and full proceeds to Lambda Legal Fund's fight for marriage equality.

Like a lot of other people, I'm not always a fan of anthologies. For a typical volume with 20 short stories, you'll find a couple that are wonderful, a couple that are appallingly bad, and the rest somewhere in the middle, a big lump of mediocrity. It's annoying to shell out full price for a book you know it's likely you'll only enjoy a small portion of, so with a few exceptions, I tend to shy away from anthologies.

This was one of those exceptions. And you know what? It's amazing. Really, there wasn't a single story of the twenty presented here I didn't enjoy in some way. Of course I have my favourites (and a couple of authors I have to look up to see what else they've written I can glom), but each one is a worthy tale in its own right, and as a collection it's... I said amazing already, right? Well, it's still as amazing as it was two sentences again.

The stories in the anthology cover the gamut, showing snapshots of just about every type of love story imaginable. First love, reunited love, forbidden love, experimental love, comfortably settled love... there are modern settings, historical settings, and fantasy settings. There's boy-on-boy and girl-on-girl. Some of the stories made me laugh, some made me tear up, and some just gave me the warm fuzzies. Some even made me stop and reflect how wonderful it is to love in a time and place where everyone has the freedom to marry who they want. Bottom line? I responded emotionally to this anthology.

Also, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the beautiful way the book is set up. The table of contents not only lists off the title and author of each story, but lets you know if the story is m/m or f/f and the "heat" degree, whether it's sweet, spicy, or scorching. So basically, readers can pick whatever they're in the mood for or skip stories that might be a little hotter than they're comfortable with (although seriously, anyone skipping stories is missing out).

It's been awhile since I've picked up a book that absorbed me to the point where I was putting other things off so I could keep reading, so imagine my surprise when an anthology, of all books, was one that did just

that.

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## **Marlobo says**

The Lindorm's Twin by Tracey Pennington - 2 stars

Desire and Disguise by Alex Beecroft - 3 stars

The Roaming Heart by Charlie Cochrane - 2 stars

Outed by Clare London - 4 stars.

*«Couldn't social acceptability be achieved with discreet familiarity, rather than wearing a lurid slogan on a tight T-shirt?» <3*

Lust in Translation by Storm Grant - 3 stars

Making Memory by Lisabet Sarai - 2 stars

Swansong by Sharon Maria Bidwell - 3 stars

Finally Forever by Jeanne Barrack - 2 stars

## **Code of Honour by Marquesate - 4,5 stars**

Tango and Temptation by Z.A. Maxfield - 1 star

The Mistake by P.A. Brown - 2, 5 stars

Holy Macaroni by Allison Wonderland - 3,5 stars

The Snow Queen by Erastes - 1 star

Better Than Beautiful by Zoe Nichols & Cassidy Ryan - 2 stars

Semi-detached by Emma Collingwood - 3 stars

Rules of the Game by Mallory Path - 3,5 stars

Templeton's in Love by Jerry L. Wheeler - 3 stars

True Love by Moondancer Drake - 3 stars

Salad Days by Fiona Glass - 1,5 stars

Wedding Announcement by Lee Rowan - 2 stars

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### **OkayKim says**

There's a couple of stories in this that getting the 4 star rating. The rest were 2 or 3 star rating.

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### **Mara Ismine says**

4.5 stars for the stories and the other 0.5 for the superb editing and skill of finding that many good tales to put in one book. This is probably the best anthology I have read.

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### **Amber says**

Like all anthologies this one was a mix bag of stories some good some bad. The biggest thing I noticed and effected my feelings about some of the stories is that alot of them didn't fit the theme or barely fit. I expected to see stories about couples getting married, fighting to get married, or at least be established couple that were forced not to. Many spent time with other peoples marriages or their past straight marriages. There were even some that were brief encounters and one night stand stories that I felt had no place in this anthology. To me that was the biggest disappointment of this anthology.

(view spoiler)

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## Montana says

Varying quality in the stories, as with nearly any anthology. No real clunkers, though, and a couple that are exceptionally good. I skipped a couple of stories because I haven't been in the mood for f/f lately, another because I'm not much on fantasy, and didn't finish one that was stylistically not to my tastes. Exceptional stories are bolded, and all are individually rated on a scale of one to five stars.

