



Salon Fantastique: Thirty Original Tales of Fantasy

Ellen Datlow (Editor) , Terri Windling (Editor) , Christopher Barzak (Contributor) , Peter S. Beagle (Contributor) , Jedediah Berry (Contributor) , Richard Bowes (Contributor) , Paul Di Filippo (Contributor) , Jeffrey Ford (Contributor) , more... Greer Gilman (Contributor) , Gavin J. Grant (Contributor) , Gregory Maguire (Contributor) , David Prill (Contributor) , Lucius Shepard (Contributor) , Delia Sherman (Contributor) , Lavie Tidhar (Contributor) , Catherynne M. Valente (Contributor) , Marly Youmans (Contributor) ...less

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Here are original stories that straddle the borderline between "fantasy" and "mainstream" fiction, stories both bright and dark in tone (without straying into the realm of horror fiction). Sometimes set in the contemporary or historical world, sometimes pure fantasy or an imagined "history," these are striking, fresh, finely crafted works that demonstrate the best the short story form has to offer. Among the authors included are Delia Sherman, Peter Beagle, Greer Gilman, Paul Di Filippo, Jeffrey Ford, Gregory Maguire, and Lucius Shepard.

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From Reader Review Salon Fantastique: Thirty Original Tales of Fantasy for online ebook

The Sheila says

Gets off to a shaky start, hits a serious bump with the Youmans story (which is godawful), but swings back in again with Greer Gilman and keeps its end up with the Maguire and Shepherd stories. Generally better than the Windling/Datlow fairytale anthologies (which may have been groundbreaking in their day, but are certainly old hat by now) and definitely recommended for anyone who likes fantasy but is sick unto death of a. dragons, b. fuckin' elves, or c. authors who think they know how to write about the demimonde but are in fact just porn writers with pretensions. (Sarah Monette, I'm looking at you. Jacqueline Carey and Storm Constantine, you may accompany her to detention.)

Fantasy Literature says

Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling are the two greatest short fiction editors of fantasy and horror of our time. Their annual collections of the Year's Best Fantasy and Horror provided us, for 16 straight years, with the best short genre and slipstream fiction from all sources. Their anthologies have defined cutting edge fantasy.

Salon Fantastique is more uneven than most of Datlow and Windling's collections. This themeless anthology, containing stories intended, as the introduction states, "to evoke the liberating, creative spirit of a literary salon," contains some very fine stories. It also, oddly enough, contains some very bad stories.

Delia Sherman's "La Fee Verte" opens the ... Read More:
<http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

N.A. Fedorak says

If you like French books, or things by Charles de Lint, you will like this. I do not.

Chris says

The three best stories in this anthology are "Le Fee Verte" by Delia Sherman, "Femaville 29" by Paul Di Filippo, and "My Travels with Al-Qaeda" by Lavie Tidhar (which is an excellent story about the effects of terrorism). There is a wonderful sense of place and time in those stories and make the book a keeper. The other stories are mixed. For instance, "The Guardian of the Egg" has some wonderful descriptions but the plot is predictable. Other stories just aren't engrossing; they aren't bad but not overly memorable.

Alisa says

I didn't read everything in here, but I did enjoy Delia Sherman's "La Fee Verte" and Chris Barzak's, "The Guardian of the Egg."

Lauren says

This looks good.

Margo says

Anthologies are always a mixed bag, and this was no exception. I do think the editors succeeded in their goal.

Melissa says

Since it is a collection of short stories there were some great ones and ones I got a page or two into and couldn't care less about it. Some very great imaginations though crafted the stories but some lacked the pull of a strong story to pull me into it.

Althea Ann says

Datlow and Windling; how can you go wrong? You can't! They're a couple of the best editors out there. Of course, that doesn't mean that I love every story, but this is a really good anthology.

The 'theme' here is that of the 19th-century salon - but that just basically means, 'anything goes.' There is no theme. Not all the stories are fantasy, either, although it says 'fantasy' right there in the subtitle. But that's OK by me.

