



Changing the World: All-New Tales of Valdemar

Mercedes Lackey , Rosemary Edghill , Kate Paulk , Sarah A. Hoyt , Tanya Huff , Fiona Patton , Judith Tarr , Nancy Asire , more... Benjamin Ohlander , Denise McCune , Elizabeth A. Vaughan , Mickey Zucker Reichert , Elisabeth Waters , Kristin Schwengel , Brenda Cooper , Stephanie D. Shaver , Michael Z. Williamson ...less

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In March 1987, a young author from Oklahoma published her first novel, *Arrows of the Queen*. This modest book about a magical land called Valdemar was the beginning of a fantasy masterpiece that would span decades and include more than two dozen titles. Now sixteen of today's hottest fantasy authors—including Tanya Huff, Mickey Zucker Reichert, Fiona Patton, and Judith Tarr—visit the world of Valdemar, adding their own special touches.

Changing the World: All-New Tales of Valdemar Details

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Author : Mercedes Lackey , Rosemary Edghill , Kate Paulk , Sarah A. Hoyt , Tanya Huff , Fiona Patton , Judith Tarr , Nancy Asire , more... Benjamin Ohlander , Denise McCune , Elizabeth A. Vaughan , Mickey Zucker Reichert , Elisabeth Waters , Kristin Schwengel , Brenda Cooper , Stephanie D. Shaver , Michael Z. Williamson ...less

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From Reader Review Changing the World: All-New Tales of Valdemar for online ebook

♥Xeni♥ says

Well, as Valdemar anthologies go, it was a very nice one. Two things really bugged me though: firstly, it really really really irritated me that there were many repeated sets of characters (already noticeable in the anthology before) in a disorderly fashion, so not only had I an irritating suspicion that I **knew** these characters before, but I also couldn't remember (in a few cases) what their former stories were. Thus, I actually wanted to sit down and draw a timetable of all the stories and characters, it got to be that confusing!

Secondly, and this is of course always a problem with anthologies, I couldn't keep the timeline in my head straight anymore. Most stories were written after the Mage Stormes, but then you'd have a few jump in from before Vanyel, or somewhere in between. And the secondary authors didn't write the stories clearly enough for it to be understandable until after the story was over.

And last of all, what was also annoying, but not monumentally irritating, was the last story of the anthology. It was... crude. Irritating. Not worth reading even. Left a sour taste in my mouth after I finished all the other nice stories. It was of a modern-day, non-Valdemar time setting. A companion in the southern states of America. So **NOT** necessary! Definitely ruined the end of the book.

On a positive note, I think the Jem And Ree stories could be written into a full length series.

Little Red Readinghood says

For fans of Valdemar.

Marieta says

For the most part a pleasant if not outstanding journey into snippets of Valdemar. The stories bounce around through history a lot, though, which is fine if you decide to leisurely read one story at a time, a little jarring if you sit down to read the whole book (I was sort of in the middle, read a big chunk and also did some one by one reading). There were good stories and not-so-good stories. A couple of them left me very frustrated because I felt the authors brought up unnecessary details if they weren't going to resolve them in any way. Those stories always seemed to have a rushed ending. And the last story, "Interview with a Companion"... UGH. That was terrible. A Companion in real-life Kentucky talking with a reporter. It was so terrible I couldn't even make myself read the whole thing, and I finished the book feeling very sour. I don't think it was a good move to put such a controversial story as the final one. I'm sure some people love the premise of that story, but you have to know that many people won't (and it's also where the title for this collection came from, Changing the World, which bothers me). I think the final story of a book should be an excellent one, one that will leave the reader feeling very happy and wanting more.

Ryan says

This is the newest collection of short stories set in Mercedes Lackey's world of Valdemar. Not all the stories deal with the Heralds and their brilliant Companions, Healers, guards, and everyday citizens all have their starring role in these 16 fantastic stories. The collection features a new short story by Mercedes Lackey as well as Tanya Huff, Mickey Zucker Reichert, and Fiona Patton.

