



The New Death and others

James Hutchings

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Death gets a roommate...

An electronic Pope faces a difficult theological question...

A wicked vizier makes a terrible bargain...

44 stories. 19 poems. No sparkly vampires. There's a thin line between genius and insanity, and James Hutchings has just crossed it - but from which direction?

The New Death and others Details

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Author : James Hutchings

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From Reader Review The New Death and others for online ebook

Midu Hadi says

I got this book, from Making Connections for free, in exchange for an honest review. Get your copy here.

The God of the Poor:

The gods are dividing the world between themselves but who will rule the poor?

How the Isle of Cats got its Name:

A sorceress on her quest to rule the world, only to be thwarted by cats!

The Enemy Within:

A local man goes to extraordinary lengths so he wouldn't be mistaken for a foreigner!

The End:

A camping trip leads to human beings becoming extinct.

A Date with Destiny:

No, literally!

Everlasting Fire:

Ironic Comeuppance in hell, Lilly and an incubus!

The Face in the Hill:

You ask it a question and the Face answers.. or not.

The Uncharted Isle:

Who doesn't think of the "one that got away" and where they might be right now. But do they ever think about you?

Compatibility :

Compatibility is very important-the color of your favorite wine might make or break a relationship.

The Scholar & the Moon:

A city where the Moon rules the temperament of its people and a scholar who seeks to defy the power of such a ruler.

The Doom That Was Laid Upon Fame:

How reality tv came into being.

Fame's Beloved:

Would you want this job?

The Name of the Helper:

Think before you promise someone a "piece of meat".

The Warring Gods:

Love & Sex.

The Adventure of the Murdered Philanthropist:

A parody of Sherlock Holmes-quite funny.

When Love Calls:

Are you in love with your phone?

Death and the Merchant:

You can't escape death.

Lost, Feral or Stray:

A man tries to attract the interest of a vet in his own unique way.

The Jeweled City:

An author's fictional characters go on a strike!

Rumpelstiltskin:

"If you can't do anything else, get into politics."

The Producer:

On remakes and heaven and hell.

The Bird and the Two Trees:

Paradoxes

Monsters:

Which is the scariest-Werewolves, Vampire, Ghosts, Wendigos or Foreigners?

The Prince & the Sky-Maiden:

Rapunzel-esque story.

The New Death:

Death falls in love!

The New Magazine:

The ending was a let down.

The Perfect Woman:

Have you met the perfect woman yet?

Legend-the story of Kevin Marley:

How do you raise a demon by accident? By making an album, of course!

The Construction Workers of Telelee:

Replacing the construction workers with robots..not a good idea!

The New God:

Armorian Idol-be a deity for one whole year!

The Death of the Artist:

Cats and their evil powers.

Two Brothers:

A drug dealer and the CEO of a cigarette company.

The God of the City of Dust:

One god kicks out another!

The Dragon Festival:

A dragon at a festival isn't what it seems.

Singles Bar:

Name says it all.

The Auto-Pope:

Auto Pope came with its own set of problems.

Todd:

Something is preying on women and only Todd can stop it.

Sigrun and the Shepherd:

She loved him and he didn't know who she was.

the Morning Post:

More of a collection of funny one-liners.

The Handsome But Impossibly Demanding Prince**The Exchange:**

Too much a good thing..

Mourning Has Broken:

Grief does funny things to some people!

Temptation:

A sorcerer loses interest in living and decides to change that.

Local News:

Time heals..Time kills.

Poems:

If My Life Was Filmed

Under the Pyramids
The Prince of the Howling Forest
The Moon Sailed Sadly Through The Sky
Weary Love
The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune
May Every Woman
The Apprenticeship
Law and Justice
The Sailor
The Garden of Admopha
The Lamb's Speech
That Which Unites Us
Unprotected
I heard the Mermaids singing
Diamanda and the Isle of Wives
My Cat is not like other Cats
Untitled
Charon

What I liked:

There were some really good stories-**The End, Everlasting Fire, The Uncharted Isle** being three of my favorite ones.

