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From evil overlords to bumbling henchmen, talking cats to lovelorn fishermen, mad queens to wise opossums, the collected fourteen stories subvert popular fantasy tropes in surprising and delightful ways. This book collects some of the best funny fantasy fiction published in the past decade. Included are works by Hugo and Nebula Award winners, New York Times and USA Today bestselling authors, as well as up-and-coming talented writers.

Includes the following stories:

“Dave the Mighty Steel-Thewed Avenger” by Laura Resnick
“Crumbs” by Esther Friesner
“Fellow Traveler” by Donald J. Bingle
“A Fish Story” by Sarah Totton
“Another End of the Empire” by Tim Pratt
“Giantkiller” by G. Scott Huggins
“A Mild Case of Death” by David Gerrold
“Fairy Debt” by Gail Carriger
“A Very Special Girl” by Mike Resnick
“The Blue Corpse Corps” by Jim C. Hines
“Librarians in the Branch Library of Babel” by Shaenon K. Garrity
“The Queens Reason” by Richard Parks
“The Best Little Cleaning Robot in All of Faerie” by Susan Jane Bigelow
“Suede This Time” by Jean Rabe

Funny Fantasy Details

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From Reader Review Funny Fantasy for online ebook

Cassy says

Entertaining, quick fantasy reads.

Voirrey says

Entertaining short stories to read on the bus.

Elizabeth Dodd says

A marvelous collection of short stories, all with a fine sense of humor.
Do check it out!

Michael says

Good, funny stories

If, like me, you like humorous SF and Fantasy, you'll like these stories - all well worth the time to read them.
IN several cases, this also introduced me to new authors in this sub-genre.

Whitt Pond says

Edited by Alex Shvartsman, Funny Fantasy is an anthology of previously published humorous fantasy stories that appeared in a number of publications from 2005 through 2015. Shvartsman did a good job of picking the selections as none were stories that I'd read before. Some of the authors, like Esther Friesner and Mike Resnick, are well known veterans within the genre but others are relative newcomers, which makes for a good mix.

The stories that stood out for me include:

"Crumbs" by Esther Friesner is a retelling of the classic fairy tale "Hansel & Gretel" wherein a young knight finds out what really went on between his father, his aunt and that witch in the woods.

"Giantkiller" by G. Scott Huggins is an espionage/From-the-secret-files-of retelling of the classic fairy tale "Jack the Giant Killer" that shows how perspective and spin can not only affect how the story ends up getting told but can also affect the actual events themselves.

"The Blue Corpse Corps" by Jim C. Hines is a short story about a runty near-sighted goblin named Jig who

survives by his wits in spite of the considerable decks stacked against him. Jig first appeared in Hines' novel *Goblin Quest* and has shown up in other stories since.

"Librarians in the Branch Library of Babel" by Shaenon K. Garrity is an amazing bit of world-building centered around the idea of an infinite library and how it would manifest. For me, this story by itself makes the entire anthology worth buying.

I can't say that *Funny Fantasy* blew me away, but all of the stories made for an engaging read and at least four were a cut above the norm for the genre.

Recommended for anyone who likes humorous fantasy and is looking for something to spend a pleasant couple of hours with.

Kendall J. says

I tend to like Sci Fi more than fantasy, and since I have been a fan of the UFO series by the same publisher I thought I would give this a try and was quite pleased.

Arw says

Disappointing

The first few Unidentified Funny Objects were great, so I decided to try this anthology, since it's by the same editors.

But the stories just weren't that funny

With the exception of one good story and a couple of OK ones, most of the stories lack a clear point or plot, and the comic elements are vague (and almost no actual jokes).

There's a constant sense of 'almost' funny, but the stories never seem to focus, meandering and drifting till they end somewhere.

This was a serious letdown.

Michelle says

Funny Fantasy, edited by Alex Shvartsman, is an excellent collection of humorous fantasy tales with a wide range of subgenre and tone, from irreverent hyperbole to clever social commentary.

"Dave the Mighty Steel-Thewed Avenger" by Laura Resnick opens up the anthology with over-the-top, ostentatious fantasy trappings that summarize down to a talking raccoon giving a disbelieving drunk college student a magic weapon. What could possibly go wrong? Many of the other stories are also quite glib, including Mike Resnick's "A Very Special Girl," wherein a zombie thug falls in love, demonstrating that beauty is in the eye of the beholder. To balance out the collection's tone, "Fairy Debt" by Gail Carriger is a sweet story wherein fairy Cups can bake amazing banana cupcakes.

