



The Beastly Bride

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What do werewolves, vampires, and the Little Mermaid have in common? They are all shapechangers. In "The Beastly Bride," acclaimed editors Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling bring together original stories and poems from a stellar lineup of authors including Peter S. Beagle, Ellen Kushner, Jane Yolen, Lucius Shepard, and Tanith Lee, as well as many new, diverse voices. Terri Windling provides a scholarly, yet accessible introduction, and Charles Vess's decorations open each story. From Finland to India, the Pacific Northwest to the Hamptons, shapechangers are part of our magical landscape?and "The Beastly Bride" is sure to be one of the most acclaimed anthologies of the year.

The Beastly Bride Details

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Author : Ellen Datlow (Editor) , Terri Windling (Editor) , Ellen Kushner , Jane Yolen , Peter S. Beagle , Lucius Shepard , Tanith Lee , Christopher Barzak , more... Richard Bowes , Delia Sherman , Johanna Sinisalo , Carol Emshwiller , Hiromi Goto , Gregory Frost , Jeffrey Ford , Jeanina Hall Gailey , Terra L. Gearhart-Serna , Stewart Moore , Midori Snyder , Shweta Narayan , Marly Youmans , Steve Berman , Nan Fry , E. Catherine Tobler ...less

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From Reader Review The Beastly Bride for online ebook

Rachel Remer says

Lots of interesting stories here, and lots of variety. The plots and ideas came from many places and went many places.

Liz says

I have a sticky relationship with short story anthologies, because I find them difficult to review. There were the stories I loved and the authors I loved and the ones I just reacted to with an "ehh".

Part of the reason is because, sooner or later, I get bored with the variations on a theme style of storytelling inherent in themed anthologies, and just want to read something that isn't another perspective, but is actually new.

That being said, I've also learned that if I stick to anthologies about things I'm really interested in (like magical animals in fairy tales, for example), I do a much better job of getting through them.

It didn't hurt that I found almost all the stories in here to be really good. They were powerful and compelling retellings or creations that I felt got towards many of the ideas behind the beast in fairy tales. And they were good! They were characters you could identify with even in five pages and the people were people, not archetypes despite being in short fairy tale stories.

And, of course, the best of all this is that I now have some new writers to get into.

Stephanie says

"Island lake" by E. Catherine Tobler: Family bonds! Ghosties and possibly-sentient-trees and mermish people. 4/5.

"The puma's daughter" by Tanith Lee: a retelling of Beauty and the Beast, but in reverse. The ending made me go ARGH WHY but it was still really great. 5/5.

"The selkie speaks" by Delia Sherman: A really lovely selkie poem. 5/5.

"The elephant's bride" by Jane Yolen: A suttee poem, so yeah, a bit disturbing. 5/5.

"The children of Cadmus" by Ellen Kushner: A retelling of the myth of Actaeon and Artemis. So, depressing again! 4/5.

"The white doe: three poems" by Jeanine Hall Gailey: Some poems that remind me of Ovid's Metamorphosis, but kinda indulgent. 3/5.

"Thimbleriggy and Fledglings" by Steve Berman: retelling of Odile the Black Swan. Not very many sympathetic characters in this one, but Odile is a very logical amoral character and fascinating to watch. 4/5.

"The Children of the Shark-God" by Peter S. Beagle: My first Beagle story. It felt like a real myth, very beautiful and sad. 4/5.

"Rosina" by Nan Fry: I ENJOYED THIS. Snakes, and, who needs princes anyway. 5/5.

Cecelia says

I am a fan of short stories. Don't run away! I felt the need to place that command right there because I know many of you (my dear readers) are NOT into short stories. Well, I have a solution. Or correction, or whatever. It has two steps, and is guaranteed to create a love for short stories. Want to know what it is?

Okay, since you asked nicely, I offer the Official Cecelia Bedelia Recipe for Inspiring Short Story Love. Step 1 – read an Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling anthology. Step 2 – if you haven't already, lose your attention span. It's easy to do, really. Just surf the web, click from channel to channel on the television, and try not to focus very hard on any one thing. If you find yourself slipping, I recommend drinking coffee, perusing magazines half-heartedly and people-watching in crowded public places. THEN, when you've whittled it down (your concentration level), short stories will be the perfect length. You'll be able to pick up an anthology, read one entry, and put it back down, all with the satisfaction of having finished an entire story. Genius, eh?

So obviously step 2 is hogwash, but I do recommend step 1 for creating a love for the short story form. Datlow and Windling draw from the best authors, and their collections are always top notch.

I felt that all of the stories in this anthology were strong, and many were stunning. Amazing quality across the board. BUT. Several entries created such evocative images that they will stay with me for a long time, perhaps forever. I can't review each story, but I can say a little bit about a couple of them in the hopes that you'll pick up this book too. It is certainly worthy.