Like always, an anthology is a many flavored ice cream cone.

What I didn't like:

There are too many stories/poems to be compiled into one anthology.

The author has a beef with "Commerce" and I got it the first time. I didn't need to be beaten over the head with it.

A collection of witty, humorous and some thought provoking writing.

James Steele says

A collection of short, narrative stories. Like a collection of modern folktales, gods such as Death, Time and Modesty are often personified, but with a modern twist. Gods alongside cellphones and facebook, demons presented in strange fictional worlds populated by sorcerers and magic which turns out to be a clever allegory about pop culture. My favorites include:

"The New God" One of the surprise ending stories that seems to be about ancient peoples in old times...only to stab the reader through the funny bone and make us laugh at the present.

"The Scholar and the Moon" The first story in the collection that really grabbed me. In this town, the people's moods are set and reset every month by the moon. Some months the moon will turn everyone into murders. Other months everyone will become honest and compassionate. There is no way to tell, or to prepare. So what happens to the one man who isn't affected? It's quite a memorable tale set in a strange world full of old-world imagery and macabre humor.

"Everlasting Fire" A comedic story about two demons falling in love. Most of the stories in the collection have this motif going on: plague-era, old-world imagery and humor mixed with modern perspective. The mixture works very well here.

"The Warring Gods" A very short story about the gods of Sex and Lust that is potent and biting.

"When Love Calls" Can't find love? There's an app for that. Who needs humans when we have smartphones?

"The End" Monsters, it turns out, are not rare at all. What's the point of being a monster is nobody's around to be scared of you?

"Two Brothers" Another piece of short satire about the hypocrisy of what we consider success in the modern world.

The strange juxtaposition of gothic settings and characters with modern technology and satire is appealing and memorable. Highly recommended for those entranced by the plague-era artwork populated by dancing skeletons, those who want to see what happens when Death falls in love, and why cats always hide under buildings.

Thomm Quackenbush says

Originally posted at Xenex.

Amber, who read some of the stories while resting her head on my chest, referred to this book as The New Death... of Jokes. This was not, as you may imagine, a compliment. I retorted that I was inclined to subtitle this review "The food is terrible and the portions are so small".

The book is 44 short stories, some of which involve the same allegorical figures, and 19 poems. There is ostensibly no logic to the placement of any of these, so there is no real flow from one to the next. After a few of the poems, little more than doggerel retellings of stories by famous authors, I decided to stick with the stories. I have been informed by other readers that I should have skipped the stories and stuck to the poems.

I am willing to concede that I may not be the target audience for this book, even for ninety-nine cents. On paper, it might seem I should be. I like fantasy, though not sword and sorcery, which many of the stories are. I love genre humor, but more along the lines of Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett, Christopher Moore, or Douglas Adams (which I gather the stories are supposed to be, but fail to come close enough to do anything but remind the reader of his weakness by comparison). I like the idea of postcard fictions or fiction so short I could have it finished in less than three minutes. Yet, pureed together in this book, I didn't care for the taste. For all its brevity, it took me weeks to actually get through because I kept groaning and putting it away so I did not throw my Kindle.

Several of the stories seem to go nowhere in particular, but are nevertheless pompous about getting there. I was infrequently drawn in to any, I was never immersed, because it feels Hutchings could not leave well enough alone when there was a "synonyms" button to abuse. Occasionally, this bad habit leads to pretty sounding words that do not mean what the author wishes them to. At other times, it seems that he does not trust the reader to reach conclusions on his own but must instead over-explain the meaning of his similes and metaphors. This is generally accomplished by the sin of telling rather than showing out of a commitment to

be short instead of good. That is, except for the times when he uses analogies that sound good but mean next to nothing (e.g., "... in the flames of the campfire his face seemed to glow like a wolf in the night." Unless this is a Chernobyl wolf, wolves are not known for glowing in the night. Perhaps he means their eyes, but that isn't what he wrote). He cannot seem to make his character sound like distinct beings, rather he throws the same irrationally haughty language into every mouth, from medieval mages to boys telling campfire stories. Furthermore, his internal mythology is glaringly inconsistent at times.