Retold folk tales and blatantly inverted tropes provide the backbone of *Funny Fantasy*. In "Crumbs" by

Esther Friesner, Hansel's son becomes a paladin for an obnoxious king who sends him deep into the evil woods, where he finds that Hansel and Gretel's version of the story, and his view of witches in general, is patently erroneous. In "The Blue Corpse Corps" by Jim C. Hines, goblins scramble to let zombies bite them so that they can gain near-invincible powers. For those who are tired of faerie realm stories, "The Best Little Cleaning Robot in All of Faerie" by Susan Jane Bigelow mixes in a little space opera and ends on a completely irreverent note.

On the social commentary side, "Another End of the Empire" by Tim Pratt follows a tyrant king determined to undermine the prophecy of his downfall by creating the Village of Progress. A few stories take on sexism directly; "A Fish Story" by Sarah Totton shows just how inappropriate an unwanted suitor's attentions can be, and in "The Queens Reason" by Richard Parks, the young man who has come to save the queen from her insanity is not at all what he appears to be.

All-in-all, *Funny Fantasy* is a solid anthology with plenty of laughs.

Funny Fantasy represents the fantasy genre well by including fourteen stories published in the past decade by current magazines and big names. With such a wide range of style and subject matter, there's bound to be something for every one.

Jacob Haller says

One of the questions, when you read an anthology, is how many of the stories you will actually enjoy reading. I enjoyed most of these. The one that I thought was funniest was Shaenon K. Garrity's "Librarians in the Branch Library of Babel", which attempts to merge Borges's thought experiment 'The Library of Babel' with the everyday politics of actually running a small, poorly funded branch library in the United States.

Probably the story I liked least was Mike Redneck's 'A Very Special Girl', and, even there, it wasn't that it was unpleasant to read; I'm just not sure why there is a need for more Damon Runyan parodies, and I didn't feel like this had much going for it beyond the fact that it's kind of enjoyable to read things written in Runyan's voice.

Looking over the table of contents, I also want to mention one story that I didn't find all that funny, but which I still enjoyed quite a bit: Jean Rabe's 'Suede This Time', a sequel to *Puss in Boots*.

Josie Boyce says

Some clever cheeky fantasy tales. None too deep, none for me, laugh out loud funny, but entertaining, for certain. Lighthearted, rarely too cynical in the humour. Breezy and fun collection with a lot of authors I didn't know. And will look into.

Mike says

I read a pre-release version of this collection, supplied by the publisher for beta reading purposes.

There's not enough truly funny fantasy around, and I applaud Alex Shvartsman for wanting to increase the prominence of the subgenre, not only by what he writes himself but by his work as an editor. Not only does he edit the Unidentified Funny Objects anthologies of new humorous SFF, but he's now started collecting previously published works (which did not appear in UFO) as well, and this volume is one of those collections.

I'm a tough audience for comedy, and look for something more than just a parody of the usual tropes with a few silly names thrown in. By and large, the stories in this volume provided that something more, with stories that worked as stories as well as being funny. I was particularly delighted to see an example of "Runyonesque," a style of which I'm very fond, in Mike Resnick's "A Very Special Girl". (Someone should really do an anthology of Runyonesque. There was a lovely one from Maria Dahvana Headley last year, and I've read several others.)

The tone of the stories covers the usual range, from full of casual mayhem (most notably Jim C. Hines, "The Blue Corpse Corps") to sweet and warm (Gail Carriger's "Fairy Debt"); from really just playing with the tropes, but doing it well (Laura Resnick's "Dave the Mighty Steel-Thewed Avenger") to more original ("Librarians in the Branch Library of Babel," by Shaenon K. Garrity; "The Queen's Reason" by Richard Parks).

The editor notes in his introduction that, in his experience, funny science fiction tends to be social satire, while funny fantasy plays with the genre tropes more. I don't know that this is necessarily true (even in this collection, there's some strong social satire in Tim Pratt's "Another End of the Empire"); I think the best of both funny SF and funny fantasy do both, and also tell a compelling story. I'm talking, of course, about Douglas Adams and, even more so, Terry Pratchett. Perhaps part of the problem is that when a story also has great character development and a well-thought-out plot we usually don't banish it to the "funny" ghetto, but consider it a fantasy or SF novel with a strong humour element. I'm thinking here of authors like Connie Willis.

All this to say that, though I didn't find any of these stories hilarious, or groundbreaking, or outstanding examples of the fantasy genre, I did enjoy them. I would like to see the standard for funny fantasy gradually ratchet up, though, and become more than having fun with genre tropes, and some, though by no means all, of the stories in this collection do attempt that.
