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An Amazon Best Book of the Month, December 2013: The sci-fi and fantasy genre is known for going big: epic series, massive tomes, epic series comprised of massive tomes. And even here, short stories--21 original tales in total--combine to form a tremendous 800-page genre-crossing collection. Co-editor George R.R. Martin contributes a story set in Westeros, nearly 200 years before A Game of Thrones begins. Likewise, other authors offer glimpses into their signature worlds. Jim Butcher gives the Dresden Files a twist by focusing on his protagonist's assistant. Lev Grossman hones in on a group of girls at the wizarding school that's central to The Magicians. Diana Gabaldon, Brandon Sanderson, Megan Lindholm... A range of fantastic writers, both male and female, offer an equally exciting range of ways to talk about "Dangerous Women"--from an unlikely bounty hunter to a gunslinger, a mother accused of the unthinkable to a young princess on the run. Dangerous Women is perfect for clamoring fans, as well as new readers, who may find these bite-sized stories an undaunting way to get to know new authors. --Robin A. Rothman

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"This meaty collection delivers something for nearly every reader's taste as it explores the heights that brave women can reach and the depths that depraved ones can plumb."?Publishers Weekly

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All new and original to this volume, the 21 stories in Dangerous Women include work by twelve New York Times bestsellers, and seven stories set in the authors' bestselling continuities-including a new "Outlander" story by Diana Gabaldon, a tale of Harry Dresden's world by Jim Butcher, a story from Lev Grossman set in the world of The Magicians, and a 35,000-word novella by George R. R. Martin about the Dance of the Dragons, the vast civil war that tore Westeros apart nearly two centuries before the events of A Game of Thrones.

Also included are original stories of dangerous women--heroines and villains alike--by Brandon Sanderson, Joe Abercrombie, Sherrilyn Kenyon, Lawrence Block, Carrie Vaughn, S. M. Stirling, Sharon Kay Penman, and many others.

Writes Gardner Dozois in his Introduction, "Here you'll find no hapless victims who stand by whimpering in dread while the male hero fights the monster or clashes swords with the villain, and if you want to tie these women to the railroad tracks, you'll find you have a real fight on your hands. Instead, you will find sword-wielding women warriors, intrepid women fighter pilots and far-ranging spacewomen, deadly female serial killers, formidable female superheroes, sly and seductive femmes fatale, female wizards, hard-living Bad Girls, female bandits and rebels, embattled survivors in Post-Apocalyptic futures, female Private Investigators, stern female hanging judges, haughty queens who rule nations and whose jealousies and ambitions send thousands to grisly deaths, daring dragonriders, and many more."

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72 of 75 people found the following review helpful.

One of the best anthologies I've ever read.

By Kriti Godey

I was really excited about this anthology! I love anthologies, I love kickass women, and the Martin-Dozois anthologies attract the best fantasy writers. I've read and liked one of their anthologies (Songs of Love and Death: All Original Tales of Star Crossed Love) before, but this one blew it out of the park!

Dangerous Women doesn't just feature sci-fi/fantasy stories; there are a variety of genres represented. This makes the collection have an incredibly broad range. The eponymous dangerous women are all pretty different too - physically or magically powerful women, women who flourish despite their circumstances, femme fatales, vengeful ghosts, and more. Sometimes they drive the plot, sometimes they're the protagonist, and sometimes they're both.

I enjoyed some stories more than others, but unusually, I didn't think any fell flat. Some were disturbing or implausible, but I think they still made good additions to the anthology. I'm not going to review every story, but I'll talk a bit about some standouts.

THE HANDS THAT ARE NOT THERE by Melinda Snodgrass

This story takes place in the same universe as one of my favourites from Songs of Love and Death, and I was immediately pulled into this universe again. Unfortunately there aren't any full-length books in this universe, but I'm hoping there will be soon! It involves an extraordinary story told in a bar, which if were true, would have incredible repercussions.

SHADOWS FOR SILENCE IN THE FORESTS OF HELL by Brandon Sanderson

I don't really like the title of the story, but the story itself was fantastic. It's set in Sanderson's Cosmere (although I don't know what planet) and features a terrifying world and a resourceful woman who makes it a little safer. I'm probably biased by my indefatigable love for Sanderson, but I loved this story.

BOMBSHELLS by Jim Butcher

I've only read the first book of the Dresden Files, but this story made me really want to catch up with it (it also contains major spoilers for the direction of the series, but I didn't mind that). It features Molly, Harry Dresden's apprentice and some other Dresdenverse women on a mission. Molly gets some great character development, and there's a lot of gratuitous ass-kicking. Some of it was a little cliched, but it was so much fun that I didn't mind.