This is not to say that all his stories are without charm, but the best of them end where a great story should begin. I am aware Hutchings is going for a laugh with most of the stories, not forming great literature, but it reeks of untapped potential. Going for cheap laughs (and that is the only laugh he is seeking) does not excuse literary laziness. He has some clever ideas, briefly explored, but either buries the potential under overwriting or blows his load in the first paragraph and hopes you don't mind cuddling a bit in the wet spot.

The greatest sin I can accuse Hutchings of - and one I do not imagine he would not proudly cop to - is that he is addicted to puns. There are a couple of stories that are, without hyperbole, nothing but puns - no plot, characters, theme, idea - Just pun after pun that your grandmother forwarded you in an email from her AOL account. Remarkably, in one of the entirely pun stories, he manages to contradict himself three times within four paragraphs because he honestly doesn't seem to care about what he is writing when he has the opportunity to make the reader groan. While I am not certain how copyright law applies to a collection of puns strung together to give the illusion of paragraphs, it does not seem sporting to consider that an original work. Perhaps worse, he interrupts the intermittent flow of his stories with relentless parenthetical puns, which seemed like a lack of confidence (and invited unflattering comparisons to masters of the humorous interjection and footnote: the above mentioned Pratchett and Adams).

Another criticism, though not on the writing, is that the formatting is frequently just wrong. Paragraphs will split in the middle of sentences without punctuation. Since I believe he sent me the same version that is for sale, this is a minor drawback for readers. I am used to wonky formatting (I used to use a Sony Reader 900 and Calibre to convert books, so I would sometimes run across formatting that would have made a new user go cross-eyed), but the rest of the book at least looks professional.

Overall, this book may be worth your dollar if you happen to like puns rather a lot, but I do not think it was worth much of my time.

Sue Bridgwater says

James Hutchings; The new death

(Available online, details below)

Amazon: <http://www.amazon.com/New-Death-other...>

Smashwords:

<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/...>

Barnes & Noble: <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/the-n...>

Review by Sue Bridgwater

"44 stories. 19 poems. No sparkly vampires." This is James Hutchings' own description of his collection, although it could be described as 63 tales, fables, parables or fantasies; the poems are also narratives, and regardless of whether or not the narratives rhyme and scan, they have much in common with each other.

Hutchings' work is steeped in irony and intertextuality and pun and contemporary references that will doubtless date, but which bring a smile or a laugh. Here is one from 'Everlasting fire.'

Often they would go to a McDonald's (the only restaurant in Hell). There they would stare into each other's eyes, needing no words (which is lucky, because the McDonald's in Hell constantly have eight separate toddlers' birthday parties happening at once).

Beneath this surface facility with comedy, however, lies a depth of imaginative creativity that hits one between the eyes all the more effectively for its contrast with the lighter tones. Hutchings acknowledges some serious influences; Lovecraft, Howard, Ashton Smith, Dunsany. I also detected a hint of Pratchett, a touch of King and soupcon of Jasper fford. But as Tolkien reminded us, each writer creates their own dish from the ingredients bubbling in the cauldron of story, and Hutchings' deepest source of inspiration is the moral fable, the tale with a twist, the stories of ancient cultures that have always carried instruction and guidance for those few who have ears to hear.

The collection begins and ends with death – in fact, like many of the tales, the opening one is short enough to quote in full as a taster;

The God of the Poor

In the beginning of the world the gods considered all those things which did not have their own gods, to decide who would have responsibility and rulership. "I will rule all flowers that are sky-blue in colour," said the Sky-Father.

"I will listen to the prayers of migratory birds, and you all other birds," the goddess Travel said to him. And so it went.

At last all had been divided, save for one thing.

"Who," asked the Sky-Father "shall have dominion over the poor?"

There was an awkward silence, until the Sky-Father said,

"Come - someone must. Those with no gods will grow restless and cunning, and in time will cast us down, and we shall be gods no more."

