



Finding the Way and Other Tales of Valdemar

Mercedes Lackey (Editor) , Tanya Huff (Contributor) , Larry Dixon , Fiona Patton (Contributor) , Judith Tarr (Contributor) , Mickey Zucker Reichert (Contributor)

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In March 1987, a young author from Oklahoma published her first novel, *Arrows of the Queen*. This modest book about a magical land called Valdemar was the beginning of a fantasy masterwork series that would span decades and include more than two dozen titles. Now readers can take a journey to the world of Valdemar—including Tanya Huff, Mickey Zucker Reichert, Fiona Patton, and Judith Tarr—each adding their own special touches.

Included in this anthology are:

[Finding the Way](#) by Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon

[In Burning Zones We Build Against the Sun](#) by Rosemary Edghill and Denise McCune.

[Unintended Consequences](#) by Elizabeth A. Vaughan

[The Education of Evita](#) by Mickey Zucker Reichert

[A Charm of Finches](#) by Elisabeth Waters

[Healing in White](#) by Kristen Schwengel

[Songs of a Certain Sort](#) by Brenda Cooper

[Otherwise Engaged](#) by Stephanie Shaver

[Heart's Choice](#) by Kate Paultk

[Heart's Own](#) by Sarah A. Hoyt

[The Time We Have](#) by Tanya Huff

[A Bard by Any Other Name](#) by Fiona Patton

[Change of Life](#) by Judith Tarr

[Lack of Vision](#) by Nancy Asire

[The Groom's Price](#) by Michael Z. Williamson and Gail Sanders

Finding the Way and Other Tales of Valdemar Details

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Author : Mercedes Lackey (Editor) , Tanya Huff (Contributor) , Larry Dixon , Fiona Patton (Contributor) , Judith Tarr (Contributor) , Mickey Zucker Reichert (Contributor)

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From Reader Review Finding the Way and Other Tales of Valdemar for online ebook

Kristin says

Some of the stories were decent, a couple were actually good, but many were truly terrible. The editing was bad as well: in one story, a character's name changed spelling halfway through. Overall, most of the stories were just poor fanfiction, not decent stories in their own right.

Izlinda says

"Finding the Way" - Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon

This short story is set after the Mage Wars, and is about the Pathfinder *hertasi* Sherra helping Vesily find her Chosen, through the swamp Gripping Mire. I liked the resolution of it. (Though it kind of, unfortunately, reminded me of a particular plot point in the Twilight series at the end. >_< Damn you, Twilight.)

"In Burning Zones We Build Against the Sun" - Rosemary Edghill and Denise McCune

This concerns Mindhealer Hedion prior to the resolution of diplomatic entreaties between Valdemar and Karse, when the Karsite priests still had red-robés who controlled demons. Hedion is driven to exhaustion to help people along the border and he is the stronger Mindhealer there is, of two. Hedion's plight and drive reminds me of Vanyel and how much burden and selflessness he felt when he became the remaining Herald Mage in his time. Hedion meets the Companion Rhoses and his Chosen Gaurane, whose backstory is blanketed in mystery. I'm ambivalent about the ending of this story. It's a good resolution for Hedion's story, but I wonder if they intend to bring back Gaurane in another anthology. I hope so!

"Unintended Consequences" - Elizabeth A. Vaughan

The wife of a Rethwellen lord who was involved in Prince Consort Karathanelan's treasonous plot is told about her husband's act and death. This story is far shorter than the previous two, but I thought it packed a nice emotional wallop. Likey.

"The Education of Evita" - Mickey Zucker Reichert

One of the most realistic stories in the series. Hard lessons for Evita. While I found Camayo's tone fatherly to Evita, rather than deep friend-like as I'm used to Companions being to their Chosen, it definitely made sense in the story. A good story, also, about human nature.

"A Charm of Finches" - Elisabeth Waters

A murder of crows! I like that this story focuses on an Animal Healer (Maia) and how she finds out about religious fraud abound and goes about trying to make it right.

"Healing in White" - Kristen Schwengel

I'm still a little unsure of the relationship between Shia and Teo by the end of the book. The Sighting Shia does, and healing, reminds me a bit of the healing in Briar's Book by Tamora Pierce when the plague befalls the city. Anyhoo, back to *this* story, it's intriguing seeing the combination of a Herald in training and Healer in one person.

"Songs of a Certain Sort" - Brenda Cooper

Twins Rhiannon the Bard and Dionne the Healer get caught in a bad situation and Rhiannon has to leave her twin behind to get help. I really liked how the author wrote about the other females in this story, though "Rhi" felt forced to me.

