



Firebirds Rising: An Anthology of Original Science Fiction and Fantasy

Sharyn November (Editor) , Francesca Lia Block (Contributor) , Diana Wynne Jones (contributor) , Ellen Klages (contributor) , Sharon Shinn (contributor) , Patricia A. McKillip (contributor) , Emma Bull (contributor) , Kelly Link (contributor) , more... Tamora Pierce (contributor) , Nina Kiriki Hoffman (contributor) , Alison Goodman (contributor) , Charles de Lint (contributor) , Kara Dalkey (contributor) , Alan Dean Foster (contributor) , Carol Emshwiller (contributor) , Tanith Lee (contributor) , Pamela Dean (contributor) ...less

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This star-studded follow-up to the acclaimed "Firebirds" contains riveting, original stories by some of today's masters of science fiction and fantasy, including Francesca Lia Block, Alan Dean Foster, Diana Wynne Jones, and Tanith Lee.

Firebirds Rising: An Anthology of Original Science Fiction and Fantasy Details

Date : Published April 6th 2006 by Firebird (first published June 17th 2005)

ISBN : 9780142405499

Author : Sharyn November (Editor) , Francesca Lia Block (Contributor) , Diana Wynne Jones (contributor) , Ellen Klages (contributor) , Sharon Shinn (contributor) , Patricia A. McKillip (contributor) , Emma Bull (contributor) , Kelly Link (contributor) , more... Tamora Pierce (contributor) , Nina Kiriki Hoffman (contributor) , Alison Goodman (contributor) , Charles de Lint (contributor) , Kara Dalkey (contributor) , Alan Dean Foster (contributor) , Carol Emshwiller (contributor) , Tanith Lee (contributor) , Pamela Dean (contributor) ...less

Format : Hardcover 544 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Short Stories, Science Fiction, Young Adult, Anthologies, Fiction

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From Reader Review Firebirds Rising: An Anthology of Original Science Fiction and Fantasy for online ebook

HP Norimatsu says

In total I would give this anthology a 3.0 because as with all anthologies there were gems and coals—so let's try to hit it in between (ish). Now, this is my honest to heaven rating for each individual work considering its memorability, plot, story, and execution.

(*) on memorable works

Huntress by Tamora Peirce – 3/5 (*)

This is darker than I expected from Tamora Peirce but then again I've only read one work of hers and that was back when I was a child (faded and I can't even remember what went on). Still, I did enjoy the darkness in the story though there could've been more to it. The modern goddess was definitely a surprise, not because I didn't see her coming (pretty sure we all knew that there was magic somewhere and was just waiting for it to happen), but because she didn't behave as expected—expected her to be merciful and kind. Then again she is the Huntress. I guess I expected the heroine to be the one to become the huntress and not an actual Huntress to appear, still I like it because in a way parts of it was a surprise in a box—worms or chocolates, both interesting. It's not the best story in the anthology and it doesn't leave you with a good feeling but it definitely is memorable.

Unwrapping by Nina Kiriki Hoffman – 2.5/5

Simple story, and is probably one of the shortest works in the anthology. It was likeable enough, the vibe is different from the others, and I do remember it. It's too short that nothing really changes from the start to the end—yeah there was a revelation but it wasn't surprising at all. I would like to read the longer works of this author as to better judge her works—I don't think this story will be enough really. Her style here is simple to read, has the hint of quirkiness that I like, and flowed well.

The Real Thing by Alison Goodman – 4 (maybe even 4.5) /5 (*)

Alison Goodman is the main reason I chose to buy this anthology. I was immediately smitten by her Eon and Eona duology—well built fantasy world with memorable characters contained within the confines of two books, SOLD! I found out upon reading this story that it's actually an extra piece of Goodman's Singing the Dogstar Blues, which I haven't read but now would love to. I wanted to read more of her world, and I'm kinda disappointed that I don't know what happens next now that the gates of hell have been opened and the rift between comp kids and non-comps have gotten wider; I found out that she's not continuing the story and that Dogstar ended somewhere before this one started and that the issues presented won't be addressed any time soon—my heart is sad now. Very good execution, good simple plotting (clean in technique no clutter though she does have some jargon), and I like how she handles the issues she presented.

Little (Grrl) Lost by Charles de Lint - 1/5

Angst everywhere, and it wasn't a kind of angst that was projected well. It was more of "meh." I see the very elementary "moral lesson" of the story here but it wasn't written well, it wasn't memorable either. From title to end I disliked this story. It could've been a good retelling of the little creature's of Gulliver's or the oh so

many stories written about little people but it falls dead flat. “Contemporary Lilliputians” that could’ve been something but we focus on this other girl instead. I rarely dislike stories but this one was just plain and more than a tad bit boring.