For the most part I enjoyed all the stories and they added to the stories of Valdemar, however there were two that I absolutely loved and one that I could have done without.

"Defending the Heart" by Kate Paulk and "Matters of the Heart" by Sarah A. Hoyt are the two that I found myself really enjoying. They are back-to-back stories that tell the tale of a young hobgoblin boy named Ree and Jem the young man he saved and has his heart. For those of you not familiar with the books hobgoblins are humans or animals that got caught in change circles during the mage storms (another long explanation that I will put off for now). Ree was one of those unfortunate souls and now has physical characteristics of both a cat and a rat. He escaped with his mind intact but since most hobgoblins are killed on sight, he hides and starts to lose his humanity. He saves Jem's life and they escape together into the countryside where they come to a isolated farm ran by a lonely old man. The rest of both stories tells how through kindness and love they find a home and a family. It is a wonderful story that should give everyone who is a little bit different that there is a place for them.

"Interview With a Companion" by Ben Ohlander is one of those stories that takes something familiar and puts it into a setting that is so different from what you are used to. Sometimes it works, other times it fails, this is one of those times when I was disappointed. The premise is that a Companion is here in the United States and giving an interview to a reporter who normally does stories on horse racing. It played with the mythology of Valdemar too much for me to enjoy. It was well written and quite funny, but it still rubbed me the wrong way. Luckily it's the last story so if anyone else wants to read this book they won't have to skip a story in the middle.

If you are familiar with these books I highly recommend this book as a wonderful addition to the Kingdom of Valdemar. Heck, even if you aren't familiar with the lay of the land, you should still read it and get a nice taste for what you've been missing.

Kristin says

Enjoyable set of short stories

I've loved this world for a long time and, once again, this was a very enjoyable read. I give it only 4 stars because 5 is reserved for books I'd read many times.

Kathy Sebesta says

Especially liked the last story. Actually flipped back to see that it wasn't a Lackey story.

Julie Akeman says

That takes care of my Valdemar fix...my favorite story was when the Companion chose TWO Chosen, two girls who were born the same time and were expected to be friends because the mothers are cousins and good friends, instead they HATE each other, and it was almost going to be a blood bath when they realized One Companion Chose both of them..the reason why was pretty fantastic. I read this out of order of the other ones so I found out two more stories that go with two others from the book that's after this one (which I read a few months back) the story of Ree, a hobgoblin. So I got to read his story almost backwards. One story got me totally confused cause it wasn't set in Valdemar or it's closest areas at all but a totally foreign land that subjugates women. The traders are probably from the areas of Valdemar but it just wasn't the typical story..no Companions. But overall a really great book and I am proud to own it and keep it in my collection.

Annette McIntyre says

A great selection of short stories adding to the mythos of Valdemar and it's surrounding countries.

Fantasy Literature says

In Changing the World: All new tales of Valdemar, Mercedes Lackey edits a collection of short stories from several different authors. They're all set in her famous Valdemar, and many center on a theme: What happens when being Chosen causes more problems than it solves? I enjoyed this approach to the classic being Chosen trope in which being Chosen is the end of all your troubles.

Lackey starts off the collection with "The One Left Behind" about a young woman who is dealing with the emotional fallout of being left — her father abandoned her as a child because he was Chosen, and her boyfriend leaves after he is Chosen. Other stories focus on people who have wonderfully happy lives and resent the intrusion of a magical white horse who is just mucking things up, or examine what happens when being Chosen means being forced to overcome ... Read More: <http://www.fantasyliterature.com/revi...>

Bibliotropic says

Another collection of short stories relating to Mercedes Lackey's Heralds of Valdemar series, which I adore. I do read the anthologies, obviously, but normally I find them less engaging than actual full-out books from the series. I know why this is. The writing styles change so frequently than it can be a bit jarring for me to pass from one story to the next. I have to put down everything I just got used to in order to start something new.

Still, I wasn't disappointed by this book. Most of the stories were thoroughly enjoyable, and the ones that weren't quite so appealing were so for personal reasons, not because they were badly written.