“The Puma’s Daughter” by Tanith Lee – It was beautiful for its characterization of the wild nature of a girl and an animal. Also eloquently described one young man’s distrust of that wildness. Set in a fascinating fantasy world.

“The Selkie Speaks” by Delia Sherman – There were a couple of poetry pieces included in this anthology. This one poem was a simple paean to the mythical selkie and the different ways in which humans interact with nature.

“The Hikikomori” by Hiromi Goto – A haunting tale of human-to-animal transformation, and a commentary on acute social anxiety and withdrawal. It also addressed the continuing trend of forgetting and abandoning the rituals of the past, and how small actions can mend a larger world.

“The Comeuppance of Creegus Maxin” by Gregory Frost – A much-needed humorous piece, that added both light and dark tale flavors to the anthology. Witty, clever, odd and wonderful, set in 19th century America.

“Pishaach” by Shweta Narayan – A sinuous tale of a snake-shifter and an isolated girl who can only communicate through silence music, set in India.

“The Flock” by Lucius Shepard – A mysterious, atmospheric tale reminiscent of Neil Gaiman’s American Gods. About life in and moving past small-towns, and growing up to realize that not all friends and friendships are created equal.

Recommended for: those interested in myth, story-telling, fantasy and fairy tales from every corner of the world, and the ways in which each tale is told over in different ways in different places. Beautiful, sinister,

strange, breathtaking, and altogether awesome.

Sesana says

Every anthology is a mixed bag, especially when the stories are collected from many authors. Luckily, this is a very nice mix overall. I can't think of a single story that I really disliked, and most of the stories were quite good. For me, the two best were Tanith Lee's The Puma's Daughter and Peter S. Beagle's The Children of the Shark God. There are a lot of great stories in here besides those, though, and I was pleased that merfolk/selkies were well represented.

Richard says

The trick for the editors in a themed anthology is to choose a subject that is inclusive enough to give the a variety of writers their individual choices in setting, characters and theme but that is tight enough so that the book is cohesive. In the latest addition to their series that began with "The Green Man" and includes, "The Faery Reel" and "The Coyote Road", editors Windling and Datlow manage to include Marly Youman's tale of a rural glassblower encounter with a salamander and Lucius Shepard's high school football players in a local curse, Peter Beagle's shark god's wife and children and Christopher Barzak's artist returning home with an aquatic boyfriend.

Julia says

Review from November 8, 2012

"The Abominable Child's Tale" by Carol Emschwiller is about happens when the title character leaves her mountaintop home for the suburbs. "The Children of Cadmus" by Ellen Kushner is about Acteon and his sister. "The Comeuppance of Creegus Maxin" by Gregory Frost features a phouka. A very *nice* collection.

Review from 2/25/14

My favorite-est writers who are usually in these volumes, either aren't, or their stories aren't worth mentioning. "The Abominable Child's Tale" by Carol Emshwiller is about the orphaned preteen daughter of a human and the abominable snowman who ends up in the suburbs, looking for community. Salim's loyalty is rewarded in "The Monkey Bride" by Midori Snyder. His father, the emir, picked a bride for him when he was born. She loves someone else now. "'I call upon the hunter's right to let my spear find a wife for me.' And with that, he had cast his spear far out into the desert." (290) The spear lands in a tree a female gilda (monkey) lives in. "The Salamander Fire" by Marly Youmans is about a glassblower Xan, who creates a living salamander in his oven. "The Flock" by Lucius Shepard takes place in a small town in South Carolina ruled by its football rivalries, lack of opportunity and killer grackles. This is a *fun* collection!

Bridgett says

I really liked the story "The Children of Cadmus" because I love Greek mythology and love the goddess Artemis. I also really liked "Thimbleriggy and Fledglings" because I love the tale of Swan Lake. I also enjoyed the poems. The other stories I liked to varying extents, but overall I liked the anthology.

Marquise says

Not a bad anthology overall, but not an outstanding one either, despite having some big names as contributors, such as Gaiman, Lee, Yolen, etc., who don't seem to have turned up their best effort, if the quality is any indication.

Some of them don't even seem to have quite got what an "Animal Bride" archetype stands for exactly, or decided to interpret it rather loosely and unorthodoxically, like Christopher Barzak with his short story *Map of Seventeen*, in which he bafflingly interprets the *animality* of the character, who is fully and 100% human, not cursed, nor deformed, nor meta-human, nor hybrid, as the perception urban dwellers have of rural people. In other words, that city boys see country folks as "animals" because of their lack of sophistication. Hmm, reminds me of that tremendous faux pas of equating a Native American to a Beast because of ethnicity, and while the author may have thought it made sense, it's a rather unfortunate simile.