I'll Give You My Word by Diana Wynne Jones – 3.5/5 (*)

I fun little story full of big words—I tried to get my dictionary for some of the worlds but ended up giving up a few pages in. Kinda middle grade but I do like that this is one of the three stories with male main characters in it. It’s quirky and very Diana Wynne Jones—meaning, very colorful story with a lighter flare than the rest making it standout. Execution is good, and quite memorable. Not the main course but a good palette cleanser.

In the House of the Seven Librarians by Ellen Klages – 4.5 /5 (*)

I liked the idea of the library being a home base, libraries always felt magical and it was a good setting for this seven mothers and their one daughter. This story’s overall aura wasn’t the best, it made the readers feel stuffed, suffocated, and a little bit caged—and I think this is brilliant because this is exactly how our heroine feels. I love the library but imagine growing up there, living there for heaven knows how long, and that’s basically the equivalent of being grounded for 17 years. You’d want to break free and that was the natural course of events. Good literature doesn’t necessarily have to be warm or comfortable it can be disturbing and suffocating, and it doesn’t need to cater to all likeable characters either. A good 4.5 for this one.

Wintermoon Wish by Sharon Shinn – 3.5 to 4 /5 (*)

A simple and warm story whose concept is not really new but is executed well. I wanted to know more about what happens next—what about the other payments? What I didn’t like was that I did not find much magic elements in this story (at all, aside from the wish thing and the other place faraway). Still, I enjoyed it. Almost like reading a traditional fairytale—and I’m a sucker for that.

The Wizards of Perfil by Kelly Link – 4/5 (*)

I want to read more. The characters are definitely, DEFINITELY not the most likeable characters and that’s what makes it interesting. The story is really nice—I can see this being turned to a movie—and you can clearly see the character development. I was definitely put off when I realized I was going to bear with the horrible girl but I ended up appreciating—not quite liking—her. I do think this would’ve been better if it were longer (a novella or novel maybe) just so Ms. Link can fix the execution a little bit and develop the story and characters more (we didn’t hear much from Onion and he came out flatter than desired). This has so much potential, Anne McCaffrey-eque, I like it now but it can be better (way better).

Jack O'Lantern by Patricia A. McKillip - 3/5

I’m sorry but I hate that title. It could’ve been “Will of the Wisp” really cause that would make more sense. I did like it but the magic part needs to be extended, it was so brief, it flickered on and then off so fast (and if this has been the intended effect it didn’t work as well as desired most probably). I like how the issues of that society were presented, how different the two girls were in terms of upbringing and treatment, and I swear I wanted to hit her parents for putting her “in the right place.” I just wish the last few parts were executed better—I wish there was more Will. If it was just extended a little bit it just know it would fantastic. There was just something missing here that maybe 2 or more pages could’ve fixed. Otherwise enjoyable.

Quill by Carol Emshwiller - 3/5 (*)

This story has “could’ve been more” stamped all over it. Good build-up but then after a while it just went haywire. The execution got foggy in the end. And I really wish there was a detailed description of the creature rather than just “it’s the most beautiful thing” or that “it looks like a feathered dinosaur”—something a bit more creative. I smell so much potential in this work that by the end of it I was mostly disappointed. I like vagueness and ambiguity, it adds a mysterious flare to stories (thought provoking effect) and there are parts where Emshwiller used that well but there are also parts where it’s just too foggy to see anything of value (even Joseph Conrad would’ve scratched his head). Still the potential is there so 3. Oh, on that note I’m pretty sure it would’ve been better as a novel, which would’ve given Emshwiller more room to let her creativity and imagination roam, to deepen the flavor more.

Blood Roses by Francesca Lia Block - 1/5

No. Just no. I tend to like dream-based stories because they have this eerie feeling to them but the written work has to have more than just the dream, it needs an actual plot. It’s empty! Things are happening but they don’t make sense no matter how many times you read it. The best explanation to make sense of this is to say that it’s modernist, a dream really won’t make sense, but that would be so far the truth that I can’t even—no. I mean it could be, but still it lacks in so many things (organic unity, technique, and plotting) and I just can’t forgive it.

