



Writers of the Future Vol. 32

David Farland (Editor), L. Ron Hubbard, Tim Powers, Brandon Sanderson, Jon Lasser

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#WofF32

Writers of the Future Vol. 32 Details

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From Reader Review Writers of the Future Vol. 32 for online ebook

Margaret Fisk says

Originally posted on Tales to Tide You Over

Reviewing an anthology is a difficult task, and I'll admit I dragged my feet on this one. I read it back in July of last year, but in some ways, this adds a weight to my comments based on which stories unfold before my eyes from a note here or there, and which didn't have that staying power. As with all anthologies, some of the stories worked for me and some didn't. I prefer to focus on the ones that did as people's tastes vary, though I'll mention a couple where they didn't quite succeed with me but had some strengths...much like I do for book reviews.

Overall, I found some incredible stories and many that had merit.

I do want to state that while I have no notes on the artwork, a failing in my opinion, neither do I have the background to comment on art the way I do stories meaning whether I liked or disliked a piece would carry little weight.

Now on to the stories (with an essay or two slipped in).

Möbius written by Christoph Weber

This story had me engaged from the start. Genetic manipulation is a dicey topic that's becoming all too present with recent advances. The seeds were well laid in the story so that the answers I posited while reading proved true, though there's more to it still. My final comment was "Okay, mean on so many levels" but it was an appropriate resolution. This story ends in a cliffhanger, one that asks you the question and makes you own up to the results. On the one hand, I hate to be left hanging, but on the other, the story engaged me and triggered important questions that lingered enough for me to remember some of the story without prompting.

How to Drive a Writer Crazy by L. Ron Hubbard

This is an amusing list, but the scary part is how the first couple are spot on for the type of writer I am.

The Last Admiral written by L. Ron Hubbard

It took me a sec to envision this as steampunk rather than straight science fiction, but once that confusion cleared, I enjoyed the old salty. The admiral with his can-do attitude was a wonderful character, but ultimately the ending weakened the story for me. I'd already had issues with illogical sexism brought into space where everyone was at risk, but to convert a very much "in the now" story into a history lesson looking at it from the future offered no value. If this had stuck to the navy and their determination to make the point whatever it cost them, it probably would have been my favorite so far.

The Jack of Souls written by Stephen Merlin

I absolutely hated the ending of the story, but in the way you hate something that is so right but so much not what you wanted to happen. The story had character, strong world building, and a deeper meaning. It was

well done, and while I don't remember every detail, the sense of the story lingered.

Swords Like Lightning, Hooves Like Thunder written by K. D. Julicher

This story connected with me on so many levels I hesitated to put it down when my reading time ended. It was hands down my favorite of all I'd read so far in how honor and respect won the day over bullies. I'll admit I didn't remember it as well as I might have expected with the above reaction, but a quick skim brought the story with its shifting alliances, cultural conflict, and complexity back to me.

Squalor and Sympathy written by Matt Dovey

This story won the title of favorite and kept it even after so much time. I loved the look at how both sides in the conflict were missing the point and how the best result would come from finding a different answer. Speaking as to the strength of this story, I wanted to refer someone to it when we were in a discussion a short time ago. Sadly, I thought I'd read it as a standalone and so couldn't find it, but I shared the concept of squalor and abuse of same so hope my friend was able to find it. This without prompting or even notes to help my memory.

Dinosaur Dreams in Infinite Measure written by Rachael K. Jones

I had mixed feelings about this story, though it also proved memorable. The story is a grand moment of connection between a mother and daughter, but the idea is wrong on so many levels. For the daughter to have gone along with it is a huge gimme for me, and I didn't buy it.

Cry Havoc written by Julie Frost

This story had what I was looking for in the endings that didn't work for me. Not just the twist, but a twist that takes the hoped for answer and does one better. The writing is evocative enough to have inspired my own creativity while the world seemed so real and the characters alive to share in it. I had no trouble remembering this story despite the title lacking an obvious memory prompt.

The Broad Sky Was Mine, And the Road written by Ryan Row

This was a weird story with illogical parts and inconsistencies, but at the same time, it was strong on voice and description. Not really my kind of thing, but an interesting enough variant on zombies to be worth a mention.

Between Cooks and Chefs by Brandon Sanderson

I enjoyed this essay for the neat analogy about writing and how it offers good advice filled with self-reflexive questioning and caveats. Too much advice is adamant when what works for one person's creativity could crush another's.

