



Through a Tangled Wood

*Jamie Campbell , Katie French , Ariele Sieling , Sarah Dalton , Marijon Braden , Dee Ernst (Writing as) ,
H.S. Stone , Zoe Cannon*

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A variety of writers come together to twist traditional fairy tales into unusual and mysterious stories. From Beauty and the Beast, to Hansel and Gretel, to the Ugly Duckling, these stories will be sure to pull you into a fantastical world of princes, romance, and maybe a little science fiction.

"Plan B" by Katie French. When Nolan is selected as one of the few candidates to work in the Breeders' hospital, he thinks all his troubles are over. Now he can afford precious medicine to save his ailing father. He's heard of the Breeders' cruelty, of their inhuman experiments, but he's sure they're fabrications. Then he stumbles into the Plan B room and learns how truly awful the Breeders can be.

"Tailless" by Ariele Sieling. A retelling of the Ugly Duckling, set on a far away planet in an unknown galaxy. While fighting a war with her people's biggest enemy, young Bode struggles to understand why she feels out of place in her community, and why she, unlike her comrades, was born without a tail.

"I Am the Maid" by Sarah Dalton. A hostile zombie killing Maid Marian meets an ill-behaved ex-soldier Robin in this post-apocalyptic retelling of Robin Hood. When a young girl falls deathly sick, the two are forced to join forces in order to outwit the Sheriff, and the mysterious Guy Gisbon.

"Three Wishes" by Marijon Braden. When Aladdin rubbed the magic lamp, things went pretty well for him. But a few thousand years later, the world has changed and the genie is old, cranky, and doesn't play fair. Young Alison thinks she's found the answer to all her prayers, but instead finds that having wishes come true isn't all it's cracked up to be.

"Killing Snow White" by Jamie Campbell. A magical retelling of the story of Snow White, told entirely by the Evil Queen who supposedly tried to poison her. Think Snow White is innocent? Think again.

"A House in the Woods" by H.S. Stone. At the conclusion of a scavenger hunt for Old World artifacts, Hansel and Gretel find themselves lost on the outskirts of the city after dark. They stumble upon a house in the nearby woods, hoping that they will find help inside, but the house's inhabitant has other ideas.

"Flight" by Zoe Cannon. A retelling of Beauty and the Beast. Dragged to the palace at swordpoint, commanded to cure the cursed prince with a kiss, Lucia wants nothing more than to return to her solitary world of books and magical study. But she soon discovers that she and the prince share more in common than she could have imagined... and that the truth behind his curse could destroy—or save—they both.

Through a Tangled Wood Details

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From Reader Review Through a Tangled Wood for online ebook

Claudia says

I quite enjoyed plan B But felt some of the others were a bit of a let down. There was two I wished were a bit longer and a couple I'd skip if read again.

CJ says

Like all anthologies - some stories were better than others. There are definitely some authors in there I'm going find what else they have written. That's the good thing about collections and anthologies, they are a great teaser.

Rachael says

Review Posted at Rachael Turns Pages

Plan B

I really didn't know what to expect of this series of short stories coming into the novel. I knew it was a set of fairy tale retellings. The first is a retelling of Sleeping Beauty, but in a way I have never seen it done before. Nolan goes to work for the Breeders hospital to get money to help his ailing father. It isn't long before Nolan sees the Breeders cruelty and lives through the nightmare with his supervisor Samuel. This first story was achingly beautiful. Nolan cared deeply for his father and the sleeping girls. He wanted to do what was right in every situation even if it meant losing his life. What a nightmare Nolan went through, but the ending of Nolan's story was so beautiful that everything he went through was worth it.

Tailless

I don't think this will be my favorite short story of the novel, but it was pretty good. This one was a retelling of The Ugly Duckling. Bode is a soldier. She has no tail and can not shoot the same kind of gun the other soldiers can. I can't say too much more because I would spoil the ending. The implications of the Ugly Duckling of wanting acceptance were a big part of this story. I feel like that is problem enough just being a woman in the military, but adding these other flaws make it even more difficult. The ending the of the short story was great. It explained so much about her situation and had the aha sweet moment attached.

I am the Maid

I didn't overly care for this retelling of Robin Hood. The story was way too long for this set of short stories. I found myself bored with Marian and Robin talking and not doing anything. The ending of the story proved to be excited and intense as they reached their conclusion. I love the story of Robin Hood, but I have difficulties with book adaptations of it. I haven't really found any that I have loved. I think this might just be another example of a Robin Hood adaptation that didn't fit with me. I did like that the story took Marian's side of the story more and made her the hero versus Robin Hood. Robin Hood was more of a sidekick in this story.

