



My Favorite Fantasy Story

Martin H. Greenberg (Editor), Matthew J. Costello (Contributor), Debra Doyle (Contributor), Elisabeth Waters (Contributor), Jack Vance (Contributor), Fred Saberhagen (Contributor), Michelle Sagara West (Contributor), James D. Macdonald (Contributor), more... Mickey Zucker Reichert (Contributor), Gene Wolfe (Contributor), Morgan Llywelyn (Contributor), George R.R. Martin (Contributor), Jean Ingelow (Contributor), Neil Gaiman (Contributor), Katherine Kurtz (Contributor), L. Sprague de Camp (Contributor), Poul Anderson (Contributor), Andre Norton (Contributor), R.A. Lafferty (Contributor), M. John Harrison (Contributor), Rick Hautala (Contributor), M.R. James (Contributor), Barbara Kingsolver (Contributor), Charles de Lint (Contributor), Manly Wade Wellman (Contributor), Robert Bloch (Contributor), Charles Dickens (Contributor), Robert Silverberg (Contributor), Roger Zelazny (Contributor), Margaret Weis (Contributor), Marion Zimmer Bradley (Contributor), Various ...less

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Who do today's top fantasy writers read--and why? This was the question posed to some of the most influential authors in the field today. This book is their answer. Here are seventeen of the most memorable stories in the genre, each one personally selected by a well-known writer, and each prefaced by that writer's explanation of his or her choice. Here's your chance to enjoy familiar favorites, and perhaps to discover some wonderful new treasures. In each case, you'll have the opportunity to see the story from the perspective of a master of the field.

"Ghosts of Wind and Shadow" • Charles de Lint chosen by Tanya Huff

"Mazirian the Magician" • Jack Vance chosen by Robert Silverberg

"Troll Bridge" • Terry Pratchett chosen by Michelle West

"The Tale of Hawk" • Poul Anderson chosen by Mickey Zucker Reichert

"In Our Block" • R.A. Lafferty chosen by Neil Gaiman

"The Gnarly Man" • L. Sprague de Camp chosen by Terry Pratchett

"Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad" • M.R. James chosen by Morgan Llywelyn

"Homeland" • Barbara Kingsolver chosen by Charles de Lint

"Stealing God" • Debra Doyle and James D. Macdonald chosen by Katherine Kurtz

"Shadowlands" • Elisabeth Waters chosen by Marion Zimmer Bradley

"Mopsa the Fairy" • Jean Ingelow chosen by Gene Wolfe

"Liane the Wayfarer" • [Dying Earth] • Jack Vance (aka The Loom of Darkness) chosen by George R.R. Martin

"The Spring" • [John the Balladeer] • Manly Wade Wellman chosen by Andre Norton

"That Hell-Bound Train" • Robert Bloch chosen by Rick Hautala

"The Dancer from the Dance" • M. John Harrison chosen by Stephen R. Donaldson

"More Spinned Against" • John Wyndham chosen by Matt Costello

"The Bagman's Story" • Charles Dickens chosen by Margaret Weis

"Unicorn Variations" • Roger Zelazny (aka Unicorn Variation) chosen by Fred Saberhagen

My Favorite Fantasy Story Details

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From Reader Review My Favorite Fantasy Story for online ebook

Mike S says

I loved a few of these stories, unfortunately the majority of the stories were to me terrible. Unfortunately I can't recommend this book. If your library has it you could check it out without wasting money on it.

Suzi Ketch says

Short stories written by a variety of Fantasy authors.

Ben says

What an astoundingly terrible title for an otherwise very good anthology!

The anthology hosts a wide variety of stories from Charles Dickens to Terry Pratchett; what a mistake to give it such a offputting name! This is not a third-grader's book report, this is a very good collection that includes some great stories! Couldn't a title slightly more suggestive of the anthology's merit have been chosen?

(Then add to the terrible title the fact that Goodreads -- at least currently -- lists this book's description as that of a different anthology...of horror stories. Ugh.)

Once you're past the grievously unfortunate title, you'll find an excellent range of fiction tied by varying degrees to the genre of fantasy.