The Jade Woman of the Luminous Star written by Sean Williams

This was an odd story with what I found to be an obvious ending, but it had an interesting premise and some curious philosophy, too. I enjoyed it.

The Sun Falls Apart written by J. W. Alden

This was a powerful story. I still don't understand the whole of what was happening, which is frustrating, but the ignorance was shared with the POV character, and I knew enough to understand his choice in the end and approve of it. As far as parenting methods go, the one demonstrated in the story was that of a bully. An educator might still discipline a child, but would tell why rather than expecting absolute obedience. I did have to skim the end to remember the story, but then it came back clearly.

Thomas says

The stunning cover for Writers of the Future 32 was created by Sergey Poyarkov and captures the imaginative worlds represented in this best-selling anthology series. Also included in this volume are full color reproductions of the artwork gracing each story. The Illustrators of the Future is an integral part of the annual Writers of the Future series. Represented here are illustrators extraordinaire Killian McKeown, Paul Otteni, Talia Spencer, Irvin Rodriguez, Maricela Ugarte Pena, Elder Zakirov, Rob Hassan, Adrian Massaro, Preston Stone, Vlada Monakhova, Brandon knight, Jonas Spokas, Daniel Tyka, Dino Hadziavdic, Camber Arnhart, and Christina Alberici. Each piece of artwork is rich with imagery and imagination, all the result of these artists putting their talent to work creating a representational scene for each story. The stories themselves are all highly entertaining, and each year I've come to rely on the WOTF anthology as a source of creative inspiration. The stories are fresh, original and wildly imaginative. There is no other anthology series that pleases me as much as the WOTF books. As expected, WOTF kicks off to a high-octane start with "The Star Tree" by John Lasser, a heartfelt tale about loss involving trading cards that hold the memories of entire worlds. This is followed by Stewart C. Baker's "Images Across a Shattered Sea," a short but provocative tale about choices and their ramifications; and then "Mobius" by Christoph Weber which is a startling and pleasing futuristic tale about life, death and something more. The reader is invited to pause at this juncture with two pieces from the WOTF creator, L. Ron Hubbard himself. First is a bit of insightful whimsy titled "How to Drive a Writer Crazy," followed by a vintage science fiction piece called "The Last Admiral," all of which should whet your appetite for any of the vintage LRH reprints now offered by Galaxy Press. Plunging onward, the reader will meet a story titled "The Jack of Souls" by Stephen Merlino, which, like its predecessors, is jam-packed with mood, imagery, insight and thrills. You'll never think about card-playing the same way again. "Swords Like Lightning, Hooves Like Thunder" by K. D. Julicher is among the longer tales, but a fantasy so compelling I couldn't put it down. I hope to read more about Yvina in the future. This is followed by an essay by Tim Powers (yes, that Tim Powers) called "Where Steampunk Started," and this in turn is bookmarked with an original steampunk story by The Runelords author (and contest judge) David Farland. By the time I reached this page in the book (page 180), I was dazzled by the incredible energy and creativity evident in each selection. "Squalor and Sympathy" by Matt Dovey is a brilliant tale about a factory worker named Anna, and then onward to "Dinosaur Dreams In Infinite Measure" by Rachel K. Jones which is an amazing tale about a girl whose mother created a dinosaur engine. By the time I finished reading the stories by Matt Dovey and Rachel K. Jones I was reminded yet again why this contest is called Writers of the Future. I can't wait to read more stories by all of these authors. "Cry Havoc" by Julie Frost is powerful, bizarre and haunting; and "A Glamour In the Black" by Sylvia Anna Hiven is seductive and mesmerizing. Ryan Row's "The Broad Sky Was Mine, And the Road" is a vivid, first-rate tale with a beautifully written final paragraph that encapsulates Row's talent. Celebrated best-selling author, and one of the contest judges, Brandon Sanderson offers a riveting essay on the craft of writing titled "The Fine Distinction Between Cooks and Chefs." Then former WOTF winner and now best-selling author Sean Williams treats us to a delicious tale called "The Jade Woman of the Luminous Star." The next story is "Freeboot" by R. M. Graves, a lushly atmospheric tale in the classic science fiction mode; and "Last Sunset for The World Weary" by H. L. Fullerton is a lyrical tale about the world ending, and

finally “The Sun Falls Apart” by J. W. Alden takes us to an imaginative place where sunlight is something to be desired. All of these stories are sparkling with ideas, both enigmatic and entertaining. Writers of the Future 32 concludes with two short essays on art, one by Sergey Poyarkov and the other by Bob Eggleton. I didn’t simply just read WOTF 32, I devoured it. Congratulations to all participants!