Three Wishes

This is my favorite story of the book so far. This one was a retelling of Aladin or One Thousand and One

Nights. The girl in the story Ali has a lot of spunk. She thinks about her decisions carefully and weighs her options. Her best friend Shel is also a noble character in this book. She helps Ali to make her wishes and stands by her side. Then there is Etok, the genie. Etok proves to be a sneaky genie that makes these wishes sound great, but doesn't follow through. Not all genie are as helpful as Genie in the Disney movie. The ending of this story is truly shocking and that is what won me over. Unlike other stories in this anthology I was able to read this story in one sitting without feeling bored. I think so far this is the story that has won me over.

Killing Snow White

I have Cinderella is Evil on my computer also from Jamie Campell and after reading Killing Snow White I can't wait to dive into that one. I loved how this story switched places. The queen was not evil, Snow White was. The queen felt guilty for never building a mother-daughter relationship with Snow White. It also followed the original Grimm Fairy Tale extremely well. It also added to the Grimm fairy tale also because who said that only Snow White gets to have a happily ever after. This was by far my favorite story of the anthology.

A House In the Woods

This one was a retelling of Hansel and Gretel. A fairy tale I actually don't know a whole lot about. I really like the changes the author made to the story and the author added a lot of depth to the fairy tale. I overall thought this story was a great addition to the book and had a modern feel to it, but still felt like a fairy tale in the wood.

Flight

This was one I did not like at all. I don't actually know which fairy tale it was off of. It had a feel of beauty and the beast, but it wasn't totally beauty in the beast. This one was much too long and left me feeling bored while reading it. It got to be repetitive. Lucia was a strong female character which I liked while the Prince was bitter and mean.

That's a Wrap

Overall I think Through a Tangled Wood was worth my time to read. I did not like some story and I liked others. Killing Snow White was my favorite of this anthology. I also really enjoyed Three Wishes. Through a Tangled Wood is still a Kindle Freebie on Amazon so if this review has made you interested go ahead and check it out.

Jenn says

They were interesting little short story twists. Of course they make me sad they're so short and long for actual novels.

Zoe's Human says

Like most anthologies, this one is a mixed bag. Conceptually, all of the stories are excellent. Dystopian, post-apocalyptic, zombies, and science fiction tales mix in with modern and classic retellings.

While a couple of the stories left me a bit flat, there were some real gems in here. In particular, I enjoyed "Plan B" by Katie French "A House in the Woods" by H.S. Stone. I will definitely be taking a look at the other work of some of the authors who contributed. Special thanks to Zoe Cannon for making Beauty and the Beast an actual love story instead of the creepy Stockholm Syndrome advocacy it's always been.

At the time of this review, this book could be downloaded for free on Amazon. :)

Ida Electra says

This collection was somewhat difficult to rate, as I enjoyed some parts well enough, while others less. Overall I enjoyed the atmosphere of this book, and most of the stories had some strong points, but unfortunately most of them had some less strong points too. I had hoped for more explicit retellings (some don't qualify at all in my opinion), and several of the endings let me down. Though I did really enjoy "Three wishes", "A house in the woods", and "Flight" was probably my favourite.

J. Hamlet says

A good short story anthology can be difficult to find, even if it has an intriguing theme. Individual styles can clash and make the anthology disjointed or they can mesh too much and leave the reader with a feeling of sameness that starts to feel dull and boring. Through a Tangled Wood is more than good, though. It is something truly special. A collection of fairy tale retellings, the anthology transports these stories to post-apocalyptic, alien, and dystopian fictional universes. Jamie Campbell, Katie French, Arielle Sieling, Sarah Dalton, Marijon Braden, H.S. Stone and Zoe Cannon all do a superb job with their fairy tale retellings. Some of the fictional universes they created are so fleshed out I wanted to read more and see what else could be done with such a richly textured environment. These stories did what they needed to do in hitting or subverting all the high notes of the fairy tale but did not overstay their welcome. Most left me wanting more, with moods and settings that ranged from bleak to comical, all while retaining an undercurrent of dread.

My favorites of the anthology were definitely Katie French's "Plan B," Zoe Cannon's "Flight," and Sarah Dalton's "I Am the Maid." All three definitely show this anthology and the concept of fairy tale retellings at their best. "Plan B" spins an almost unrecognizably suspenseful tale that transports sleeping beauty to a despair-filled and mysterious dystopia. "Flight" takes beauty and the beast and changes both lead characters into rebellious youth craving to be mages in a high fantasy setting. "I Am the Maid," puts Robin Hood in a zombie apocalypse and changes him into a sidekick, making Maid Marian into a cunning and lethal hero in the process.

By keeping the number of stories down, the anthology feels short and brief but also lets each of the individual stories stretch out a bit when needed. Given the diversity of authors and story types, Through a Tangled Wood always left me wondering what would happen next and what creative twists would be applied to these well known tales. It never disappointed.