Hives by Kara Dalkey – 4.5/5 (*)

Very, very interesting. Of course the premise of the story is far from original (technology used wrong, questionable justice system, mean girls turned murderer) but the plotting and technique used is spot on. The 0.5 deductions is because it leaves you wanting more of it and that could be good but I see it as an unsatisfied hunger. It’s definitely sci-fi but not the sci-fi of the distant future but one that is—could be—only years away. It’s a futuristic story that is still recognizable and that makes it cling to your skin, a buzzing warning even. Will definitely consider reading more of her works.

Perception by Alan Dean Forrester – 2/5

It dragged on really. I wished it focused more on the relationship between human and non-human assistant. It could’ve been interesting but the execution was lack luster. The reversal in the end is the only reason I didn’t give this a 1.

The House on the Planet by Tanith Lee – 3.5/5 (*)

It was good, and then it got really good, and then it fell short. The house was a good tie, it didn’t need to be a deeper bond or whatever BUT that ending was just—typical, flat, almost like a teenage-girl-writing-in-her-diary-esque. I still like it though but that ending removed a lot of points, really that last story offsets the flow of the other two. I think it was the way the “lesson” was delivered, too upfront, it felt like this, “this is what you get from this story now use it and be a better human”—preachy. If she had used a subtler or a more seamless technique it could’ve gone for 4-5.

Cousins by Pamela Dean - 3/5

This could have been really good if it was shorter maybe or if the pacing was faster and more things happened in the span of the short story. It could’ve been a knockout but the voices came out too late, and the question of why they have to leave is left unsolved (why of all people would it be dangerous for them? It

needs more flesh). If the author wishes to keep this pacing then maybe she should lengthen the story instead, it really felt like a fragment of a novel—a chapter one might not invest much to if he or she didn't know the context of the world. And yes I know this is suppose to be a short on a world Dean has created already but as with all short stories it has to be at least (even just a little bit) self contained (like with "The Real Thing" or "Wintermoon Wish"). I liked it though despite all things, and I might (eventually) read Dean's works.

What Used To Be Good Still Is by Emma Bull – 3.5 /5

I like this it's simple and sad and windswept, I think the characters are realistic enough but I just wanted to know how the magic element adds up. Magic needs a bit of logic in it too no? It could be seen as speculative fiction because of the lack of explanation but it wasn't really hard on straight in the heart fantasy. It felt more like a contemporary read for the most part, and then she turned into a mountain—I wish how or at least the traces of how was given to us or implied at least. Still a good 3.5.

Layne Fowler says

I definitely recommend this book to anybody! Especially if they like the Sci-Fi Genre. This book isn't just one storyline though it is a collection of Sci-Fi short stories. You will be captivated by stories like "In The House Of The Seven Librarians" where a young orphan girl is raised by seven librarians and surprisingly a magic library. Or if you want it to have more Science Fiction in it, read a story like "The Real Thing." In that story the girl protagonist Joss and the human race lives side by side with aliens, but not everybody sees them as equals. Joss does and actually has a best friend name Mavkel who doesn't really approve of Joss' new boyfriend Kyle. So Mavkel tells Joss this and she pushes him away, telling him to get out. But when a romantic midnight walk turns bad, and Joss needs Mavkel more than ever will he come to her? You'll have to read "The Real Thing" in Sharyn November's amazing book "Firebirds Rising"!

Nikki says

Firebirds Rising is an anthology full of fantasy and SF stories, mostly for a young adult audience. They're all by different authors, so naturally, some are hits and some are misses. I encountered quite a few new authors here, though I'm not really eager to follow up most of them.

The first story, 'Huntress', is by Tamora Pierce. It wasn't really an encouraging start, for me. The mythological references could be interesting, but the whole idea of the story is that a goddess comes along and punishes some teenagers who were killing people by... killing them. This could've been well-played, with a bit more expansion -- a bit more attention to detail, like discussion of the kind of goddess she is. That goddesses can be both kind and cruel isn't a new idea, either, and there was a bit of it in there, but there was very little judgement of the eye-for-an-eye mentality, and Pierce's author's note suggested her complete acceptance of it.

'Unwrapping', by Nina Kiriki Hoffman, has some nice imagery and such, but doesn't really go deep.

'The Real Thing', by Alison Goodman, is more SFish than the first two. Very much from an already established world, but I caught on quickly enough, and rather enjoyed it. I'd like to read more by her. I liked

the positive approach to sexuality, too -- something about it sat right with me.

Charles de Lint's story, 'Little (Grll) Lost', kind of annoyed me. It was basically *The Borrowers*, only modernised. And not as charming.