C.P. Cabaniss says

I received a copy of this collection through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

I am honestly not sure what to say about this collection. Fantasy is my favorite genre, and I’ve wanted to start reading more science fiction, and I like writing short stories, so I thought this would be a good fit. In some ways, I was right.

None of these stories really stand out to me over the others. There were a few that I found interesting and would probably read more from, but none of them really caught my attention either for story or writing. There seemed to be more of a focus on science fiction here, which may have been part of what I didn’t enjoy. The fantasy stories that made appearances I believe were my favorite. The only story that I can distinctly remember is The Ace of Souls, which, while not amazing to me, was really interesting.

I’ve wanted to start reading more short stories and short fiction in general because I really enjoy writing short fiction, so this was a good jump into that. It helped me shape my opinions more on what I believe makes a good short story and what doesn’t seem to work. It also made me want to enter the Writers of the Future contest, so I might be working toward that for this first quarter of the current competition.

Overall this was enjoyable but nothing particularly special to me. If you enjoy science fiction then this would be a good collection to try.

Amelia says

Great collection of stories

This was a good collection of stories ranging from ok to amazing I even looked up one of the authors so I could read more of their stuff. If you like science fiction or fantasy you will have a good chance of finding a new author to read.

Overall it is a pretty normal Science fiction and fantasy collection but with new authors and some amazing pictures. It is geared towards writers and artists with chapters on how to write and some hilarious ones at the end on art critics. Since I am not a writer or an artist it still enjoyed the book and will look forward to next years edition of it.

Anna Tan says

Trying to read a book within two to three days isn’t a big deal for me. I was just defeated by fatigue and horrible formatting which made me want to tear my eyes out (though it is a digital ARC, so I can’t complain). The stories contained within Writers of the Future #32 are the best 3 of each quarter’s

submissions for 2015, including 1 notable entry. I'll try to summarise here my thoughts on each one.

The Star Tree (Jon Lasser) - Chiq collects star system cards, what he believes to be deeds to destroyed stars and planets now rebuilt by The Unexpected Delight Company. When he finds a whole deck missing on their journey to their new home, he insists on going back to find them. The Star Tree explores the relationship between two brothers and their father in the wake of their father's separation - is it divorce? - often wobbling back and forth between understanding and sibling rivalry. Chiq's revelation throws them all off-course. (3 stars)

Images Across a Shattered Sea (Stewart C Baker) - Driss and Fatima are chasing message-globes on the cliffs above the Shattered Sea, excited for the chance to discover what new meaningless (or maybe meaningful) messages they'll be able to gleam from the long-dead past. But hidden amidst the harmless globes are some not-so innocuous ones: shards that allow people from the past to see the state of society in the future. I found this a little confusing, probably because I read this in between falling asleep. So I don't know if it was confusing because I was sleepy or I was sleepy because I was confused. (2-ish stars)

Mobius (Christoph Weber) - Detective Elizabeth Arus chases down illegal gene-tweakers - but the latest criminal is the one she least suspects... Mobius (and I don't know how to do those dots above the o) is a compelling medical thriller with very high stakes. (4 stars)

The Last Admiral (L. Ron Hubbard) - this is a reprint of Hubbard's old story, but it's a good one. Admiral Barnell is about to witness the death of his beloved US Navy when the Johnsonville colony on Twain is utterly destroyed. Barnell is galvanised into action, sending the Navy into space to do what it's good at: navigating and running down pirates. (4 stars)

The Jack of Souls (Stephen Merlino) - Harric, the gentleman bastard, is cursed to die tonight. In a last bid attempt to gain the attention of a god and maybe live a little longer, Harric sets out on a dangerous gamble to win the life of a slave from the hands of the West Isle Lord Iras. I loved this piece - a delicate blend of Greek mythology, medieval fantasy and tinge of the Wild West. (5 stars)