"Otherwise Engaged" - Stephanie Shaver

Set in Selenay's time as Queen with Elspeth the Brat, but Talamir still alive. I'm not familiar with Grier the Healer, who is noble born and Lelia the Bard and this short story felt a bit jumbled in my mind. The foreshadowing is quite strong. One of the weaker stories in the bunch, I reckon.

"Heart's Choice" - Kate Paulk

A story with Ree, the hobgoblin and Jem, the human! :D They've progressed further in time in this short story; Jem is already a man. I do love how the Valdemar Universe is accepting of non-heterosexual relationships. Ree and Jem get called in to deal with the pup of hobglobins who killed a cow and injured the Mayor's son in the fight. (The hobglobins were killed in the fight.)

"Heart's Own" - Sarah A. Hoyt

Another Ree and Jem story, continuing a year and a half after the previous one. (I wonder how the two authors know each other.) This story deals with the town's reaction to Meren, the pup rescued in the previous story and Ree and Jem raising him, as well as their adopted daughter Amelie. This story was really touching.

"The Time We Have" - Tanya Huff

Ah, another Jors and Gervais story. I haven't read any of Tanya Huff's novels, though I know people who have and recommend it. The connection felt a little forced here, but another realistic story.

"A Bard by Any Other Name" - Fiona Patton

This story is hilarious. It features the Danns again, of the Watchguard. A poet is vandalizing the walls with their love poems and it's up to them to find out who. Again, hilarious. I could feel the energy of a character so much!

"Change of Life" - Judith Tarr

A matter-of-factly written story, with a matter-of-fact narrator. Marlys is preparing for her sixth and final daughter's wedding and a Companion comes to the village. Though there's no big flashy adventure in this story, I really liked it. It was soothing.

"Lack of Vision" - Nancy Asire

A story featuring Perran, a traveling judge of Karse. I don't recall if he's featured in past anthologies, but I really enjoyed this story. It reminded me a bit of the stories in *Oathblood* where Kethry and Tarma have to solve "whodunit" mysteries. I like the title.

"The Groom's Price" - Michael Z. Williamson and Gail Sanders

Intriguing choice of having a Shin'a'in Chosen by a Companion, and this short story is a little more open with the Companion's ability to use magic to disguise themselves. Set after the Mage Wars, we see a cameo by Quenten in Rethwellen. It was an okay read, though not one of my favorites.

Joy says

This is another excellent selection of stories set in Mercedes Lackey's world of Valdemar, with a few

excursions to other well-known locations such as Karse and the Dhorisha Plains. I enjoyed all of the stories greatly, and there is a good mix of lengths from a very short story to the near-novella written by ML herself. If you enjoy other books of Valdemar, and especially if you like characters introduced by other "Tales of Valdemar" books, you'll enjoy this one too.

Mieneke says

I've been a huge fan of Mercedes Lackey's work since I was fourteen, so writing an objective review was always going to be hard. So I thought I'd just come out and say it: I love Mercedes Lackey's books; they are my literary chocolate, I can reread them time and again and no one is going to take them from me, so there! Well, now I've got that rather adolescent statement of my chest, here is a more mature, but probably equally fangirlish piece by me on why you should read Mercedes Lackey over on Fantasy Literature. All this being said, here's my review for the latest Valdemar anthology *Finding the Way*, you can be the judge whether I'm succeeded in being objective!

For the past three years early December marks the publication of a Valdemar anthology (the previous three were published in 1997, 2003 and 2005 respectively) and *Finding the Way* is the latest in the series. And it's at once one of the best and one of the more frustrating of the anthologies. To be honest however, the points that frustrated me most were mostly subjective and not tied to the writing itself, so it might not bother people not familiar with the other anthologies. The biggest niggle is that all the authors are returning contributors. There isn't one new author in this bunch of stories. On the one hand, this makes it possible to have recurring characters - which is great - but on the other hand, exploring new authors through familiar universes is one of the attractive side benefits of these kinds of anthologies. And while having recurring characters and storylines is great fun, for a die-hard Valdemar fan it is also an opportunity lost to explore a new corner of Velgarth or something new and unique to the universe. The last thing that really bugged me was the fact that there were some continuity mistakes and typo's that weren't caught before printing. I know mistakes happen, but it was distracting, because my eye kept snagging on the typo's and stopping me reading.