"Not I," said blind Justice, and her stony face flashed a momentary smirk at the thought. "Why not Fame or Fortune?"

"Darling I don't think so," said the sister goddesses together.

There was a long pause. The gods shuffled their feet and avoided one another's gaze. At last a voice broke the silence.

"I will," said Death.

In the middle comes the title story, and at the end the tale in verse of the death of the last human being, mythologically expressed. I found every tale a delight; there are cats in a lot of them (definition of the Internet; a realm populated entirely by nude women and talking cats) which is an added bonus for some of us. However, the main strength of these works is simply good writing. Good storytelling in uncomplicated prose or verse styles with their roots in the oldest tales in the world. I recommend this collection heartily, and look forward to more by Hutchings.

Natshane says

One word: Amazing.

I think the last time I read this kind of book was when I was 6, *The New Death and others* is a compilation of

short stories and poems with a twist of humour and sarcasm that would certainly leave you laughing. The stories and poems in the book was told in both modern and classic adaptation, each story was entirely different yet commonly amusing. It was hard to pick favourites but I would say some stories were that funny/creative/unique that it left a huge impression in my mind (I even told the story of Rumpelstiltskin : One of the parody-chapter in this book) to my younger brother as a bedtime story and we shared a good laugh.

I have never come across such a unique book, and while I was reading this I was feeling like a young kid with an adult mind. The writing was smooth and very alluring, I was buried in the story after the first few pages (though I find myself confused in the first few pages) and laughed my way all through till the end of the book. There were several chapters of the stories which I praised for being a challenging read as well! I especially adore the poems in this book, some were actually better than the stories themselves!

As a conclusion: The book is a mix of mythology (parody-style) and weird human stories told in a fiction-ish, sarcastic, humorousness point of view. To sum it up: Truth and Reality conveyed through joke poems and stories.

I would recommend this to whoever who wanted a good laugh!

Reviewed by,
Natasha Anne
Dreamland Teenage Fantasy

S.W. says

When the author asked me to review *The New Death and Others* I was quite chuffed. I'm not normally one to review books but I thought it was a great time to start. The genre of this book isn't really what I would seek out to read, so it was going to be out of my normal comfort zone.

The New Death and Others is a collection of short stories, very short stories and poetry. The subject of these tales is quite dark at times. I have to say that some of them left me a little cold - meaning that I read them and at the end my thoughts were 'What was all that about?'. But on the other hand many of them showed me a completely different way of looking at things. I liked the clever way that Hutchings uses Death, Destiny, Fame and many others as characters
- certainly a different spin.

The author has a talent to look at everyday things and present them in a completely original way - and as you read - if you look behind the words you can pick up the hidden messages in the stories.

I see these stories as a very original way of reflecting on the norms of society. This can provoke the reader into personal contemplation about ourselves and how we live.

Note: I don't claim to be a pro-reviewer, I am a reader. My reviews are based on my personal thoughts around the story that the book is trying to tell. I'd rather focus on the story (which is the reason I read) rather than dissect the book and pass comment on writing style, structure or typos.

Mike says

Note: The author offered me a free copy of his latest book, *The New Death and Others*, in exchange for a review. (Apparently a LOT of folks got the same offer. This is probably a good move on his part from a marketing perspective.)

In all honesty I probably would not have bought the book on my own initiative, since it is in e-book format only. Even at \$.99 (practically free!) I'm not interested in buying e-books, since I don't use a Kindle or Nook and stare at a screen most of the work day all ready. But if you want to buy it, you can use Amazon (<http://www.amazon.com/New-Death-other...>) or Smashwords (<http://www.smashwords.com/books/view/...>). So I printed out the PDF as a digest-sized booklet so I could read it and tore through it at a few breaks and lunches at work.

The book is a collection of short and very short stories, poems, and jokes. (The jokes may technically be extremely brief stories or poems, but they look like excerpts from some comedian's routine --maybe Stephen Wright). Example: from *The morning post*:

"He turned on the radio. It was the mime hour. He turned down the volume, but that just made the mime clearer.