Diana Wynne Jones' story, 'I'll Give You My Word', was quite fun, and funny. Perhaps a little predictable, for her, but cute. And I learnt some new words!

I liked 'In The House of the Seven Librarians', by Ellen Klages. Probably because I love the idea of being raised in a library. There isn't much more to it than that, I suppose, but I still liked it.

Sharon Shinn's 'Wintermoon Wish' is quite interesting because it deals with a fantasy equivalent of Christmas. Maybe it's mostly fandom where this kind of thing tends to go wrong, but writers who remember that Christmas isn't universal are awesome. I didn't like the characters much, though.

'The Wizards of Perfil', by Kelly Link, reminded me of something else. Maybe Ursula Le Guin, but I had that feeling a couple of times with this anthology. Anyway, it's quite enjoyable, but the characters are not terribly lovable at first, if at all.

'Jack O'Lantern', by Patricia A. McKillip, was kind of interesting, but I wished it'd worked more on the sense of the uncanny. It wasn't memorable.

Carol Emshwiller's 'Quill' was a bit different; something about the narrative threw me, and the ending was unsatisfying.

Francesca Lia Block's 'Blood Roses' just struck me as mostly pointless. Stories transcribed straight from dreams do not tend to thrill me. What seems deep and meaningful in a dream isn't always when you wake up.

Kara Dalkey's 'Hives' is kind of interesting, but at the same time it's nothing new. The old themes of Techonology! Is! Scary! and teenage girls are mean.

Alan Dean Foster's 'Perception' is fun mostly because of the flip at the end. Haaa.

'The House on the Planet' by Tanith Lee could maybe have been tighter -- something about it was off. The three threads seemed superficially, not deeply, linked. I did like it, though.

I liked Pamela Dean's 'Cousins' quite a lot -- again, it reminded me of Ursula Le Guin's writing, somehow. I liked the culture there, woven into the story.

'What Used To Be Good Still Is', by Emma Bull, is really enjoyable. I like the central idea, and the narrator was kind of perfect for it -- I didn't like him as much as I liked the central character, but he wasn't awful, either, and he was just the right level of understanding/not understanding.

As a whole, I enjoyed the anthology: I should read more anthologies, because I like the way they collect together lots of authors. I suppose I treat them a little bit like tester pots.

Deborah O'Carroll says

November 29, 2017

Re-read just Wintermoon Wish, possibly my favorite short story ever, like I love to do each winter around this time of year. :)

A Christmas-esque holiday (Wintermoon) in a fantasy world, with dark night and glistening snow and sparks of a bonfire, moonlight and love and unexpected kindness, a cozy inn and a wreath filled with wishes for the new year, and a girl named Lirril who must confront her own self-centeredness when a young stranger named Jake finds his way to the inn's door one cold winter's day.

I love this short story so so much! ^_^ I keep this collection around just so I can re-read this particular short story. <3 Allow me to just hug it forever and a day.

"May all your Wintermoon wishes come true."

ORIGINAL REVIEW OF COLLECTION: READ 2013

Overall I was very disappointed with most of the stories in this collection (so 2-stars overall) but there were two that I loved, a couple others that were good, and a few tolerable ones.

5 stars - "A Wintermoon Wish" by Sharon Shinn was fabulous. One of my favorite short stories ever. The character Jake was fabulous. I loved this story a lot and though I'd never read her before, I now hope to read some of her other writings someday, preferably set in that world.

5 stars - "In the House of the Seven Librarians" by Ellen Klages was also wonderful. I loved the idea and the story was very well written and fun.

4 stars - "The House on the Planet" by Tanith Lee surprised me. I did not think I would like it as much because it's science fiction (I still prefer fantasy), plus I generally don't like stories that follow a few generations. But this story was actually rather amazing and I was surprised to find that I loved it too.

4 stars - "I'll Give You My Word" by Diana Wynne Jones--I've yet to meet (I mean... read) anything by Diana Wynne Jones that I didn't like, if not love. This was a fun story as well.

I give "Cousins" by Pamela Dean and "Little (Grrl) Lost" by Charles de Lint both 3 stars - I liked them.

So six of the sixteen stories were good to great, and I would like to reread them sometime. The rest... Some were okay, but a lot of them I just didn't like. I could tell they were very "well written" but that didn't stop me from hating the characters and/or the stories themselves, a lot of which were just too gross for me to like. Apparently current sci-fi/fantasy short stories are not my thing. (I might try out a couple of the authors' longer works though.)

