



Corsets & Clockwork: 13 Steampunk Romances

Trisha Telep (Editor) , Maria V. Snyder (Contributor) , Tiffany Trent (Contributor) , Kiersten White (Contributor) , Jaclyn Dolamore (Contributor) , Tessa Gratton (Contributor) , Caitlin Kittredge (Contributor) , Adrienne Kress (Contributor) , more... Lesley Livingston (Contributor) , Dru Pagliassotti (Contributor) , Dia Reeves (Contributor) , Michael Scott (Contributor) , Ann Aguirre (Contributor) , Allan Frewin Jones (Contributor) ...less

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Dark, urban fantasies come to life in the newest collection of Steampunk stories, *Corsets & Clockwork*. Young heroes and heroines battle evils with the help of supernatural or super-technological powers, each individual story perfectly balancing historical and fantastical elements. Throw in epic romances that transcend time, and this trendy, engrossing anthology is sure to become another hit for the fast-growing Steampunk genre! This collection features some of the hottest writers in the teen genre, including: Ann Aguirre, Jaclyn Dolamore, Tessa Gratton, Frewin Jones, Caitlin Kittredge, Adrienne Kress, Lesley Livingston, Dru Pagliassotti, Dia Reeves, Michael Scott, Maria V. Snyder, Tiffany Trent, and Kiersten White.

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From Reader Review Corsets & Clockwork: 13 Steampunk Romances for online ebook

Kristin (MyBookishWays Reviews) says

You may also read my review here: [http://www.mybookishways.com/2011/03/...](http://www.mybookishways.com/2011/03/)

Overall rating: 4.5

Wild Magic by Ann Aguirre: Pearl, an uppercrust socialite in an age of steam and clockwork, discovers a door to Faery, and through a handsome fae named Pick, the secret of her own magic. Loved this one. (4)

Under Amber Skies by Maria V. Snyder: A young girl in wartime Poland discovers just what her father's clockwork inventions are about, and the family secrets that may get her killed. (5)

The Vast Machinery of Dreams by Caitlin Kittredge: In the city of Lovecraft, where dark magic seethes and Elder Gods reign, a young writer falls in love with a beautiful girl that feeds on dreams...and may not be a girl at all... (4.5)

Tick, Tick, Boom by Keirsten White: Catherine, the daughter of an baron of industry has a penchant for building things that go boom. In her efforts to stop unfair labor practices, and those that further them (such as her father), she meets a man that makes her lips tingle, and will turn her world upside down. (5)

Rude Mechanicals by Lesley Livingston: Quintillius Farthing, a disillusioned thespian counting the minutes until his Uncle's failing theatre closes, finally meets his perfect Juliet, a beautiful clockwork girl with copper filament hair and metallic skin. But will her Juliet be too realistic? (4)

The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe by Frewin Jones: A rather disturbing tale of an evil man that kidnaps a mermaid and takes her as his wife. When she dies in childbirth, he raises the girl, Silka, shackled in a cage, telling her stories of how he will seek his true love in the big city. Around the time of her 15th birthday, Silka eats her father, breaks out of her shackles, and goes off to see her true love. During her journey, she meets all manner of men with less then honorable intentions, so she eats them too. Then she meets a thief named Toby, who teaches her a better way to live. Like I said, rather disturbing, but also sweet and probably one of my favorites of the bunch. (5)

Deadwood by Michael Scott: It's 1868, and the independent Martha Burke sets out to search for her brothers who have disappeared after seeing work in the mines. On an airship, she meets the charming JW. When their airship makes an unscheduled landing in Deadwood, it will take all of their wits to get them out of Deadwood. (4)

Code of Blood by Dru Pagliassotti: In 1815 Venezia, a young girl that commands air elementals will do anything to save her grandfather and her city. (3.5)

The Clockwork Corset by Adrienne Kress: 16 year old tomboy Imogen recognizes her growing affections for her childhood friend, but what will she do when he is called away to war? Why, join up, of course! (4)

The Airship Gemini by Jaclyn Dolamore: Siamese twins and freak show performers Faith and Patience, are once again performing on the Gemini airship. When a powerful magician offers to separate them, and uses

the fate of their dearest friend as leverage, can they possibly refuse? (4)

King of the Greenlight City by Tessa Gratton: In the City of Light, a boy that can fly and a girl intended for another fall in love, but will it be their undoing? (3.5)

The Emperor's Man by Tiffany Trent: Corporal Reed, of the Imperial House Guard, is charged with keeping Princess Athena safe in the magic filled woods during the Hunt, and he will find out a truth about Athena that will change his life forever. This was a magic and wonder-filled story! (4)

Chickie Hill's Badass Ride by Dia Reeves: Welcome to 1961 Portero. Join Chickie Hill and Sue Jean for one hell of a ride. Time travel, otherworldy creatures, and as the title suggests, one badass ride are the order of the day for a town that sits just this side of normal. (5)

Alice-Elizabeth (marriedtobooks) says

I would really like to re-read this collection again. I am starting to read more Steampunk novels and short stories thanks to this collection.