He looked at his mail. He'd been invited to a bondage party. He couldn't go: he was tied up. Anyway the last time he went to a swingers' party some guy accused him of not looking at his girlfriend.

There was an invitation to a family reunion. His great-great grandfather had been kicked out of Ireland for not starving. When he came to America he met up with an Englishman and a Scotsman. They got a job walking into bars to give comedians ideas. During Prohibition they joined the Amish and walked into barns."

Some funny lines in there, but not the book's strong suit.

The poems are a mix of completely original verses and adaptations of some classic stories (R.E. Howard, H.P. Lovecraft, Clark Ashton Smith, Lord Dunsany). These are generally entertaining but read more like song lyrics than poems, in my opinion. As Scottsz points out in his review (<http://scottsz.posterous.com/review-t...>), the H.P. Lovecraft piece in particular reads like something Iron Maiden would do, or maybe Nile. There is a bit of repetition in all the adaptations. Some of the repetition is effective and some is awkward, making me think he needed some filler for some verses. For example, near the end of "Under the pyramids" we have:

I stumbled, howling in the dark
in misery and fear
perhaps for days, perhaps for weeks
or for ten thousand years.

Perhaps for days, perhaps for weeks
beyond all and guilt or shame. (...)

Hardly a mortal sin, and I'm not really a big poetry fan, so it doesn't spoil the poems for me but it did break my concentration. [on second thought, this may just be a poetry or ballad form I'm unfamiliar with]

The largest part of the book is the short stories proper, which come in at least three kinds: straight fantastic

fiction (for example, Todd, The dragon festival, and The city of dust); fable/fairy tale style shorts which often have a twist, moral, or joke ending (for example, most of stories of the "gods", Monsters, and The bird and the two trees), and lastly a number of pun-filled romps (Everlasting fire, The adventure of the murdered philanthropist). Maybe a fourth category, which overlaps the first three, are the satires...at least a fourth or third of the stories include satire (ranging from the juvenile to the really biting).

I enjoyed most of the stories. The 'twist endings,' while not used in every one, were common enough that by the time I was getting to the end, I was a little annoyed by them. But some of the stories were really, really good, and perhaps the only 'failing' of the collection is its unevenness. Mr. Hutchings may have done well to have an editor pare this one down to a smaller collection, or perhaps arrange them into sections. As it stands the shift from humor to horror is mostly at random, and the only organizing principle seems to be to alternate between prose and poetry. I think a much slimmer volume collecting just the "gods" stories (Love, Fame, Destiny, Death etc.), and another with just the straighter fiction, and perhaps another of just poetry, would be workable, or better yet if the stories and poems that are feel more unfinished or derivative were omitted or revised...

The influence of Lord Dunsany is very strongly evident, and for this reason I will certainly keep the digest I printed on my book shelf and re-read those parts I really liked.

In fact I probably would have been better off reading it in bits, rather than straight through. The puns and satire probably work better in small doses.

Some readers might also be a little put off by his aggressive moralizing about politics and religion, although in my case I found nothing that offended me...but I'm pretty left wing and irreligious.

So, if you like fantastic fiction, satire, and fable, you will really like this collection. If you take literature terribly seriously, you'll hate a lot of it. If you like Lord Dunsany but wish he was around to satirize reality TV and the digital age, you'll love it. Despite all my reservations above, I loved this little collection.

Tim says

This compendium reads more like a writer's sketchbook or workbook than a publishable portfolio. There is no central focus or thematic organization to this collection. The prose pieces are admirable by themselves, and they would create a charming—or chilling—world if assembled with more reason. The major flaw lies in the alternating poems that distract from any enjoyable flow.

Presented in some peculiar typesetting, the prose pieces are parables wherein characters such as Fame, Fortune, Destiny, Famine, or Death discourse with considerable humor and struggle with moribund morals. Hutchings' invented persons and places, such as the Mayajat, Telelee, or the Owls of Yib, smack of Douglas Adams' wit and result in Rod Serling's thaumaturgy.