Any collection of stories will have duds and *Finding the Way* is no different. But, with only two stories out of the fifteen that really didn't click for me, the number of disappointments is very small. The stories that didn't work for me were Mickey Zucker Reichert's *The Education of Evita* and Michael Z. Williamson and Gail Sander's *The Groom's Price*. Zucker Reichert has had stories in all six anthologies and her stories are always rather 'hit or miss' for me and this time it was a miss. I just found the titular character of Evita annoying and I couldn't get past that. Williamson and Sanders' story just didn't do it for me, which was a shame because it was a Shina'in story and I've enjoyed Williamson's previous contributions a lot.

While all other thirteen stories were highly enjoyable, my favourites were the titular story by Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon, *Finding the Way*, Elisabeth Waters' *A Charm of Finches*, Kate Paulk's *Heart's Choice* and Sarah A. Hoyt's *Heart's Own*. The Lackey/Dixon story is a story about an Hertasi, the little lizard-like non-humans that live in the Pelagirs. They are one of my favourite non-human races in the Velgarth universe, so I enjoyed this closer look immensely. Waters' *A Charm of Finches* is a continuation of last year's *A Storytelling of Crows* and I adored this look at Gifted people not part of the Collegia. Paulk and Hoyt's stories were both great new Jem and Ree stories. I love these two characters and it's a unique view of life after the Mage Storms.

All in all, this was another fun addition to the Velgarth universe. I wouldn't recommend it to people new to the Valdemar books; I'd recommend starting with either the *Heralds of Valdemar* trilogy or the *Last Herald-*

Mage series, but for any Valdemar fan, this will be a must-read regardless of any flaws. Some of the stories will benefit from having read the previous ones, but most stand solidly on their own. I enjoyed this quick visit to Valdemar and I can't wait to go back for a longer stay with *Intrigues* later this year.

Julie Akeman says

The first story, done by Lackey and her husband, was really good. I love the different take on the Hertasi. This is a wonderful collection, makes me want to write a Valdemar story of my own.

Ruby Hollyberry says

No more than a couple of mediocre stories among the really good ones, and two more Jem and Ree stories makes this anthology extremely satisfying to me.

Diana says

This is book is an anthology of stories based off of the Valdemar books by Mercedes Lackey. I love this series and these short stories are great. A word of caution, if you're looking into starting this series, don't read the anthologies first, you need the basis of the novels for the anthologies to make sense.

Re-read 2018

Picked this up to read since I'm not feeling 100% and wanted something that wasn't too involved. I love Mercedes Lackey's books, and appreciate that she allows other authors to play in her worlds. It gives you a chance to read their writing style and maybe see if you'll enjoy their own work.

Olga Godim says

This is a collection of short stories from the Lackey's Valdemar universe. Some of the stories are better than others. My favorites were **Heart's Choice** by Kate Pault and **Heart's Own** by Sarah A. Hoyt. Although both stories are written by different authors, they take place in the same village (not just world, which is a Valdemar world anyway) and employ the same set of characters, even the same family, a year apart from each other. Both stories deal with the same fundamental theme: Who is human? What sets a human apart from an animal? If a guy has fur and a tail, is he human or is he an animal? If a man can't talk, is he a human or a subspecies? If, when angry or provoked, he bites instead of punches with his fists, is he human then? Both these stories are heartwarming and very well written, but the overall quality of the entire collection is rather average, like a mixed bag of fan fiction.

Interesting fact: Mercedes Lackey was the author who introduced me to fantasy as a genre. In the beginning, I adored her Valdemar novels and devoured all of them, many more than once. Then, like most first love affairs, I got disillusioned with her writing. Now, I'm on the fence regarding her stories, and specifically her Valdemar tales.

For those unfamiliar with Lackey's Valdemar backlist, a bit of a background. Valdemar is a quasi-medieval

country, and most stories set there, this collection included, deal with the Heralds of Valdemar and their Companions.

The Companions are intelligent magical beings, super noble and dedicated to the good of Valdemar. They are shaped like white horses. They find people, mostly teenagers, with some kind of magical gifts and bond with them for life. The Chosen ones become Heralds of Valdemar, as dedicated to the kingdom and its monarch as their Companions. The Heralds are professional heroes, absolutely incorruptible and very well trained in martial arts and other more brainy disciplines. They roam the kingdom like knights, dispersing justice, fighting bandits, and helping those in need. They are also habitually the ones who sacrifice themselves for the good of the kingdom.