Melindeeloo says

My favorite steampunk stories are ones in which there is still a historical feel but the technology plays a significant role - rather than just being part of the scenery - and adds a twist to turn the familiar into something different - and I don't mind if there is a bit of magic thrown into the mix as well - add a touch of romance and I am good to go...

This collection gets off to a slow start and I was a bit disappointed in the first few stories that the steampunk was mostly incidental. But once the boiler was finally stoked, it was full steam ahead - or at least enough steam to keep things rolling along.

1. Rude Mechanicals by Lesley Livingston- An artifical Juliet's performance is just perfect

2. The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe by Frewin Jones - In which our 'heroine' - and that is a stretch - is off to London looking for love and ... I don't even know how to summarize this one

3. Wild Magic by Ann Aguirre - A priviledged daughter of good blood gets to use her forbidden magic - I liked this but it was more fantasy than steampunk

4 Deadwood by Michael Scott - In which our heroine puts her natural talents to use when she is the victim of an airship-napping - I really enjoyed this one and the last paragraph was good for a chuckle too

5. Code of Blood by Dru Pagliassoti - Blood will tell, but can it save the day? - The steam here is fueled by magic, but I liked the story once I got past the multitude of Italian names which pepper the first few sections.

6. Clockwork Corset by Adrienne Kress - When friendship becomes more, a woman will do what's necessary to make sure her 'friend' survives - Clockwork and steam powered inventions litter the background and

provide the means of salvation as well

7. The Airship Gemini by Jaclyn Dolamore- The thought of a little alone time has little appeal for Siamese twins, but that choice may no longer be theirs - Other than the setting, this one is fueled more by magic than steam

8.Under Amber Skies by Maria V Snyder - The nazi's are very interested in a young Polish girl's father's amazing inventions - I love stories where the inventions are integral to the story.

9.King of the Greelight City by Tessa Gratton - A young mage awakens to a surprising power - This was more fantasy and would have liked it more in book that didn't have romance in the title - there are expectation for the ending in a romance

10 The Emperor's Man by Tiffany Trent - A guard loyal to the Emperor is awakened to the truth - Another more fantasy offering

11. Chickie Hill's Badass Ride by Dia Reeves - This one is an alternate 50's instead of the normal 1890's, but has the inventions.

12. Vast Machinery of Dreams by Caitlin Kittredge - Hmm, well can't really say exactly what this one's about.

13. Tick, Tock, Boom by Kierstan White - A nice wrap-up to the collection, a 'vapid' well bred lady is more than she seems.

Kate says

Let's get one thing out of the way: I like novels, not short stories. Short stories frustrate me, because one of two things always occurs while I read. 1) As I read I think, "What on earth is going on?" and then it's over. 2) As I read I think, "Wow this is getting really good – " and then it's over. Either there's not enough time for proper worldbuilding and character development and nothing makes sense, or the story really captures me and then ends too soon.

The problem is that every two years or so I forget this and go and pick up a new anthology of short stories, like this one, Corsets and Clockwork. Oh, well...

All of the stories are steampunk, and have some elements of romance as well, which causes a massive outbreak of instalove! throughout the collection. Many take place in some sort of England, although others feature the Wild West, pre-WWII Germany, and fantasy environments. At least 10 of the stories mentioned corsets. Many of them had clockwork as well. In fact, there was even one story called "The Clockwork Corset."

If you've survived being whapped in the face with all the blatant steampunk-ness, we'll move on to the stories themselves. I tried to read all of them, I really did. However, old instincts and library due dates took over, so a few I either put down or skimmed. As for the ones I did read...

The best:

Code of Blood by Dru Pagliassotti – I read this author's Clockwork Heart earlier this year and really enjoyed it, and her short story here does not disappoint. In an alternate 19th century Venice, a nobleman's granddaughter has to save the city from French invaders. Pagliassotti's worldbuilding is well-done in a short span of time, with elementals, steamboats and a blood sacrifice.