Conclusion: I would say that most of the stories in this collection are not worth reading (which is something I

very rarely say about any story). And yet there are the ones I loved in it, however few. My advice is to read those six and leave the rest.

I feel rather as though this book is taking up precious space on my shelf. And yet I shall always be indebted to it for Jake and "Wintermoon Wish".

kvon says

Short stories (by favorite authors).

Most memorable to me were Jones 'I'll give you my word', Klages 'In the House of Seven Librarians' (great title too!), Link 'The wizards of Perfil' (which felt like a Jones story), and Bull 'What used to be good still is'.

Robyn says

I checked this out of the library for the Diana Wynne Jones story in it, but read the whole anthology. I'm not giving a star rating to each story, but I did keep a note of whether I felt positively or negatively toward each story when finished, just as I did with the first *Firebirds: An Anthology of Original Fantasy and Science Fiction*.

1. Huntress by Tamora Pierce +
2. Unwrapping by Nina Kiriki Hoffman +
3. The Real Thing by Alison Goodman +/-
4. Little (Grrrl) Lost by Charles de Lint +

5. I'll Give You My Word by Diana Wynne Jones + (I kept thinking as I was reading this that for certain Asperger's kids, this would be an especial treat. For the hero of the story to be the kid who doesn't communicate well, even with his own family, who says the unusual thing at the unexpected moment, that could be a real celebration. For myself, I appreciated the way the older brother worried but still cared and protected his challenging sibling.)

6. In the House of the Seven Librarians by Ellen Klages ++ (I cried. Twice.)
7. Wintermoon Wish by Sharon Shinn + (didn't think I would like it because of the main character's bad attitude, but it grew on me. I was annoyed at the placement of the ending, I felt it was cheating a bit, as the author set these 'challenges' for the male protagonist--a necklace out of icicles, etc.--and I wanted to know how he'd rise to them. The author ended before having to figure out how to write that)
8. The Wizards of Perfil by Kelly Link -
9. Jack O'Lantern by Patricia A. McKillip +
10. Quill by Carol Emshwiller -/+ (interesting, but it was clear from the start that there would be no happy ending, so I just read it filled with dread and wanting to get it over with)
11. Blood Roses by Francesca Lia Block +/-
12. Hives by Kara Dalkey - (very negative)
13. Perception by Alan Dean Foster - (when you know from the opening paragraph that it's a story about prejudice/racism and then have 17 pages of the main character exhibiting that intolerance before the final summing up about how false his perceptions were even to the last moment, it's not enjoyable. It's not even

really a story, it's a sermon. That's always a risk with scifi short stories, because scifi traditionally involves current societal themes that are 'safer' to address in exotic settings. A full-length novel has time to weave that sort of thing in gracefully, but a short story can be hard to fit a mask to. Also, I do not enjoy reading cruelty, and contempt is a real form of cruelty)

14. The House on the Planet by Tanith Lee +

15. Cousins by Pamela Dean +

16. What Used to Be Good Still Is by Emma Bull + (and a good one to end on)

I decided on a star rating for the entire previous anthology based on a numbers game, counting up how many stories left me with a positive feeling, how many with a negative, then thought about how well edited I felt the anthology was overall. Doing that again with this one, we have 10 fully positive, 3 fully negative, 2 mixed more positive than negative, 1 mixed more negative than positive. Being generous, that makes 12 positive to 4 negative. The arrangement of this one was better than the previous, especially considering how hard it is to place a minority scifi into a majority fantasy. There were no stories that made me stop and say "wait, this doesn't belong in this book at all!". And there were two stories that I immediately wanted to share with a friend. So overall 4 stars.

CuriousLibrarian says

I originally went in search of this book because a friend thought I would enjoy the story "In the House of the Seven Librarians," and told me that some of the other stories were "pretty good too." I picked it up and discovered that it was populated with some extremely well-known sf/fantasy authors! So I sat down to read the whole thing.

As in every anthology, there are some stories that are better than others, and some authors that I historically don't like. But I found one stand-out author whose work is new to me: Alison Goodman. And her story is apparently a side story from a previously published book. So, I will certainly be following up on that!

I really appreciated some of the choices that the editor, Sharyn November, made in putting this book together. She put the author bio and discussion of the story in the pages immediately following each story instead of the end of the book. Plus, she deliberately chose the order of the stories in such a way that you could read them in order if you so choose (which is my preferred method, and I know it puts me in the minority).

This is a YA book, and some of the stories are directly aimed at teens. But there is much here for an adult reader to savor as well if the YA stories are not your thing.