Humor within these pieces runs a gamut from risible malaprops to slangy puns to outright groaners. Simple jokes can lie in converting names (H.P.) Lovecraft to Hatecraft, or punishing Death with a life sentence, or detailing altruistic Sir Benjamin Envoleant on the subject of benevolence. Footnotes are mere devices to insert additional or extended punnery. Humor can be tenuous and most comedy applied here reeks of locker-room chortles rather than consistent and polished routine.

The verse constructions interrupting the prose waft more as doggerel than Dionysian craft. They seem student attempts and imitation than studied craft. The meters are inconsistent although considerable attention had been given to end-rhyme patterns. Still, the poetry is more loony than lyrical.

Nevertheless and if the above-articulated points are ignored, Hutchings' offerings could rise beyond being a mere pastiche of prosody. For the next two months, read one item while strumming a lute and pretend you are Scheherazade.

Jennifer says

Originally posted on my blog: <http://a-librarians-library.blogspot...>

This 100 page work is comprised of 44 short stories and 19 poems. To me, some of the individual stories read like a telling of a mythology, complete with the mythological morals, which is an aspect of this work that I can appreciate. There are also a lot of vignettes that are purely satirizing the world today, which are humorous. But then there were other stories that completely lost me, whether because I didn't quite understand some of the names/terms that were thrown in to the story, or a drastic switch between the "mythological" elements and the modern elements.

Some of the poems did not sit so well with me. Most of poems took the very standard 4-line stanza format with some of rhyme scheme. This is fine. But what needs to stay consistent is the use of punctuation. Punctuation in poetry is such a powerful element, and every piece of punctuation (or omitting it) should be purposeful, and there are times where I feel like there was an inconsistency in punctuation usage. And because of this, the poems irked me. If you are going to correctly punctuate sentences within the poetic lines, then it needs to be continued throughout. But "Under the Pyramids" is an example of inconsistent punctuation, where some of his stanzas have correct punctuation, and other stanzas have no punctuation. And it just doesn't sit well with me, and it takes away from the enjoyment of the poem itself because the way in which I read it is thrown off.

Despite of some of my unsettling feelings, it is obvious and apparent that James Hutchings has a knack for linguistics; his language usage throughout this work is really effective! With his language choice, he creates vivid metaphors and powerful descriptions which I thoroughly enjoyed reading. However, with such a large vocabulary, there were times that I felt he threw in a "bigger" word just because he could, and sometimes the vocabulary usage also took away from story being told.

Probably my favorite short story in the bunch was "The End," which tells a tale of 5 friends who all find out they are each some sort of paranormal creature (vampire, demon, etc) and are now wondering if all of the humans have become extinct. Just the witticism that fills that story, along with the intriguing idea of such a paranormal future, made for an interesting thought. I also really enjoyed the snarky story told in "The Doom that Was Laid Upon Fame"--there is such a truth to that one!

Overall, the flow of this collection of short stories was a little off for me. While I understand that there does not have to be a connection from story to story, I feel that some sort of flow should be evident in a compilation such as this, and to me there is not. The order choice, if it was deliberated, is not evident or prominent to me. Though I did think that the ending poem was well chosen.

I gave this collection 2 stars. I found a lot of good qualities within this Short Story Collection. However,

there is some definite room for polish, and maybe some reorganization/evidence of connection to be more prominent. Overall, I found many of the pieces in this work to be engaging and humorous, while still others I felt like there was almost "trying to hard" effort. Hutchings has a great writing style, but something in this short story collection was just lost to me.

Katy says

This review can also be found on my blog, Now is Gone on June 22, 2012.

Book Info: Genre: Short stories/Poetry; Fantasy/magical realism

Reading Level: Adult

Recommended for: Readers

My Thoughts: These very enjoyable short stories and poems run the gambit from humorous – the demoness who inflicts ironic punishments – to Lovecraftian – the poem about Cairo – to thought-provoking - “The God of the Poor” among others. I found myself laughing (for example, at the Holmes satire), thinking and thoroughly enjoying myself throughout reading this book. There was not a single story or poem in this book that I did not enjoy. There are a lot of themes that show up time and again – the town of Telelee, the various gods and goddesses, puns galore, thought-provoking ideas...