For example, there's more "traditional" fantasy ranging from the humorous story of *Cohen the Barbarian* by Terry Pratchett to the grimly brutal *Liane the Wayfarer* by Jack Vance. Knowing that the latter story was George R.R. Martin's contribution as editor is not in the least surprising once you read Vance's story.

On the edge of what might be considered "fantasy", there's the Dickens' lighthearted story from *The Pickwick Papers* of a man who, after having perhaps a bit too much to drink, had a strange old chair turn into an old man that helped him pursue his love interest. There's also Barbara Kingsolver's story of a girl's grandmother's death - that hardly contains mention of a fantastic element, let alone any explicit fantastic forces.

The variety is such that, if a reader has any interest in the genre of fantasy, there **has** to be a story that appeals - and undoubtedly, numerous that do not.

If your taste is anything like mine, do put in the effort to get past the first story by Charles de Lint: I still simply can't comprehend what his fans see in his writing. Or M. John Harrison's story *The Dancer from the Dance*: that was an incomprehensible collection of words that hardly seemed like a story at all. What did I miss *there*?

Overall, the good definitely outweighed the bad: , *Unicorn Variations* made me laugh out loud (as each of the various mythical creatures first introduced themselves to Martin -- and then, without much delay, asked him if he had any beer), *Troll Bridge* (Pratchett's story) was humorously entertaining yet with a sad/serious undercurrent as well, *The Hell-bound Train* was clever - and in a good way, *Mazirian the Magician* was intriguing 'pure' fantasy that didn't feel like a Tolkien spin-off, and my favorite *Mopsa the Fairy* was a tale about a young boy and his voyage to Fairyland that, despite its childish tone, somehow conveyed a sense of the hauntingly profound by the story's end.

It's definitely worth picking up this anthology if you have any interest in the genre for the variety of really great stories amid the rest. Also, I recommend the Kindle edition since - despite the various typos in the Kindle text - no one will have to see the title of the book you're reading.

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And since the Goodreads description is not accurate, here's the full table of contents from the book:

Ghosts of Wind and Shadow - Charles de Lint
Mazirian the Magician - Jack Vance
Troll Bridge - Terry Pratchett
The Tale of Hauk - Poul Anderson
In Our Block - R. A. Lafferty
The Gnarly Man - L. Sprague de Camp
Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad - M. R. James
Homeland - Barbara Kingsolver
Stealing God - Debra Doyle & James D. Macdonald
Shadowlands - Elisabeth Waters
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The Spring - Manly Wade Wellman
That Hell-bound Train - Robert Bloch
The Dancer from the Dance - M. John Harrison
More Spinned Against - John Wyndham
The Bagman's Story - Charles Dickens
Unicorn Variations - Roger Zelazny

Nadia says

The few good ones are really good, a lot are forgettable. Maybe it is because of the very nature of the collection but this book is very hit or miss and none of it flows well together as an anthology. Mopsa the fairy way too long to be included in a short story collection. "Homeland" by Barbara Kingsolver is an excellent story but is it fantasy? No.

Rita Varian says

I found this and wondered what George RR Martin's favorite story would be like; would everybody get killed? Would a female character think about how her boobs feel? Sadly, he and Robert Silverberg both chose Jack Vance stories with nearly identical plots. Why did the editor let that happen? Other than that, it is a strong collection. Mopsa the Fairy had the biggest effect on me; it was like Alice in Wonderland but more disturbing.

Kelly says

Modern fantasy authors choose their favorite stories from authors who influenced them. Real mixed bag of old and new/good and bad. Stories that stand out at "Stealing God," chosen by Katherine Kurtz, about modern day Templars and CIA-like nuns. "Ghosts of Wind and Shadow" was an interesting Irish/Otherworld-themed tale. "More Spinned Against" was a fun spider story. In "Unicorn Variations," a unicorn and a chess master play for the fate of humanity--with the help of Bigfoot and some griffins. "That Hell-Bound Train" took a nice spin on the deal with the devil. "Shadowlands," chosen by Marion Zimmer Bradley, also had a nice flavor. The rest were rather dry--some too much so.