Swords Like Lightning, Hooves Like Thunder (K.D. Julicher) - Yvina is running for her life, betrayed in the middle of negotiations with the Methlan Khan. But Mahkah, the Methlan warrior who defeats her, seems to be at odds with his own Khan. As they travel over the steppes into the heart of Methlan's homeland, Yvina must decide if they are on the same side - and if not, what she should do about it to save her people. This is my favourite story of the whole anthology. (5 stars)

Hellfire on the High Frontier (Dave Wolverton) - I suppose this is Wild West Steampunk? It's... okay. (2 stars)

Squalor and Sympathy (Matt Dovey) - Society is built on the Squalor of the poor, their machines powered by their feelings of misery. But things are changing and Nelly Ludd is leading an uprising to free them. Squalor and Sympathy evokes memories of A Little Princess (and maybe some Dickens) in its traditional British style and themes. (4 stars)

Dinosaur Dreams in Infinite Measure (Rachael K. Jones) - Liza is trying to convince her aged mother to vacate the old farm. Instead, her mother convinces her to stay and help when she reveals that she's created a dinosaur engine - a large, clunky machine that creates real life dinosaurs out of garbage. It's quite a silly romp - hasn't Liza (or her mother) watched Jurassic Park? - but amusing enough. (3 stars)

Cry Havoc (Julie Frost) - Nate's entire pack has been eliminated and now the hunters are after him. But Iann MacKinnon, the strange old man who just watches, keeps asking him this same question, "What do you want?" I'm not a big fan werewolf stories, so this was just okay. (3 stars)

A Glamour in the Black (Sylvia Anna Hiven) - Keani lives with a parasite - one that changes her appearance and abilities according to the wishes of the people around her. Naho, a straight-talking clammer from the caves, strengthens her resolve to get it removed. Glamour is the story of the lies we tell ourselves, the lies we tell each other, and the wishes we harbour that may be more dangerous than we know. (4 stars).

The Broad Sky Was Mine, And The Road (Ryan Row) - In a post-apocalyptic world, David and Samantha drive into town hunting stage fours. There's a lot of death and running and memories. (2 stars)

The Jade Woman of the Luminous Star (Sean Williams) - Hugh Gordon, accused of murdering his wife, tells the ghoulish story of a strange woman from another world who visited him on the fateful night. Its a little to wordily philosophical for me. (3 stars)

Freebot (R. M. Graves) - Danny Clark's wife has just given birth. But he's lost his job and his benefits and now an ugly old freebot in the bar is giving him life advice. Freebot is dark, gritty cyberpunk in a desperate future world. (3 stars)

Last Sunset for the World Weary (H. L. Fullerton) - Fida has just watched the Earth end from the observation deck of a star cruiser with her poet/boyfriend, Jawry, and Pickets, their insanely rich patron. I didn't really get the point of this, especially with its weird ending. (2 stars)

The Suns Fall Apart (J.W. Alden) - All Caleb wants it to go outside and see the sun. But he can't pass the tests that will allow his freedom. When he makes a desperate escape, he soon finds that the outside world is very different from what he expected. The Suns Fall Apart starts off very innocently - you wonder at this strange prohibition, and this magic that the family seems to have. Then clues filter in and you're left reading in horror. (3 stars)

Overall - I think I pretty much enjoyed this one. Was probably in a better frame of mind than when I was reading #31.

Frank says

Writers of the Future is a compendium of new authors whose works noted authors have reviewed and thought to be examples of future good work. The stories cross multiple genres and for the most part are interesting crossing into steam-punk, hard science fiction, fantasy, dystopian future, and horror. The volume is very readable and worth your time.

Jaffa Kintigh says

The annual Writer's of the Future contest in writing and art culminates in that year's anthology representing the 12 quarterly finalists in each of the categories. It also includes a few other inclusions from past winners and the anthology editor. The genres range from fantasy to sci-fi, urban fantasy to steampunk. And the

winners are consistently very good.

My favorites of this year's winners each rate at 5 out of 5 stars. Jon Lasser's "The Star Tree" is an off-world, coming-of-age tale that sees a small family shattered and stitched back together as they navigate their lonely planet lost among the stars. Stephen Merlin's "The Jack of Souls" is a fantasy rogue's tale with gumption, cleverness and heart. Julie Frost's "Cry Havoc" is a particularly moving urban fantasy tale that turns the monster hunter versus werewolf trope on its head.