Valdemar also has a cohort of Bards, who make songs for the good of the kingdom. Here lies my first very serious objection. I grew up in Soviet Russia, where all the 'bards' also made songs for the good of the kingdom. Of course, there were no kings, but the Communist ruling party came close in its unchecked power, and the artists and writers had no choice but to praise the communists and their party. If they didn't, they ended up unemployed, in prison, or worse. Since then, I'm allergic to the arts that glorify the ruling body of the country. It's never sincere. The artists are forced to do it out of fear of reprisal. Nothing noble about that.

So I hate the whole situation with the Bards of Valdemar. The poor bards can't criticize their king or queen. Most of them don't even want to. They were raised by the crown; they studied at the crown-subsidized collegium, and they were so brainwashed (my interpretation), they don't know otherwise.

The same is true for the Heralds. None of them realizes that there are other choices, that they can doubt and question and explore and take a different path. They are all marionettes of the crown, decent people totally controlled by their rulers. The Companions fill their heads with patriotic drivel mixed with love. Because their propaganda is intertwined with love, the Heralds believe that the Companions and the crown are infallible, and every deviation from their worldview is a crime. This whole caboodle makes me sick.

Patriotism should never be enforced.

I want to free them. I also want to write a story about a Herald who starts doubting. Or a Bard who starts mocking the system, but I don't think they would have a nice future in that universe. Neither would my stories, so I don't write them.

I don't think Lackey intended such a reading. For her, it was all straightforward. She wrote it all as if it was a good idea, not a satire – hence my disappointment.

Kris says

Short stories by many authors that take place in the world of Valdemar. All good, I wished several of them could have been longer.

Kaye says

This was a selection of short stories, each one enjoyable.

Allison says

I much prefer Mercedes Lackey's own analyses and explanations as well as her love stories and development

of a unique magic system. Though I knew this was a collection of short stories by different authors, the voices were so very different that it felt disjointed and false. Several of the stories involve the same power--Mindspeech--which becomes boring after a few reads. Though some sideways characters like the Shin'a'in received some attention, most of the characters were just regular people without much depth. I much prefer Lackey's style over this collection. Plus, I read her series for the Heralds; no offense, Bards and Healers.

Kathy Davie says

An anthology of fifteen tales of young adult fantasy in a theme of finding your path in Valdemar.

Series:

"Heart's Choice" and "Heart's Own" (Heart)

The Stories

Mercedes Lackey and Larry Dixon's "Finding the Way" is an unexpected pairing of a *hertasi* with a Companion in which the *hertasi* teaches the Companion patience so she may survive until her Chosen is ready. Twisty little tale!

Rosemary Edgehill and Denise McCune's "In Burning Zones We Build Against the Sun" is a rather depressing tale of the unique talents of a Valdemaran Healer and the struggles he attempts to survive. It comes right in the end...rather uniquely, although a bit on the vague side. Still, a good story.

Elizabeth A. Vaughan's "Unintended Consequences" is a very short story of traitors and a mournful death which ends unexpectedly well.

Mickey Zucker Rechert's "Education of Evita" is an excellent tale of the confidence of youth with its resulting embarrassment of reality as Evita learns the consequences of judging from naiveté.

Elisabeth Waters' "A Charm of Finches" is one of those stories that exemplifies why I love stories about Valdemar. Its people are basically good and do what they can to help people. Maia has the Gift of Animal Mindspeech and manages to save several people now and who knows how many would have been harmed in the future through her gift of seeing through birds.

Don'cha just love that...a charm of finches so directly opposite a murder of crows...

Kristen Schwengel's "Healing in White" sees Shia Chosen by Eodan. Shia is a unique combination: a talented Healer with strong Gifts in Mindspeech and Empathy with a touch of Foresight and Sereth, the head of the Healers' Collegium, is furious that they have lost her to the Heralds! At which Herald Merchan, Dean of Collegium, reminds her that the Companions are always right with their Chosen choices...that someone with the right combination of Gifts is always Chosen when they are needed...

Brenda Cooper's "Songs of a Certain Sort" takes a rare perspective with its warped household trapping and taking its way into becoming. Talk about getting what you wished for...

Stephanie Shaver's "Otherwise Engaged" is a sad tale of unrequited love and an unwanted death sentence.

Kate Paulk's "Heart's Choice" is a lovely tale of tolerance and love when an unusual pair of sentient beings

rescue a hybrid cub when its parents are killed. It's also the first half with Hoyt's "Heart's Own", providing the happy ending.

Sarah A. Hoyt's "Heart's Own" is the happy ending for Paulk's "Heart's Choice" when Rem's unease is answered in every way necessary.

Both are so well done that each story feels as though it is written with the same voice.

Tanya Huff's "The Time We Have" is such a sad story with its necessary ending and it feels as though an important chunk is missing. Wherever did Jors meet the lady with a braid?