The one major exception to the above paragraph, though, is the short story written by Fiona Patton. There

wasn't anything wrong with her story, really. But I didn't like it, nor did I like a similar one in the previous anthology, that took place around the same characters. My biggest problem with it is that it was too generic. Take out two of three sentences making specific references of Valdemar, and this story could be transplanted into any random fantasy world.

And really, two of three specific sentences was all the story held to tell a reader that it even took place in Valdemar.

Still, with very few exceptions, this was an enjoyable book to read. By buying a copy, you're even supporting somebody on Dreamwidth.org, since Denise McCune co-authored the second short story! (And congratulations to her, too!)

I recommend this book for the die-hard Valdemar fan, much like myself. Don't buy this as a way of getting into the Valdemar series, though. The stories may be short and fun, but to let this be your introduction would be a mistake, and would likely leave you feeling more confused than intrigued.

But if you're like me and need a copy of everything Lackey-related, go out and grab a copy from your local bookstore (or use the Amazon link above). You won't be disappointed.

Marti says

This is the best Tales of Valdemar collection I have ever read. And I do love the Heralds and Companions of Valdemar! Well done!

Kathy Davie says

An anthology of sixteen short stories in the Valdemar young adult fantasy series.

There's one constant that keeps cropping up in various stories when a Herald complains about a task he has to do, and a Companion reminds him that this is exactly what he is supposed to do. Help people. Help Valdemar. Because helping and protecting the people of Valdemar is important and can only help Valdemar and a Herald can't pick and choose which tasks he'd prefer to do.

Chronology:

"For Want of a Nail" (the very beginning of the kingdom of Valdemar and the arrival of the Companions)

"Softly Falling Snow" (towards the latter end of Elspeth's reign)

"The Last Part of the Way" (a Rhi and Dionne short)

"Midwinter Gifts" (Wil and Leila)

"Defending the Heart" and "Matters of the Heart" (Heart 1 & 2??; Ree and Jem stories which begin after the last Mage Storm)

"The Thief of Anvil's Close" (Dann Family of Haven, 2)

The Stories

Mercedes Lackey's "The One Left Behind" makes me cry and laugh. I love the revenge Marya achieves, and I ache for her losses. Selfish, nasty people thinking only of their own comforts! Arghhh!!!

Rosemary Edghill & Denise McCune's "For Want of a Nail" is a fascinating peek at the very beginning of Valdemar when the baron was just starting out with his followers to create his dream. This story is from the perspective of a foot soldier-turned-scout and his worries.

Elizabeth A. Vaughan's "Softly Falling Snow" is so sadly lovely as Elspeth regrets the passage of time and the constant stress of keeping her kingdom at peace.

"I love you."

'And I, you,' Kyran said. 'And on the morning when you do not wake, I'll not be far behind.'"

Meanwhile, lol, he'll let her strum his lute.

Mickey Zucker Reichert's "The Reluctant Herald" is funny even though it doesn't sound right. It sounds too jokey, too modern, too abrupt, even as our reluctant herald manages a narrow escape.

Elisabeth Waters's "A Storytelling of Crows" finds a Companion stumbling on Maia in the Forest of Sorrows with an arrow-studded pile of rags on its back. This is cute with a small crew of helpful critters. Waters starts with some nice detail, but then suddenly realizes she only has so many pages available. Yep, she speeds up and summarizes a whole lotta events to fit it all in.

Kristin Schwengel's "Waiting to Belong" is joyous, bitter, and then smooths into a waiting stance as Shia tends the town's ills and hurts. Waters could take a hint from Schwengel's story as Schwengel has nicely wrapped up several years into a short story. And has left me wanting more, dammit.

Brenda Cooper's "The Last Part of the Way" is another Rhi and Dionne story in which they help a depressed young Herald. It's a soft yet sorrowful tale for all those involved.

Stephanie D. Shaver's "Midwinter Gifts" finds us reading of Bard Leila (from *Under the Vale and Other Tales of Valdemar*: "Sight and Sound") with a brief mention of her twin, Herald Lyle. It's Wil's Companion, Vehs, and Queen's Own Talamir who pairs her up with Herald Wil to investigate a possible serial murderer! A cute story of unrequited love and frustrated confusion.