Highly recommended, and I will be checking out the other anthologies in this series.

Margaret says

Another excellent collection, just as good as the first one. I liked that several of the stories were SF -- I don't remember much, if any, SF in Firebirds (though I'm thinking I need to reread it), and one of the SF stories here, Alison Goodman's "The Real Thing", was one of my favorites of the collection. Other standouts for me were Diana Wynne Jones's "I'll Give You My Word", Ellen Klages's "In the House of the Seven Librarians"

(okay, yes, I'm a sucker for librarian stories), and Pamela Dean's "Cousins" (I really must hunt down and read some of the Liavek books).

Rhea says

While reading books, what are readers allowed to hope for?

And when the book promises something like this:

This star-studded follow-up to the acclaimed "Firebirds" contains riveting, original stories by some of today's masters of science fiction and fantasy.

and

What you hold in your hands is more than a book. It is a gateway between worlds - from deep space to Faerie to just around the corner. The seventeen authors who have contributed original stories to Firebirds Rising have won virtually every literary prize and made best-seller lists worldwide. These authors... have written singular stories that will capture readers and spark their imaginations.

Firebirds Rising proves once again that Firebird is more than simply just an imprint devoted to publishing the best science fiction and fantasy for teenagers and adults - it is a gather place for writers and reader, from teenage to adult, all over the world.(less)

Are they allowed to hope for something like this?

or something like this?

or even something like this?

especially when these stories are written by AWARD WINNING AUTHORS!?

Apparently, the answer is no.

See, these stories are mostly uninspired. Of course, there are a few lovely ones, but they are not enough to redeem this collection.

I admit I didn't read all of them, but here are the ones I did:

Huntress: a generally uninspired story with EEEVIL rich kids, a Nice Heroine, and a moon goddess which fits in somehow. There is one semi-exciting action scene, and a semi deus-ex-machine ending, and none of it meshes well. Blah. (2 stars)

Unwrapping: A cute-ish story about two girl's friendship. However, its all rather meh and the idea is rather unoriginal. (2.5 stars)

The Real Thing: A bit boring, but still thought-provoking and cute (I love Mav!) Also, the romance aspect felt fresh in the sense that the love interest wasn't flawless. **Recommended.** (3.5 stars)

Little (Grrrl) Lost: Blah! The only reason I read it was because I was intrigued by the "borrowers." Otherwise, it was preachy and boring. (2 stars)

I'll Give You My Word: Clever, cute, and funny. This one's biggest flaw is how juvenile it is - it's more middle grade than YA. Great for fans of DWJ, though. **Semi-recommended**(3.5 stars)

In the House of the Seven Librarians: Possible my favorite of the collection. Review published here. **Recommended.** (3.5 stars)

Wintermoon Wish: A heartwarming fantasy/Christmas-y story. This one's a bit typical, but well-written and enjoyable. **Semi-recommended.** (3 stars)

The Wizards of Perfil: I've been trying to cook up a review for this one to convey what a mess it was. Sadly, nothing comes to mind, so all I'll say is SKIP. (1 star)

Jack O'Lantern: Didn't read

Quill: Intriguing, thought-provoking, and exciting, though a bit disjointed. **Semi-recommended.** (3 stars)

Blood Roses: Confusing, creepy, and very, very dark. Block's prose is lovely though at times overwrought, and the story is more style than substance. (2 stars)

Hives: Didn't read

Perception: Didn't read

The House on the Planet Great premise, terrible execution. Basically plotless, with a ridiculous conclusion. Boring, boring, boring. (2 stars)

Cousins: Didn't read

What Used to be Good Still Is: I was bored to tears, and even took to skimming (which I NEVER do) though it's probably only me. (no idea how to rate this)

ANYWAYS, I didn't like this at all.

Alternatives: Of course, there's the stellar Lips Touch Three Times, which is much better than it sounds. There's also the anthology Zombies vs. Unicorns, and Firebirds Soaring, which is a much better collection than this one. Finally, there's Red Spikes, though only for mature, experienced YA readers.

Catie says

This is going to be a bit of a cheat review because I've acknowledged to myself that the only reason I checked out this anthology was to read the Joss and Mavkel story The Real Thing by Alison Goodman. I may choose to keep renewing this thing like a jerk so I can keep it and read the Kelly Link or Tamora Pierce stories, but for now I feel perfectly comfortable giving this anthology four stars based solely on the The Real Thing alone.