"The Lindorm's Twin" by Tracey Pennington (UNREAD)

"Desire and Disguise" by Alex Beecroft (\*\*\*\*)

**"The Roaming Heart" by Charlie Cochrane (\*\*\*\*\*)**

"Outed" by Clare London (\*\*\*\*\*)

"Lust in Translation" by Storm Grant (\*\*\*)

"Making Memory" by Lisabet Sarai (UNREAD)

"Swansong" by Sharon Maria Bidwell (\*\*\*)

"Finally Forever" by Jeanne Barrack (DNF)

**"Code of Honour" by Marquesate (\*\*\*\*\*)**

**"Tango and Temptation" by Z.A. Maxfield (\*\*\*\*\*)**

"The Mistake" by P.A. Brown (\*\*\*\*\*)

"Holy Macaroni (and Cheese)" by Allison Wonderland (UNREAD)

**"The Snow Queen" by Erastes (\*\*\*\*\*)**

"Better Than Beautiful" by Zoe Nichols & Cassidy Ryan (UNREAD)

"Semi-detached" by Emma Collingwood (\*\*\*\*\*)

"Rules of the Game" by Mallory Path (\*\*\*)

"Templeton's in Love" by Jerry L. Wheeler (\*\*\*\*\*)

"True Love" by Moondancer Drake (UNREAD)

"Salad Days" by Fiona Glass (\*\*\*)

"Wedding Announcement" by Lee Rowan (\*\*\*\*\*)

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## Alex says

Stars: 3.5/5

### Overall

An enjoyable mix of stories with a medley from fairy tales to bitter endings, it's definitely worth picking up, if only to grab a few stories from favorite authors. Some stories are stronger than others, per the norm for anthologies, but overall a good bunch. (Note, I only reviewed the M/M books below.)

### **The Lindorm's Twin** by Tracey Pennington

An OK story that weaves the tales of classic fairy tales with its own spin. An extended tale that combines multiple tales, the ride was a little long, but fairly enjoyable, especially for those who enjoy Grimm-like stories.

### **Desire and Disguise** by Alex Beecroft

This is an interesting story that left me pleasantly surprised, despite the slightly bittersweet ending. It has

interesting characters, a fresh plot, and while it has a few after-school special moments, they fit into the story and don't detract from the overall telling.

**The Roaming Heart** by Charlie Cochrane

A short historical piece that gives a taste of the story and a happy ending without going on too long or too in depth. Short and sweet without much filling.

**Outed** by Clare London

A fun story about a young man who isn't out but isn't hiding his partner either and a memorable celebratory tea with his Auntie where she accidentally spills the beans without realizing it and everyone's reactions. Cute, funny, and short, this is a nice glimpse into a family.

**Lust in Translation** by Storm Grant

Explosively cute and funny, I giggled my way through this one as I watched these two men fumble their way from drugged to dopey.

**Swansong** by Sharon Maria Bidwell

A sweet, slightly sad tale of moving on after a loved one has died and being honest with yourself.

**Finally Forever** by Jeanne Barrack

Two Jewish lovers talk on the phone, planning their move and wedding. A sweet snapshot of their lives and love for one another.

**Code of Honour** by Marquesate

A fun, sexy story of two legion men in France and the struggles of one to accept who he is. While intense and hot, there was definitely a level of depth to the story too.

**Tango and Temptation** by ZA Maxfield

Ohhh, sexy dancing, sharp barbs, and fake accents make this a playful and sweet story that makes you smile, even if you're rolling your eyes. Fun characters, simple plot, and quick tongues make this piece come together.

**The Mistake** by PA Brown

Funny and cute with a touch of sweetness. I found the sex to be a little porn star for me, but if you like big black cock--I mean cops!--then it will be right up your...alley.

**The Snow Queen** by Erastes

Wow. Beautiful and heart-breaking. Depressing. Painfully honest in its reality.

**Semi-detached** by Emma Collingwood

A nice little story, just a slice of life although it did very little to move me.

**Rules of the Game** by Mallory Path

A short, sexy little piece about two committed partners who switch things up for the evening.

**Templeton's in Love** by Jerry Wheeler

And interesting story, but the characters didn't really grab me, although I liked some of the messages and the overall atmosphere.

### **Salad Days** by Fiona Glass

A tender story about a man who constantly mentions his ex and the current boyfriend who keeps his jealousy quiet--all while making a salad.

### **Wedding Announcement** by Lee Rowan

A quick end to the anthology, this one is OK, another slice of life as a man calls his father to tell him about his civil ceremony.

Be sure to check out my other reviews on my blog.