All the stories were new to this book (2006), so they were all new to me.

La Fee Verte - Delia Sherman

This first story is the only one that really fits with the 19th-century salon theme. Brothels, a war-torn city, and a lesbian love story... complicated by some Cassandra-esque visions. Loved it.

Dust Devil on a Quiet Street by Richard Bowes

Set in NYC's East Village - which I loved, but I began to feel that the setting was trying just a smidge too hard. A magic ring may bring artistic success... and some people will kill for it.

To Measure the Earth by Jedediah Berry

A remote farmhouse, plagued by unquiet ghosts.

A Gray and Soundless Tide by Catherynne M. Valente

A classic tale of selkies... but with a new and disturbing twist.

Concealment Shoes by Marly Youmans

A family moves into an old house, and finds pairs of antique shoes in the chimneys. Intrigued, they take them to the historical society and leave them to be researched. But those shoes were there for a reason, and now they are without protection.

The Guardian of the Egg by Christopher Barzak

A surreal piece of weird fiction about a boy whose sister one day finds a tree growing out of her head - and realizes she has been called to an arcane purpose.

My Travels with Al-Qaeda by Lavie Tidhar

Interesting piece, musing of conflict & terrorism, but I didn't see it as fantasy, and didn't really feel it fit in with the collection.

Chandail by Peter S. Beagle

Wow. I LOVED this story. The feel of it reminded me a lot of Rosemary Kirstein's Steerswoman series - I'm not sure why. The best part? The notes told me there is A BUNCH OF BOOKS set in this world, and I haven't read them! But I will! Really, a strong and effective tale of a woman's encounter with an alien creature whose nature is to 'play' with human memories and emotion.

Down the Wall by Greer Gilman

Really more of a prose poem than a story. The language is beautiful. But it gets in the way of the story. I often love stylized language, but there needs to be a balance. Maybe I would have felt differently, in a different mood.

Femaville 29 by Paul Di Filippo

In a temporary refugee camp, people make do after a disastrous tsunami. Lives are up in the air, adults try to deal with indecision, try to reforge relationships and create a future from unknowns. But the children spend all their time building an eerily detailed model of an imaginary city...

Nottamun Town by Gregory Maguire

A dying soldier's life flashes before his eyes, kaleidoscope-fashion. Really not fantasy. I don't like Gregory Maguire as much as (it seems) most of the rest of the world does.

Yours, Etc. by Gavin J. Grant

A marriage, plagued by ghosts.

The Mask of '67 by David Prill

A really weird story, with the feeling of an allegory. A small-town-girl made good comes back to her hometown. A festival is planned. But she arrives wearing a bizarre metal mask. People are freaked out. The only one to accept her is the teen boyfriend she dumped, who's always carried a torch for her. But the mask isn't the end of it, and things progress...

The Night Whiskey by Jeffrey Ford

Man, those people in small towns, getting up to their weird shenanigans. This small town secretly conducts a ritual involving drinking a liquor made from the "death-berry" that allows the participants to communicate with the dead.

The Lepidopterist by Lucius Shepard

Hmm. Would bizarrely beautiful butterflies that could maybe-pass for people allow anyone to take over the world? It seems unlikely. But this tall-tale is nice and weird.

Jen says

Enjoyed this collection. Datlow and Wilding always put together interesting anthologies. I especially liked La Fee Verte, The Night Whiskey and Down the Wall

Snail in Danger (Sid) Nicolaides says

I forget why I checked this out from the library originally. To re-read the Delia Sherman story, maybe? Well, anyway, sadly I am coming to the conclusion that "La Fée Verte" is one of the stories that I like less with each re-read.

A number of the stories that are here I had read elsewhere. However the Valente story and the Barzak story were new to me, and I liked them.

I had to stop reading the Peter Beagle story because it was called "Chandail" and all I could think was that chandail means sweater or jersey in French, and I kept waiting for that to become relevant. It may be that I didn't wait long enough. >.>