Laura Martinelli says

I'm conflicted on where I stand with this collection, because while I didn't dislike it, I found it to be fairly

underwhelming in terms of content. Considering that this begins with a fairly disturbing retelling of *Sleeping Beauty* (which is a disturbing fairy tale to begin with), and then to have two comical and somewhat childish stories following three dark stories is really a tonal whiplash for me. The weakest story in the collection, "Killing Snow White", could have been a funny dark comedy, but it never gets there. Also, that story lost points for directly referencing the Disney version—the dwarfs don't have specific personality traits in the original story. "Three Wishes" also suffers from this as well, particularly considering the last wish in the story. Aside from "Plan B" (the aforementioned *Sleeping Beauty*), none of the other stories really stood out for me. "Flight" was the only other strong story in the collection, but everything else in this collection is worth skipping.

Bonnie Dale Keck says

Not kindle unlimited, might be permafrees or something as that, freebie day or whatever, though got it a while back.

Not going to go through all of them specifically, the good one seems to be the beauty and the beast one but even that one didn't luv it just at least liked it unlike the others, some of the others well the 1st one took me forever to figure out what it was supposed to be {not the ugly duckling one, just didn't like that one much}, the only reason it even got a 2 is because of the one mentioned first, otherwise would have given it a 1.

the goodreads 2 stars is for the amazon 2 stars, have pretty much given up trying to make them equal in meaning, just stars

J. says

I found this book through having read an eARC of Sarah Dalton's book, *White Hart*, and seeing that it was free on Amazon, I tried it out. My feelings about the stories vary a lot from story to story, but overall, I liked it well enough.

"Plan B" is really, really creepy--which is not something I'm drawn to as a reader, but it was also slightly disappointing as a short story because it gives hints of a world significantly different from ours without ever developing the story enough for us to see what it is. However, I suspected--correctly, it turns out--that it takes place in another universe that the author did develop in more detail. I think this story will appeal to readers who like creepy dystopia.

I struggled with "Tailless" because I didn't understand enough about the world to really connect with what was happening, and I only had surface impressions of the characters from what the story said. (view spoiler) but overall, again, not quite enough (or perhaps too much) world-building in the short story for me to feel significantly grounded.

While I wasn't a big fan of *White Hart*, "I am the Maid" was my favorite story in this collection. Slightly upper YA, and I didn't love the sometimes crude way the characters talked, but overall I found it inventive, with just enough detail to make a short story--well, short, but also satisfying. Though I'm not a fan of zombies, this convinced me that I should still keep an eye on Dalton's work.

"Three Wishes", "Killing Snow White", and "A House in the Woods" are all fairly predictable retellings that don't deviate much from the actual story. Of the three, my favorite was "A House in the Woods", which is generally well-written (though, seriously, what a creepy and violent fairy tale). "Three Wishes" is cute, though I didn't feel any deep connection to it--but I understand that writing a short story with enough depth to allow a reader to connect to the characters and world while also keeping it short is tricky.

"Killing Snow White" is interesting in that it gives you the "evil stepmother's" point of view, but I thought it was a bit too long for what it is (which is not something I normally say). It keeps the fairy tale element of not really explaining why someone is so evil and why someone is so good, but just switches the places of Snow White and the stepmother in those roles. So--interesting, but not the kind of depth I was hoping for in a retelling. Also, I found the overabundance of comma splices in this story distracting.

I'm also not a fan of mages/witchcraft/extensive magic in stories, but I found that I liked "Flight". It is a sweet retelling of "Beauty and the Beast" that manages to develop a level of believable romance and resolution in a short story.

Although the varying levels of paranormal and sci-fi are not, perhaps, in line with my natural preference in what I read (I do tend toward high fantasy and fairy tale retellings that aren't necessarily super dark, more a la Cruel Beauty), the stories were still fine overall.

Montzalee Wittmann says

Through a Tangled Wood (Breeders #2.5) by Jamie Campbell is a pretty good collection of short stories. I think there was one 3 star but the rest were 4 stars. My favorite was "Tailless". Good book!

Julie Powell says

An enjoyable set of fairytale inspired stories.

My favourite is from Sarah Dalton, as I always enjoy her stories.

Recommended to lovers of fantasy and fairytales.

Matt says

3 of the stories were incredible. Killing snow white, a house in the woods, and flight. The rest I really could have done without. Plan B was decent but that's about it.

Mandy says

Enjoyed most of these YA fairy story retellings

Rachel Russell says

I've had this on my kindle for quite a while and only recently have got around to reading it. It's a very mixed bag of anthologies by authors that I am new to, it introduced me to some new authors that I will be looking up in the future and from Sarah Dalton. If you love Fantasy and fairy stories then this will be a book for you, but overall I found it a really good read.