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### **Sol says**

For an anthology with the theme of marriage, this one was rather disappointing. I think only two couples actually got married, the rest of the stories referenced someone's marriage/wedding and some of them completely missed the point of the theme. My favorites were **Tango and Temptation** by ZA Maxfield (funny characters and interesting plot if a bit cliche) and **Holy Macaroni (and Cheese)** by Allison Wonderland (cute, simple plot). I absolutely hated **Desire and Disguise** by Alex Beecroft (bad plot, bad characters. Just bad).

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### **Rosie says**

A three star overall rating, but a 5 star rating for 'Code of Honour' by Marquesate.

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### **Kassa says**

This is a twenty story anthology that spans genres from fantasy to contemporary involving men and women from just about every religion, race, and sexuality. All proceeds are donated to Lambda Legal fund, an organization that is working for civil rights of lesbians, gay men and people with HIV/AIDS. The anthology came about with the outcry over proposition 8, which was a recently passed California law that made gay marriage illegal.

The opening fantasy story provides a high level of entertainment and imagination to start the anthology and that level is continued throughout to the end. While I certainly had favorites among the stories, this rare collection offers no huge misses. Each story is a glimpse into the lives of everyday people and their struggles through relationships. From first meetings to long time loves to loss and breakups, each story is a wonderful short treat of romance. There is a mixture of m/m with f/f and the importance of marriage as an option is highlighted several times. Some stories certainly stood out amongst the crowd in both positive and negative ways.

Unfortunately "Lust in Translation" by Storm Grant didn't work for me which I was really disappointed about. With such a quirky and unique voice to her writing, I really want to like this author. Sadly, while the premise of this story was fun and entertaining – a cop having a bad night mistakes a drugged professor for a rent boy – the characters fell flat for me and the story went on longer than most. Perhaps because the story fell in between a quick glimpse and a longer, developed short story that somewhere along the line that

middle length did a disservice to the story.

However, for one maybe miss, there were many wonderful and charming stories. Particular favorites of mine were The Roaming Heart by Charlie Cochrane (m/m), a historical about two British actors who were witty and delightful to read. Outed by Clare London (m/m) was incredibly funny and I could vividly imagine the matriarch of the family “accidentally” outing Rob and Guy even though the men weren’t trying to hide their relationship. Semi-detached by Emma Collingwood (m/m) had me wanting to read more about these interesting characters and how they met, did they move in together and get married? Although one character was a “gay for you” that usually doesn’t work, Thomas was likable and his love for James evident.

My absolute favorite of the group was The Snow Queen by Erastes (m/m) featuring Josh who is trying to recover from losing his lover when he meets Sean and Sean’s daughter Bess at the London Zoo. The attraction and chemistry is strong enough to tempt both men out of their safe, comfort zones to pursue the other man. Unfortunately fears and old hurts surface, ending the relationship before it could begin and ultimately Josh encases his heart in ice against the pain of rejection and loss. A beautifully told story, I was absolutely left wanting more and wish this is expanded in the future. The fantasy or paranormal aspect was somewhat confusing due to the lack of explanation but the writing and characterization made up for that. This was my first time reading anything by the author and if this is any example, I’m eager to read more.

Due to the variety of the anthology there is sure to be something for every romance lover. There are fantasy, historical, contemporary settings mixed with action, humor, heartbreak, child birth and throughout each there is a distinct thread of romance. Some stories are longer than others but each is a well written introduction to engaging characters that involve you in a snippet of their lives. From sweet romance to scorching sex, the heat level varies but surprisingly keeps you interested from story to story. In an anthology this long with as many varying voices and styles, it’s rare to have such a solid group of authors and stories. Combined with the excellent cause the proceeds support, this is a definite buy for all romance lovers.

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### **Lee Rowan says**

As one of the editorial selection committee, I can rave about all the stories in here but my own... and I do. ALL profits go to Lambda Legal to support marriage equality for ALL adult human beings.

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### **Augusta Li says**

I am not going to write any more reviews for books. As an author, I can't say anything bad about somebody else's work (even if it's justified), because I know how much time and energy went into it. Therefore I will only rate books here that I enjoyed. In the case of books I didn't enjoy so much, I will do as my parents advise and, if I don't have anything nice to say, I'll say nothing at all.

This anthology is great though: not a bad story among the bunch, not even a mediocre one. They're all brilliant, diverse, and enjoyable.

I'll still review video games, manga and anime on my blog, if you're interested.

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