A QUEEN IN EXILE by Sharon Kay Penman and NORA'S SONG by Cecelia Holland

Both of these stories were historical fiction and featured women figuring out how to become dangerous in a male-dominated world. Other than that, they were fairly different - in the former, Constance, future Queen of Sicily, takes charge of her unhappy life and in the latter, a young Eleanor of England, Queen of Castile learns how to get her way. I found both fascinating, and I really need to read more historical fiction.

MY HEART IS EITHER BROKEN by Megan Abbott

I don't want to say very much about this heartbreaking story, but it examines the emotional consequences of knowing a truly dangerous woman. Or thinking you do.

LIES MY MOTHER TOLD ME by Caroline Spector

This story is set in the shared Wild Cards universe, and involves a superhero that goes from having dangerous powers to being truly dangerous even without her powers. I found it very poignant.

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I could keep going, but I'll just say that I also loved SOME DESPERADO by Joe Abercrombie (I can't wait to see more of Shy in his latest book, Red Country), THE GIRL IN THE MIRROR by Lev Grossman, NAME THE BEAST by Sam Sykes, and RAISA STEPANOVA by Carrie Vaughn (I haven't read anything by Vaughn that I haven't loved). THE PRINCESS AND THE QUEEN by George R.R. Martin read like the dry medieval telling that it was meant to be, but was strangely fascinating.

The stories I wasn't as thrilled about:

I KNOW HOW TO PICK 'EM by Lawrence Block

This is an extremely well-written story, but it left me feeling unclean just having read it (which seems intentional). It definitely adds to the diversity of the anthology, but I wish I hadn't read it. It probably didn't help that I was envisioning Tricia Helfer as the "dangerous woman" in the story.

SECOND ARABESQUE, VERY SLOWLY by Nancy Krees

The idea behind this story was fascinating (discovering beauty in an ugly world), and I was somewhat touched by the ending, but I was distracted by finding the worldbuilding implausible - 99% of women are

sterile, and civilisation totally breaks down. I can see how women's place in society would change significantly, but I don't think cities and technology would be completely destroyed. I didn't even mind the world, but the cause of it seemed forced.

PRONOUNCING DOOM by S.M. Stirling

I got the gist of this story, but was thoroughly confused by the world. American society is now heavily influenced by ancient Scottish/Irish tradition, and this all happens within a few years? I found out that this is set in the "Emberverse", but I don't think there's enough of an introduction to this universe for people not already familiar with it.

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That ended up being much longer than I anticipated. Summary: this is one of the best anthologies I've ever read. Buy it!

40 of 47 people found the following review helpful.

- A great collection!
- By bdallmann

I don't like reading short stories. I feel like they don't have enough time for proper character development and, more often than not, they feel awkwardly truncated. Short story collections are difficult for me to sit down and read for a long time because my brain keeps being confused when I move on to the next story. But that's the reality of short story collections, huh?

Anyway, this collection is better than those I have read before. I sincerely enjoyed each and every story in the book, though of course I liked some more than others. There were several that I wished were full-length novels (Carrie Vaughn's "Raisa Stepanova," for example). I had a few friends who were misled by the title, thinking it referred solely to women that are out to wreak havoc and destroy lives. That is certainly not what this collection is about. While some of the female protagonists may not be shining stars of virtue, for the most part they all represent strong woman who take control of their destinies. It is, truthfully, a book of feminist dreams (and I mean that in the best way possible).

A friend did express concern that the book would use George R.R. Martin's name as a way to sell a collection of mediocre stories. However, I found that is not the case. I came to the collection without bias, as I have not read anything by any of the authors (no, I do not read the Song of Ice and Fire series), yet I found each story to be well-written and original. I just hope that not too many people flip to the end of the book to read Martin's story and then decide not to read the others. It would be a damn shame, since I was not impressed with his work.

Is the book worth \$32.50? Personally, I would not think of paying full price for it. However, as stated before, I am not typically a fan of short stories. I think it is a worthy addition to the book collections of those who do enjoy short stories, or for those who are fans of one or more of the contributing authors.

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23 of 26 people found the following review helpful.

Uneven - And Title Somewhat Misleading

By bonnie_blu

Very uneven collection. Although there were a few excellent tales (e.g., those from Jim Butcher, Joe Abercrombie, Raisa Stepanova, and others), there were too many in which women were little more than

backdrops and the tales were really all about men. A collection entitled "Dangerous Women" should have had women as the main characters. I love works by George R.R. Martin and expected more from him in picking the stories for this collection.

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