Anyway, I couldn't find as many short stories to my taste in this anthology as I'd hoped. The few I would cite that I liked best were:

- "The Puma's Daughter" by Tanith Lee, which would be her 4th attempt at retelling a Beauty & Beast/Animal Bride-themed fairy tale (and that confirmed my guess that Lee envisioned the Beast as a feline, because 2 in 4 retellings by her that I read had feline Beasts. She sure loved cats, big and small!).
- "The Abominable Child's Tale" by Carol Emshwiller, a bittersweet story based on the Bigfoot legend. The style is like a YA "Harry and the Hendersons" story, but not as happy.
- "Coyote and Valorosa" by Terra L. Gearhart-Serna, which is the most fairy tale-like story of all, and appears to be set in an indeterminate Colonial setting (back when part of the US belonged to the Spanish crown), and is also very reminiscent of the traditional *Beauty and the Beast*, mixed with local lore and legends (the Beast is a coyote). I do wish, however, that the author had toned down her overenthusiasm for using Spanish phrases and terms of endearment excessively and unnecessarily, probably trying to make the story sound more "culturally authentic," but that had quite a distracting effect because she'd insist in translating each and every single word and phrase, with the result being that too many things were said twice over: once in Spanish and again in English, side by side. Too much clutter.

The three above I'd rate four stars each, but the anthology as a whole I'd rate somewhat lower. It's worth a read in any case, and other readers might like many more stories than I did.

Anthony says

At least as far as genre fiction goes, Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling may just be the best editors/anthologists currently working. Together or individually, their anthologies usually manage to feature

a wide variety of authors and story-telling styles under whatever theme they are gathering stories for.

The Beastly Bride is the fourth volume in what they call their "mythic fiction" series, "each volume dedicated to a different aspect of world mythology." (The previous volumes were The Green Man: Tales from the Mythic Forest; The Faery Reel: Tales from the Twilight Realm; and The Coyote Road: Trickster Tales.) This time out, the focus is clearly on shape-shifters of all sorts: gods masquerading as human to woo humans, animal spirits taking human form, humans who can transform into animals for any number of reasons, and in one case animals that don't really bother to even pretend they're human in order to wreak havoc on an unsuspecting community.

Clocking in at 500 pages, there is bound to be something to appeal to everyone in the book but of course not every story will work for every reader. That's the blessing, and the curse, of short story collections. My favorite stories were Steve Berman's "Thimbleriggy & Fledglings," Lucius Shepard's "The Flock," Ellen Kushner's "The Children of Cadmus," Tanith Lee's "The Puma's Daughter," E. Catherine Tobler's "Island Lake," and Gregory Frost's "The Comeuppance of Creagus Maxin."

Donna says

I am never disappointed by anthologies from Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling, but The Beastly Bride is even more enjoyable because it enters my favorite territory--shapeshifting--and includes many of the authors I like best--Peter S. Beagle, Ellen Kushner, Jane Yolen--and introduces me to new ones. As usual, Windling shares her knowledge of mythology in the introduction.

Chris says

Full Review at [Booklikes](#)

Not all the stories in this collection are stand-outs, and not all, thankfully, have to do with brides. Datlow and Windling, however, should get a huge round of applause and much credit for bringing back the female beast and male looker instead of just staying to the whole typical Beauty and the Beast format.

Stand out stories include:

“Puma’s Daughter” by Tanith Lee.

Cheryl says

One or two clinkers, and too YA, full of melodramatic melancholy, but definitely worth reading if you're interested. Plenty of lovely writing. Some stories didn't deviate far from their inspiration, while others were entirely original, so, whichever you prefer, it's here. I found the ones by Nan Fry, Richard Bowes, and Midori Snyder most intriguing & worthy.

Stewart Moore's story wasn't the best, but it did have a great line: "Every one of you knows the wonders that God made in the six days of Genesis. But have you seen what his hands made in those same six nights, in the dark, when no one was looking?"

Rosie says

Excellent stories - new takes on folk tales of the intersection between animal and human -- what happens when they are blurred

Christin says

A good collection as to be expected from the Mythic Anthology series put together by Ellen Datlow and Terri Windling. However it's not as strong as The Faerie Reel or The Coyote Road (the previous two anthologies in the series). The stories at times suffer from being too similar to their mythological source.

The beauty of this series is that the stories are such fresh and inventive takes on older themes so for the stories to be too close to their inspiration is merely disappointing in this case. However, the fact that the worst thing I can say is that some of the fiction in this book is derivative still goes to demonstrate just how good the book is. The stories that are as innovative as I hoped are beautiful and amazing works of fiction. Can't wait to read the next book in the series.