I love this story, but it's bittersweet because it's such a beautiful glimpse of everything that a Joss Aaronson series could have been. I've just visited Alison Goodman's website and apparently she's working on a "new series" so I have to assume that poor Joss has been set aside, at least temporarily if not forever.

I think that Joss and Mavkel will be marked down in the imaginary log where I keep track of these things as one of my favorite human/alien teams of all time. Joss is fierce, independent, and determined. She's flawed in all of my favorite ways: she's too blunt, too self-contained, and just a little bit damaged. Mavkel is a little bit damaged too: he's desperate for the intense connection that he used to have with his now dead twin Kelmav. I thought that it was interesting that Singing the Dogstar Blues has no romance in it whatsoever. I found that refreshing and bold. Joss' adventure really stood on its own without relying on any kind of hastily inserted love interest.

However, this story gives us a thrilling glimpse into all of the complications and humor that arise when Joss finds herself going on a date with a young comp kid and Mavkel is highly curious about the whole affair. There is also more information here about the tension that's building between the comp kids (genetically engineered to be superior, but only allowed into the academy in small percentages) and the naturally conceived students from wealthy families.

Alas, all this story does for me is dramatically increase my desperation for another Joss and Mavkel adventure. Curse you for a horrible tease, Alison Goodman! Would it help if I begged? I'm not above begging here.

Perfect Musical Pairing

Spoon – Don't You Evah

Joss, I will miss you terribly, but at least we'll always have Spoon.

Tatiana says

Not a collection where all stories are good. I ended up skimming a lot of them.

If you read only one story out of this anthology, let it be Kara Dalkey's "Hives" - mean girls in future, who are joined into cliques(=hives) via 24/7 addictive, straight-to-brain cell communication. A disconnect from a hive can be lethal. Great story with enough meat for a whole book.

The others worth reading - "The Real Thing" by Allison Goodman (time-travel school and a cute telepathic alien); "Perception" by Alan Dean Foster (again, aliens); "Quill" by Carol Emswiler (aliens!) and "Wintermoon Wish" by Sharon Shinn (a Christmasy feel good story).

In case you haven't noticed, I pretty much liked almost all sci-fi shorts and only one fantasy story.

Wealhtheow says

A collection of YA short stories. Yet another clunker from Charles DeLint, another terrifically imaginative story from Diana Wynne Jones, and several stories that felt all too much like snippets from a novel. Francesca Lia Block's story was literally just one of her dreams, transcribed--not a good read. There was no point to Tanith Lee's lackluster "The House on the Planet." Kelly Link's "The Wizards of Perfil" was evocative, if a little too surreal in places. Ellen Klages' "In the House of the Seven Librarians" doesn't delve deep but IS a really fun, comfortable read; it's the tale of seven librarians who shut themselves up in a library and raise a baby, with lots of sensory details and librarian in-jokes. The best story is Kara Dalkey's "Hives." As Oyceter said, it has a modern, truly teen-oriented tone that echoes Scott Westerfeld's Pretties series. In "Hives," a certain kind of cell phone hooks directly to your brain, leading to incredibly powerful, addictive cliques. The concept is chilling, the world-building intense, and I loved the main character.

Jessica M says

Name: Jessica McClelland

APA citation: November, S.(Ed.). (2006) *Firebirds rising*. Penguin: NY.

Genre: Short Stories

Award (if applicable):

Format: Book, Short Stories

Selection process: The book was favored in Booklist. Estes, S. (2006). *Firebirds rising: An anthology of original science fiction and fantasy*. Booklist, 102(15), 32.

Review: *Firebirds Rising* offers a multitude of short stories from popular young adult science fiction and fantasy authors. Fans of ghosts, aliens, goddesses and the like will enjoy the tales found inside and also hearing something new from their favorite authors. Authors like Alison Goodman, author of *Eon* and *Singing the Dog Star Blues* will find a Maev and Joss adventure in the short story *The Real Thing*. Tamora Pierce is also featured in a short story of Artemis in *Huntress*. Each author takes up only a few pages in the anthology and the novel seems to move fast despite its weight. As the third edition in an anthology series, *Firebirds*

Rising may be a little lackluster compared to its predecessors and seems to favor one genre over the other in regards to content. Interestingly, November put the author bios at the end of each of their tales instead at the end, which seemed to work with the flow of the book. Professionals may want to consider one of the previous editions if low on budget, but the novel should be given proper credit for its accomplishments.

Recommended.