Fiona Patton's "A Bard by Any Other Name" is an odd story of young love and bad poetry with a suggestion of a Bardic Gift revolving around a young graffiti artist.

Judith Tarr's "Change of Life" is absolutely lovely!! With a most unexpected lease on hope and requited happiness. You go, girl!

Nancy Asire's "Lack of Vision" is a story from Karse of a hanging judge required to adjudicate a murder trial with an inside look on achieving justice.

Michael Z. Williamson and Gail Sanders' "Groom's Price" is the journey of Keth're'son shena Tale'sedrin. A Chosen who resists his Companion's choosing. For no Shin'a'in uses magic...no matter who is part of his bloodline.

The Cover and Title

A very Valdemaran cover with its Companion's head in profile poking through a shield hole against a heraldic-looking banner. In light royal blue and gold. The title is accurate in that each tale is one of *Finding the Way*.

Jelfia says

I love how several of the short stories are the same people from the other short story books. but yet their adventurer could be read on its own.

Ryan says

I am in love with all things Velgarth, the world that the Kingdom of Valdemar exists in. I snatch every book up that I find, though I still am missing three books, and I devour them almost instantly. Finding the Way is the new fifteen story anthology that explores the world of Heralds, Healers, Bards, and other citizens of the land. Mickey Zucker Reichert, Fiona Patton, Rosemary Edghill, Larry Dixon, Elisabeth Waters, and Mercedes Lackey all continue to draw upon their creative talent to expand the mythology of Velgarth and Valdemar.

Now I know for a lot of people anthology can's be headache inducing if all the stories don't work for them. I know some people that if they even dislike one story, the whole collection is ruined for them. Thankfully I

am not like that, not that I didn't enjoy every story in this one, because I did for one reason or another. For the most part this was a collection of 15 wonderful stories that allowed me to revisit my favorite fictional land. Now I didn't love them all, but there were none that fell flat for me this time around.

What I absolutely loved this time around was that quite a few stories allowed me to revisit some fantastic characters introduced in other anthologies. I got to visit with Jem and Ree in the stories "Heart's Choice" by Kate Paulk and "Heart's Own" by Sarah A. Hoyt. They are a couple of young men, one completely human the other a changechild, who are trying to forge a life together after the Mage Storms. They continue to face challenges, not only because they are shaych (gay) but because of Ree's obvious difference in appearance. What I love about them is that despite the prejudice and the odds, they are slowly building a life with a new daughter and a relationship, if somewhat strained, with Jem's father, the local lord. They face more difficulties in these two stories, but by the end they are stronger for it and even more committed to each other.

The other two stories that really stood out for me, were "Unintended Consequences" by Elizabeth A. Vaughn and "The Time We Have" by Tanya Huff. The first was the shortest story in the collection, about nine pages long, but it had one of the strongest emotional punches for me. Lady Cerararatha's husband was one of the Rethwellan lords that tried to assassinate Queen Selenay and sit her husband on the throne. Faced with the shame and possible execution as a traitor, Lady Cera's mind instantly goes into overload. Will she be allowed to stay in Valdemar? Will she be sent back home to Rethwellan, where she would face an unknown future? Or is something else in store for her that she can never predict? When the two women, one the wife of a traitor the other the queen of the land, finally come face to face they connected by the betrayal of their husbands.

In "The Time We Have" we find out how lifebonding doesn't always go the way you would want it to. Herald Jors is riding circuit when he is caught up in struggle against bandits that have been pillaging and killing their way across Valdemar. One of those bandits happens to be a beautiful young woman that for one reason or another Jors is not able to get out of his head. It's by going after her that the Herald is able to end the reign of terror that the bandits have been spreading, but it's also through her that he suffers the biggest loss of his life. Herald Jors and Mirayne were destined to be lifebonded, but the bonding is cut off way before it's time.

Where "Heart's Choice" and "Heart's Love" helps keep alive that helpless romantic side of me, "Unintended Consequences" and "The Time We Have" broke my heart and made sad for the characters involved and for anyone who has been caught up in a relationship out of their control. I think both are feelings and situations that most of us find ourselves in at one time or another. We have all come out with scars, but it's that true belief in love that allows us to find our peace and strength

Red Risa says

Read again

Always finding something I missed when I re-read these anthologies.

Decided to read these back-to-back to get a better understanding of some of the recurring characters, and their stories.

Much like Tanya Huff did with her recent Dann family compilation. Even if she did leave a couple stories out! ?