My three 4-star honorable mentions are: Christoph Weber's "Mobius" which explores the black market genetic modification research and policing of the near future, Sylvia Anna Hiven's "A Glamour in the Black" which spins a uniquely dark view of magic and parasitic creatures, and J. W. Alden's "The Sun Falls Apart" which depicts a coming-of-age tale for a desperate teen with unrealized, dangerous abilities.

The other winners, all rating 3-stars were:

Baker, Stewart C.--"Images Across the Shattered Sea"

Dovey, Matt--"Squalor and Sympathy"

Fullerton, H. L.--"Last Sunset for the World Weary"

Graves, R. M.--"Freebot"

Jones, Rachael K.--"Dinosaur Dreams in Infinite Measure"

Row, Ryan--"The Broad Sky Was Mine, And the Road"

The other tales included were:

Farland, David--"Hellfire on the High Frontier"--5 stars

Hubbard, L. Ron--"The Last Admiral"--3 stars

Julicher, K. D.--"Swords Like Lightning, Hooves Like Thunder"--2 stars

Williams, Sean--"The Jade Woman of the Luminous Star"--3 stars

I received this new anthology from Netgalley. I previously enjoyed last year's *Writers of the Future Volume 31* also edited by David Farland.

Julie says

This was mixed for me. I entirely skipped one story because I disliked it so much, but there were at least two that I thought were excellent. It felt like it averaged out to "like" rather than "okay". I enjoyed the way the illustrations were like a little surprise in each story. I love the cover art.

Paula says

I reviewed this book for NetGalley.

I have read several "Writers of the Future" anthologies and have always enjoyed and been very pleased by the quality of the writing and illustrations in the different volumes. This latest entry does not disappoint.

Writers of the Future is a contest begun in the 1980's by L. Ron Hubbard to find new science fiction/fantasy talent, heavily towards the science fiction end. This is more than being about fiction - it's about dreams and

aspirations of the future. Ideas presented in fiction form concepts which will help shape humanity's future in a positive way.

These stories, essays and illustrations live up to that premise. All of them entertain and make the reader think beyond the mundane - which is the role of good, if not great science fiction.

These stories all fulfill Mr. Hubbard's goal of discovering and nurturing new generations of dreamers who can lead the way in creating a better world.

An excellent book.

James says

Got through most of these; most of these are new authors and I do see a lot of potential for them. Some pretty striking tales about genetics and if we need to change into aliens to better adapt to life on other planets. Lots of trippy stories like that, some great articles from professionals and Mr. Hubbard himself on how to put together a story and deal with editors. Cool artist advice on how to put your stuff out to market. A great contest. Can't wait for the next one.

San says

I found this a very mixed bag of short stories, most of them were not to my taste.
Also something went wrong with the formatting, I could not see the title for any of the stories.

Two of them really stood out were topic and atmosphere is concerned:

- The one about a girl who through a parasite appears beautiful/ trustworthy to everyone she meets.
- The one with the boy, who wants so much to go out into the sun, but his parents will not let him, until he passes certain tests.

These I would like to read a complete book about, which for me is the sign of a very good short story.

Alexander says

Disclaimer: I got six stories plus the preview of one in exchange for an honest review. I won't go into every story in-depth as I only got six of the whole picture and I'd want to do that for the entire collection, but I'll just give you a general idea. The stories I read were The Star Tree by Jon Lasser, Cry Havoc by Julie Frost, Möbius by Christoph Weber, Freebot by R.M. Graves, Swords like Lightning, Hooves like Thunder by Kate Julicher & Last Sunset for the World Weary by H.L. Fullerton. I also read the first couple of pages of Squalor & Sympathy, but since that was so little, I won't base my review on that.

Having said that, I was seriously impressed at the quality of the short stories in this collection. I don't read a lot of short stories (usually I simply prefer novels), but these ones were really good. There were one or two that didn't quite feel finished and left me with more questions than I liked (Last Sunset & Möbius), but the

other four felt really, really good. If the rest of the collection is like this, then I'll have no reason not to buy it. Every story kind of tackles a different type in the genre, but they all do so very well. Möbius is about the discovery of eternal life where the protagonist gets a terrifying dilemma, Last Sunset is about the destruction of Earth, Freebot about advertising and capitalism going too far, Cry Havoc about a werewolf going rogue to avenge his pack (and it doesn't quite answer the main question here, but in this case, I *loved* it), The Star Tree about a family torn apart in a science-fiction world (and I absolutely loved how contemporary it felt, even with the sci-fi elements), and Swords like Lightning about different nomadic tribes dueling (and I loved the politics, as well as the worldbuilding).