If you like stories of any type, if you like reading at all, you will definitely find something in this little book to enjoy. I imagine that most people will enjoy them all, just like I did. If you don't yet have this terrific little book, go grab a copy now!

Disclosure: I received a free e-copy of this book from the author in exchange for an honest review.

Synopsis: Death gets a roommate...

An electronic Pope faces a difficult theological question...

A wicked vizier makes a terrible bargain...

44 stories. 19 poems. No whiny vampires. There's a thin line between genius and insanity, and James Hutchings has just crossed it – but from which direction?

Amy Corwin says

The New Death and Others

By James Hutchings

Let me start by saying that I loved this book, but it's hard to describe exactly what it is because it doesn't really fit neatly into your standard fiction genres. But please, don't let that dissuade you from checking it out. I'm mortally afraid that I'll turn potential readers off by reviewing it and my poor attempts at trying to describe exactly what it is. But imagine, if you will, that Saki (H. H. Munro) didn't die in WWI and decided

to rewrite Ovid's *Metamorphosis* and a few Lovecraftian short stories. Many of the stories and poems in this collection had Saki's sly, often acerbic and dark, wit and a definite mythological/phantasmagorical slant. The book is a fascinating collection of short stories, poems, and tiny vignettes, each small fantasy ending with a Saki-esque twist. There is, quite literally, something for everyone, as long as you have a rather mordant and morbid sense of humor.

The author describes it as dark fantasy and it is that. There is definitely a Greek myth feeling to the stories, but they tend to be much more amusing than the typical myths. And it isn't all fantasy. Or rather, I guess it is, but my favorite story in the collection was *The Adventure of the Murdered Philanthropist* that literally had me laughing out loud. I was reading it in bed and my husband thought I had lost my mind. When I picked up the book the next night to continue, he looked at me, sighed, and said, "You're not reading that again, are you?" I was clearly disturbing his fifth reading of one of his books on the Civil War. Or else he was aggravated that he wasn't having as much fun reading his book as I was reading this one. Get over it.

Anyway, *The Adventure of the Murdered Philanthropist* was a new Sherlock Holmes-type story, except a lot more fun, complete with murder and a brilliant consulting detective. Just to give you a taste, there is one point in the story where one of the characters is described as the sort who makes large contributions to the RSPCA. Then there was a footnote defining the RSPCA as The Royal Society for the Practice of Cruelty to Atheists. That footnote induced one of the moments that disturbed my husband so much: I broke out laughing. Okay, maybe you had to be there, though I'm glad you weren't because our bed isn't quite that large.

So there were stories like *The Adventure of the Murdered Philanthropist* (I would have bought the book just to get that story—it was that good) which continues the Sherlock Holmes tradition; *Under the Pyramids*, based on an H.P. Lovecraft story; *The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune*, based on a story by Robert E. Howard; *The Garden of Adompha*, based on a story by Clark Ashton Smith; and many, many others.

As I said, there is quite literally, something for everyone who has a sense of humor. It is difficult to convey just how much I enjoyed the various stories. I'm not much for poetry, but I did enjoy a few pieces just because of the wry humor.

I loved this book. I just wish I could convey a better feel for this collection. If you enjoyed stories like Saki's *The Open Door* or *The Great God Pan*, then you will adore *The New Death and Others*. I hope I've convinced you to give it a try.

Just don't read it in a setting where they're likely to call the men with the long-sleeved, white jackets if you start laughing insanely in public.

Happy Reading!

Janus the Erudite Artist says

This book is way outside my comfort zone but since I've been trying to move outside my boundaries, the *New Death and Others* is just one of the books I needed to do so.