Sarah says

Excellent anthology, with a strong blend of SF and fantasy. I encountered several authors I hadn't read before, and will seek out in the future. I liked nearly every story in here. I had sought out the book because I noticed it contained stories by Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Charles de Lint, and Kelly Link, but I also really enjoyed the stories by Tamora Pierce, Alison Goodman, Ellen Klages, Carol Emshwiller, and Kara Dalkey. I think the strongest pieces in here might be Ellen Klages' "In the House of the Seven Librarians" and Kelly Link's "The Wizards of Perfil." It wasn't shelved as a YA title, but all of the stories seemed to me to be accessible to teenage readers; most had teenage protagonists.

PurplyCookie says

"Firebirds Rising: An Anthology of Original Science Fiction and Fantasy" is an engaging mix of SF and Fantasy stories aimed at a young adult audience, though quite enjoyable for adults as well.

This collection as a whole is definitely worth reading, and many of the stories deserve rereading as well. At the same time, there were a few stories that just weren't that impressive.

Tamora Pierce's "Huntress"- One of those stories that just didn't impress me, but I do love Greek mythology, so the references sat well with me, but I really didn't understand the characters' motivations.

Nina Kiriki Hoffman's "Unwrapping"- For me, it wasn't exactly memorable, but I enjoyed it nonetheless. It had an interesting premise and I liked the imagery.

Alison Goodman's "The Real Thing"- A sci-fi story exploring a future where genetic enhancement is prevalent, and the prejudice between those who are 'comp' made and those whose parents let nature take its course. The story is taken from a novel by the author, so it does feel a bit like a chapter out of a larger novel.

Charles de Lint's "Little (Grrl) Lost"- I love the title. However, I'm not really a big fan of stories about little people, so I didn't enjoy it as much as I could have.

Diana Wynne Jones's "I'll Give You My Word"- I loved this story. The character of Jeremy is just so unique and lovable, and the story is interesting, quirky, and somewhat humorous.

Ellen Klages "In the House of the Seven Librarians"- This is one of my favorite stories in the book. Definitely worth the price of the book alone! This story is about a young girl named Dinsy who is raised by

seven 'feral librarians' in an old library building. This book is a paean to old libraries and classics of literature. Any lover of books and reading will be thrilled to read this. For those of us who remember the old-style libraries with card catalogs, it is a veritable love song. For all book lovers, it's a treasure to love and cherish.

Sharon Shinn's "Winternoon Wish"- This would make a great Christmastime story. Unfortunately, it doesn't have quite the same effect when you read it in the summer. It's got a nice moral though.

Kelly Link's "The Wizards of Perfil"- I didn't like this one much at all, mostly because I found Onion very bland and, and didn't really understand the premise of magic in the setting until close to the end.

Patricia A. McKillip's "Jack O'Lantern"- About a girl struggling with her parents' conventional views of the role of women, particularly upper class women, as her older sister prepares to be married. I just wish that the protagonist had been somewhat stronger and more resistant to the world around her.

Carol Emshwiller's "Quill"- A story where an alien girl was abducted by her father so he can rape and impregnate her just sickened me. I don't care if the circumstances was that of propagating a dying race/breed.

Francesca Lia Block's "Blood Roses"- It's a bit confusing, and I feel one needs to read it at least one more time to get it completely.

Kara Dalkey's "Hives"- A science fiction story about a future where technology can telepathically link minds, and teen girls use this to keep themselves in constant contact with their groups of friends, or 'hives'. But what happens when the girls get 'cut' from the network of their hive? Why does the sudden silence in their minds cause them to kill themselves? This story takes a science fiction approach to the importance of female friendships, and how necessary and addictive they can become.

Alan Dean Foster's "Perception"- This story is pretty simple in which a point stated at the end makes sense.

Tanith Lee's "The House on the Planet"- Explores three young women living in the same house over 100 years' time on a colonized alien planet in the future. The first story captivated me but I just found the rest of it to be utterly boring.

Pamela Dean's "Cousins"- Not crazy about this one. The main character is likeable enough, but the story was just too long for my liking. I might have liked it better if it was shorter.

Emma Bull's "What Used to Be Good Still Is"- The story of a young man in a mining town in Arizona in the 1930s, and his love for a Mexican-American girl, who loves him but loves something else even more.

Fantasy stories outnumber sci-fi two to one, and the great majority of the tales feature female protagonists. Even those with male protagonists deal with themes of friendship, family, love, and loss more than action and adventure.

Book Details:

Title Firebirds Rising: An Anthology of Original Science Fiction and Fantasy

Author Sharyn November

Reviewed By Purplycookie