Those last three were easily my favorites. Disclaimer: I'm friends with Julie Frost and Kate Julicher (I even critiqued one of Julicher's books) so I might be a little biased, but eh.

If the rest of this collection is like these six stories, then you shouldn't hesitate and buy it! I feel it's better than some of the collections I've seen from the professionals.

But then again, I might be biased. So why not find out for yourself? ;)

Akahayla says

This was a great read! It really gives me the inspiration to write my own fantasy and sci-fi stories. Some stories were shocking, others had a unique humor, some made me teary eyed and some filled me with awe. Nonetheless I enjoyed them all and the illustrations that follow were perfect. They captured the story so well.

I never knew about this competition before and I happened to come across this book by total chance but I'm so glad I did.

Raven and Beez says

<https://ravenandbeez.wordpress.com/20...>

This was a great read. Basically it's a collection of short sci-fi and fantasy stories written by new and budding authors. As I read through them I felt so motivated to write because telling a beautiful story in a few pages is a crazy-cool accomplishment that these amazing people did **VERY** well.

There's nothing much to discuss when it comes to this book so I'll just quickly mention some of my favourite short stories and why I liked them.

The first one is **Möbius** by **Christoph Weber** (also loved the **beautiful illustration by Talia Spencer**) This one is a sci-fi. It basically follows the life of an anti-genetic engineering detective Liz Arus whose mum died because of an engineered virus. However the line between allowing genetic engineering to continue in hiding or not blurs when her father gets involved. I loved the writing style, the characters and I love the ending.

The second one is **The Jack of Souls** by **Stephen Merlin**. This one's a fantasy and I believe that Merlin has written and published a full book which I'm more than excited to read soon. I don't remember much about this story but I do remember that this guy named Harric gambles his life to free a slave. I remember absolutely loving the medieval style world-building that was done in such a short story and I remember falling head over heels in love with almost every character. So definitely give the book a try you guys! The **illustration by Maricela Ugarte Pena** was equally beautiful.

Next, I also loved **Storm like lightning, hooves like thunder by K.D.Julicher**. This one too was a fantasy and I absolutely loved the intelligent and strong female character who used her skill in languages to solve a dispute between two tribes/kingdoms. Usually I'm not a fan of romance, be it in real fiction or fantasy or sci-fi but this one I really loved. The characters, the world-building, the writing style, everything about it was amazing. This was actually my favourite story among them all. **Eldar Zakirov's illustration** to this story was like a cherry on top of the delicious-ness.

A Glamour in the black by Sylvia Anna Hiven was another story I really enjoyed reading. It was a story about Keani, who lived with this parasite that changed her appearance to appeal whoever looked upon her. She uses this ability of hers to help her father in his trade so he can save enough money to get a life-threatening surgery for Keani, that would hopefully get her rid of the parasite. This was my second favourite story. I did NOT expect that kind of ending at all. **Brandon Knight's illustration** at the end was absolutely beautiful and did so much justice to the story itself.

And finally we have, **The Jade woman of the luminous star by Sean Williams**. It was a very time traveling/philosophy kind of a story which was so fulfilling to read. It is about a character named Hugh Gordon, who is accused of murdering his wife. I don't want to tell much about this book because it might spoil the beauty of it. I believe **Daniel Tyka** was the one who painted a beautiful illustration for this story.

So if you get your hands on this amazing book, definitely give it a try because it has such amazing undiscovered gems within it.

Daniel says

It is so hard to review short story collections like this. Some of the stories in here, like "Images Across a Shattered Sea," and "The Jack of Souls," were 5 star fantastic. Absolutely loved them. Others, like "the Star Tree," and "Mobius" and "Squalor and Sympathy" were interesting and well written. Unfortunately, that is only 5 of the 13 stories that I would classify as "good." The rest were entirely forgettable, and in a couple of cases (The Last Admiral) really terrible. I don't want to not recommend this because some of it is truly great, but if you are going to pick it up, feel free to skip some of the stories.