I've read a couple of anthologies before, but usually it's a collection of stories and poems from a variety of authors, so I was a little surprised knowing that the author of this book solely wrote the stories and poems. I

may not be a writer but I know that it's hard to create anecdotes that would only take up a few pages and yet must have the establishment of characters and a moving story. Plus the idea alone is something hard to accomplish; so for that, kudos to you, James Hutchings!

Now on with the book's content. What is it about? Well, the title and the cover pretty much says it all. I can't say I loved all the stories but there are several that stood out and I somehow came to like. For instance, when I read *The End*, I liked the irony of what occurred with the characters, sorry for being vague but I'd be giving away the entire story if I go any further.

I also like the touch of a Lovecraft tale. While I was taking up 3D Arts, we had a class called "Character Illustration" and part of our lesson was to get inspiration from H.P. Lovecraft's works and create fantasy creatures. That was not an easy take for me so I commend the author's ability to construct something out of that.

I do have to say that I struggled with some of the stories. I guess it's because they're not the type of stories I encounter with the books I'm accustomed reading. I also feel like some parts may've been unpolished or unclear to me; or maybe I just don't get the idea of.

This may not have been a favorite of mine but I admire Hutchings for his creativity and I'd surely like to see more of his works.

Masquerade Crew says

MARK'S REVIEW

This was my first serious foray into flash fiction, and the experience didn't disappoint. Since this is flash fiction, the author doesn't go into a lot of detail with each story. Some of these pieces are like a joke you would tell your buddy, especially the piece entitled "The End" which appears near the beginning. That one made me smile, mostly because of the punchline.

There's something for everyone with this anthology. Some pieces are more serious than others, but the general feel of the entire piece is not super serious. I'm not into poetry, so I didn't read even one of them all the way through. I started one or two. They were written well; just not my thing.

The poetry is long, spanning several screens on my Kindle. I guess you could classify them as epic. I would imagine there are some of would like these very much. If the preciseness of his narration is true of his poetry, he won't disappoint there as well.

Due to the price, I would recommend this to anyone, especially if you don't have a lot of time to read. It took me a while to read these since I would read when I only had a few minutes. If I had more free time, I read something else more involved.

The Masquerade Crew (<http://s.tt/1lLnC>)

Vanya D. says

Umm, okay. I got this book - a collection of short stories and poems - from the author in return for an honest review. I hope he doesn't change his mind when he reads what I have to say about his work. LOL
Anyway, just a side note here - I didn't read the poems. Sorry, but I'm not a poetry person.

Let me start off by saying that the stories are all dark humor, dark fantasy, dead on sarcastic and super thought provoking. The author addresses very important issues in each story, though they are so well masked, that if you don't use your brains, you'd be left gaping at the page wondering "what the hell did I just read?"

Each story is thought provoking, deep on a shallow level and so out there that it's really brilliant. They're all written in a creative, sarcastic and totally new way that made me laugh hysterically.

I'VE NEVER READ ANYTHING LIKE IT!!!

I can categorize it either as insanely mad or totally brilliant, and nothing in between. And I can definitely say that this isn't a book for just a random read. It's light and heavy at the same time; pointless and intrusive; moralistic in a very odd kind of way. I recommend it to people who like to have a good laugh when they encounter the truth revealed in the most bizarre ways. Like through talking cats or the like.

I really liked the following stories (though the list isn't full, since I didn't record the titles after the 50% threshold):

- *The end
- *Everlasting fire
- *Rumpelstiltskin
- *The New Death
- *The New God

Veronica Morfi says

This book was very different from anything I've read lately, it was a fresh breath of humour, sarcasm and irony that I truly enjoyed.

It consists of a lot of short stories and a few poems. I especially loved the stories that were bigger cause all the others were over too soon and I wanted more. This is one of the most unique books I've ever read and had me laughing at most of the times. I am a very ironic person and love to read about ironic characters when I get the chance, but this book was full of irony and sarcasm I think I took a good dose of it for the next few months. Surprisingly I even found myself enjoying the poems, sometimes even more than the stories, I say surprisingly cause I hate poems... :P

If you need something to make you laugh and light up your mood this is the book for you.