Michael Z. Williamson's "Wounded Bird" is a story that will have women and, ahem, *intelligent* men (lol) up in arms as Riga puts up with the Mirr idea of courtesy.

"I swore my Warrior's Oath to protect the weak," she said, 'And I didn't swear that it stopped at the edge of our lands.'"

I do love Riga's ending sentence!

Kate Paulk's "Defending the Heart" is an important story. I think it introduces us to Jem and Ree, and being on the farm. It is also the story in which the Hobgoblin King comes to "life" and the reason why the villagers are, later on, so accepting of Ree. I can understand (and despise) that they are conscripting soldiers, but why would these soldiers, who belong to Grand Duke Parleon in whose lands the farm stands, take people to sell as slaves and why would they be looting and burning out their own people. How does the duke

expect his subjects to farm, to produce food to eat and trade, to raise taxes if he's eliminating them and their farms, towns, villages? It's also the story of Amelie.

Sarah A. Hoyt's "Matters of the Heart" comes right after "Defending the Heart" and finds Lenar coming home from the wars. It's a battle of an argument followed by yet more physical battles.

I do like the stories of Jem and Ree, but I do wish Hoyt didn't make Ree sound so pathetically pitiful. I can understand why Ree would be insecure, but Jesus, Hoyt takes it a bit too far.

Tanya Huff's "Nothing Better to Do" is incredibly sad as well as funny when Herald Jors has to rescue and transport a toddler. I think he gains a new appreciation for what mothers have to go through, lol. The 'ossy isn't too excited about all that sticky, either...*she says laughing*...

Fiona Patton's "The Thief of Anvil's Close" is a Dann family story with an unexpected burglary solved for the blacksmith. Seems a very skillful thief is stealing tools and goods from him, and Edzel is a 'stormin' and a 'rantin' that the watchmen are totally useless. It's amazing how much information Patton can get into a story and make it so good!

Judith Tarr's "Twice Blessed" is an odd one, and I'd be curious to know how this threesome does in the future.

Nancy Asire's "Be Careful What You Wish For" is too true for Herald Tomar. He's headed back to Karse to find out how the rest of the family is in Karse. It's safer there now, for the Son of the Sun has declared Valdemar a friend. Only the meeting he has with family is not at all what he expected.

I'll be hoping that a future anthology lets us know what happens to Doron.

Ben Ohlander's "Interview with a Companion" is too, too funny with a modern-day reporter hoping for an explosive exposé who ends up interviewing a Companion in Kentucky. A Companion who sent him some of Mercedes Lackey's books to read and has a few words to say about some woman writer in Oklahoma who writes about Companions and elves building race cars. He also talks about the Companions who have changed our world's history besides the background he gives on Vanyel and magic in Valdemar.

The Cover and Title

The cover is gorgeous in its rich browns and golds with a general background of a deep golden tangle of dragon and gryphon against a red-brown. On top of that is an inset shield border of white steel with equally spaced rivets that frames the white Companion's head emerging from the shape, a close-up of gryphon feathers behind him. Atop that is a smaller shield of black with a white steel border encasing a red firebird against a round golden sun-shape. The yellow title is above it all on a black background bordered by a deep burnished gold border. The firebird's red creates the sub title with white providing the book info and the "edited by" information at the bottom.

The title is about the Heralds and how they're *Changing the World*.

Mike says

3½ stars

I love Mercedes Lackey's writing, and I specifically love her Valdemar series; I own every single one of the Valdemar books – I've even re-bought several in e-book form so I can dive in whenever and wherever the mood strikes – and I've read the whole lot of them many, many times.

If you're wondering how my love for Valdemar translates into a 3.5-star score, it's because this anthology, like all the other collections she's published, only contains one of her own stories. The rest of the short stories in the book are written by other authors at Lackey's invitation...and sometimes those other authors don't get it quite right. You'll already be familiar with this arrangement if you've read any of the other Valdemar collections (I think this is the fifth?), and, if that's the case, I strongly recommend that you use your opinion of those to decide whether to get this one – many of the authors who contribute to these books continue the stories of the characters they created for earlier books. In other words, if you loved Ree and Herald Jors, or if you hated Maia or Lelia, you'll be seeing all those characters again.

