



## The Best of All Possible Wars

*Larry Niven , Greg Bear , Jerry Pournelle , S.M. Stirling*

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Invasion seemed like a good idea at the time, but the catlike Kzin should have been polite to those apes from Earth. Humans know that there's more than one way to skin a cat -- even a Kzin.

A collection of favorite stories from the first five volumes of the Maz-Kzin Wars series.

## The Best of All Possible Wars Details

Date : Published May 1st 1998 by Baen (first published 1998)

ISBN : 9780671878795

Author : Larry Niven , Greg Bear , Jerry Pournelle , S.M. Stirling

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction

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# From Reader Review The Best of All Possible Wars for online ebook

## Peter Tillman says

The Man-Kzin Wars is probably the best -- and most successful -- of the shared-world series. Now up to number 8, it has spawned a "best-of", and it's pretty good: two Larry Niven shorts, a Greg Bear / S.M. Stirling novelette, and a Jerry Pournelle / S.M. Stirling short novel.

The Larry Niven opener, "The Warriors"(1966) has a certain clunky charm -- it was his first Kzin story and the first story he tried to sell. He dreamed it up in math class, working up to flunking out of Caltech, and rewrote it for years, "trying out what I was learning from my correspondence writing course." It's enough to give an amateur writer hope.

The second Larry Niven, "Madness Has its Place" (1990), is professional but minor. In "The Man who would be Kzin" (Greg Bear & S.M. Stirling, 1991), a powerful projective telepath leads the Kzin Second Invasion Fleet into disaster. It's clever, logical and smoothly-written. I enjoyed rereading it.

Jerry Pournelle & S.M. Stirling's "In the Hall of the Mountain King" (1992) occupies two-thirds of the book. It's not flawless, with a pointless Buford Early / ARM-as-Illuminati sub-plot, plus it is a sequel to "The Children's Hour" -- but it moves smartly (after a slow start) and if the ending doesn't raise up the hair on the back of your neck, you probably shouldn't be reading this stuff.

I believe all eight of the Man-Kzin collections are still in print, and the publisher obviously hopes you'll go out and buy more after reading this "teaser" collection. Be warned -- they're habit-forming. The series remains high-quality throughout, though there are a few clunkers. It's pretty much required reading for Niven's Known Space fans. My personal favorite is Dean Ing's "Cathouse" & "Briarpatch", actually a novel, awkwardly split between Man-Kzin Wars 1 & Man-Kzin Wars 2.

My 1998 review:

<https://www.sfsite.com/09b/man41.htm>

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## Nick says

The two Larry Niven stories in this volume were of great historical interest, since the first one shows that the Kzin were part of the earliest development of his story universe, and the second one that the Kzin could inspire some really twisted fiction.

The other stories were very odd. The Greg Bear/S.M. Stirling story came across as better, but that may be because the fourth one, a Stirling/Jerry Pournelle collaboration, was a sequel to one that I don't recall reading, so a few things didn't really have a full impact on me.

By this point in the Man-Kzin War stories, there was enough about the Kzin to explain how and why a seemingly primitive carnivore species could ever be advanced enough to be in space, but also the stories speculated on whether the lower intelligence of the females was a deliberate choice in genetic modification. That bothered me. Yes, it's easier to justify than gene-linked intelligence, but it's much creepier in a lot of ways. An environment in which females were evolved for, say, protecting the young at the cost of brain power for other things would have worked just as well, and with less apparently evil intent on the part of some Kzin scientist at some point.

In any case, if you like interesting military science fiction, then half of this volume is that. The other half is weird, almost like a western movie set in space, but still interesting.

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### **Howard says**

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### **Farzana says**

The Best of the Man-Kzin Wars. This collection has the the short story, The Warriors, that began it all, and also the novelette, In the Hall of the Mountain King, of Large Son and Spots, and their companion, the human Jonah, making their way in the back country of Wunderland.

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