Changing the World has sixteen stories in it, and naturally, I liked some better than others. “Changing the World” is also the title of Lackey's own offering, and as per usual, it was one of the best, if not THE best. I also enjoyed Rosemary Edghill and Denise McCune's “For Want of a Nail,” which explores the first appearance of the Companions AND includes a m/m relationship (nothing explicit, it's all in the background if you're wondering). Tanya Huff's “Nothing Better to Do” features Jors, one of my more favorite anthology characters, and – despite featuring an orphan – is lighthearted and fun. I also enjoyed “The Thief of Anvil's Close” by Fiona Patton; this isn't the best story featuring Hektor Dann, but the Watch Sergeant and his huge family are always good for a good time. And I struggled with where to put “Be Careful What You Wish For” by Nancy Asire, but decided it belongs with these other winners; this one features a band of Karsite bandits and a Gift I don't recall ever seeing before.

There was more than one story I didn't care for at all. “The Reluctant Herald” by Mickey Zucker Reichert was more upsetting than entertaining. “The Last Part of the Way” by Brenda Cooper was another I could've done without; it's a Rhiannon & Dionne story, and I'm not a great fan of those two characters, and this one was even more aggravating than usual. While most of my ventures into Valdemar make me fall in love with companions all over again, “Twice Blessed” by Judith Tarr showed us just how unpleasant they can be...and I don't think that was her intention. And the last story in the book, “Interview with a Companion” by Benjamin Ohlander, is set in the real world where a companion shows up in Kentucky to offer a journalist an interview, and the effect was mostly just jarring.

But with most of the others, I liked them, I suppose, but I'd have a hard time really praising them; some don't seem to have enough of a point, and others lack Valdemar's unique flavor. “Softly Falling Snow” by Elizabeth A. Vaughan, starring Queen Elspeth the Peacemaker from Vanyel's time. It was well written and well characterized, but awfully melancholy. “A Storytelling of Crows” by Elisabeth Waters was very good writing-wise, but a little too short to draw me in. “Waiting to Belong” by Kristin Schwengel ended up being quite good as well, but was rocked by some clunky dialogue before it really had a chance to get rolling. I'd have called “Wounded Bird” by Michael Z. Williamson, a story about Riga, is well-written, but had I not read another Riga story in an early anthology, I wouldn't have had any idea what it has to do with Valdemar. There were two Ree stories in here, one each by Sarah A. Hoyt and Kate Paulk, and while the writing is good, the characters just aren't my favorite; it's hard to pinpoint, but something about these ones just doesn't evoke the placidity I usually feel when I'm in Valdemar. And finally, “Midwinter Gifts” by Stephanie Shaver reintroduces us to Bard Lelia and Herald Wil. This one had promise, but the plotting was a bit clunky.

Really, I can't pretend that Mercedes Lackey's books – the full-length novels, I mean – are perfect. They all have lots of reviews pointing out their weak spots, and I have to admit, much of that criticism is earned. There's just something about this world, though, that lets me overlook the lack of perfection. They soothe my

soul. But as forgiving as I am of Lackey's own writing, and as much as I like some of these authors' works in their own rights, a Valdemar story written by someone other than its creator just doesn't get the same leeway from me. All the same, though, I'm never NOT going to want a trip into Valdemar, even if it's not perfect...so I'm rounding my 3½ stars up. I'm sure I'll be diving back into this collection again in the future, and now that I know which contributions really shine, I'll like it that much more the next time around!

Derek says

A fine group of tales. Although you really need to have read a lot of Mercedes Lackey's writings to (IMO) fully appreciate the last story. ;-)

CatBookMom says

Finally got around to reading the most recent anthology, and wound up following about 4-5 years of stories about the same characters. Quite good, most of them.