The Airship Gemini by Jaclyn Dolamore – I can't remember having read a story with a Siamese twin as a protagonist before. Airships are always good, too (see the Airborn Trilogy by Kenneth Oppel – one of my all-time favorites). I really like Dolamore's novel Magic Under Glass and this story is intriguing. However, I feel it really could have been a full novel instead of a story especially since the ending is a bit of a *deux ex machina*.

Under Amber Skies by Maria V. Snyder – I swear that it's a coincidence that my three favorite stories were by authors that I had already read things by! I honestly wouldn't have recognized this story as being by Snyder, but come to think of it, Poison Study was very dark and so was this story. Set on the cusp of World War II, Nazis are looking for Zosia's father, an Polish inventor who disappeared months ago. Quite good, with a killer twist!

The one to avoid:

Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe by Frewin Jones - I knew Jones for the uber-frothy Faerie Path series (I mean, look at the covers!). I think he was trying to break away from that formula, because his story here is nothing like the faerie books. There is implied rape. There is main character who is a cannibalistic half-mermaid. There is general weirdness. Skip this one.

The rest of the stories were pretty mediocre. Some were entertaining (Tick Tick Boom by Kiersten White) and some were just confusing as all get-out (The Vast Machinery of Dreams by Caitlin Kittredge). The three favorites listed above were worth the read, but I would not recommend going out of your way to read this anthology.

Rating: 3 out of 5 stars.

Cover & Title: As mentioned before, the title is...fitting. The cover is pretty, though they could have done something more imaginative than Generic Female Face Close-Up.

Where I got the book: Local library

Miss Bookiverse says

GENERAL IMPRESSION

This collection of stories was entertaining enough to keep me coming back. There were some really good stories ("Under Amber Skies", "King of the Greenlight City", "Vast Machinery of Dreams") but no outstanding ones. I wish there had been more 4 star reads.

I think a lot of the stories could've been better if they'd had more space to develop, some felt novel-worthy to me. Others would've needed more time to feel more authentic, because there was a lot of insta love involved. Not very believable but hard to do differently if you only have a certain amount of words to go with, I guess.

Surprisingly most stories didn't feel very steampunk to me. Some authors just dropped in a few clockworks here and there to make it fit the theme, I think. Romance on the other hand was displayed widely.

STORY BY STORY

Rude Mechanicals by Lesley Livingston ★★★??

A Shakespearian stage director gets a new actress in form of an "actromaton" who takes her role a bit too seriously.

I didn't see that coming. Could've been longer. I would've liked some scenes in which Quint teaches Jewel how to act and they get to know each other better, some more scenes for the heart.

Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe by Frewin Jones ★★★??

A half-mermaid leaving her secluded childhood behind to seek her fortune in London.

I really liked the first half of the story because it had this creepy fairytale vibe to it (the mermaids in this story are no music-loving Arielles). Then the tone shifted into something average and the ending didn't really fit together with the creepy mermaid-descriptions of the beginning. :(

Wild Magic by Ann Aguirre ★★★??

A girl from a rich family learns how to use her magical powers from a handsome, young man not quite of her standards.

The story itself had potential but it felt too rushed. The characters fell in love too quickly and the really interesting parts (like how she actually trains her powers) weren't described at all. I can see this working as a novel, not as a short story though.

Deadwood by Michael Scott ★★★??

A young man and woman meet on an airship that is being kidnapped.

This one had a more steampunk feel to it than the previous stories. The characters were likable but the conflict wasn't anything thrillingly exciting.

Code of Blood by Dru Pagliasotti ★★★??

A girl has to save her city (Venice) from foreign attackers.

I really liked the writing of this one but I also had trouble with all the Italian vocabulary. Foreign words just were thrown around with no explanations. The setting was very atmospheric and described well though. The story itself was a bit I-don't-really-care, especially about the girl falling in love while being busy saving her city.

Clockwork Corset by Adrienne Kress ★★★??

A girl attempts to go to war to save the boy she loves.

I loved the first part of the story where the childhoods of the girl and her friend are described. I really liked the writing in this one and actually underlined some quotes. The plot fell a bit flat and the ending was sweet but also rather cheesy. Nevertheless, my favourite story in the collection so far.

Airship Gemini by Jaclyn Dolamore ★★★??

Siamese Twins are displayed as a freak attraction by their aunt until a magician/doctor offers to separate them.

Very unique idea, good writing style but the ending kind of ruined it for me. First of all the fact that (view spoiler) seemed to come out of nowhere and didn't fit with the rest of the story. It could've just been about Siamese Twins, that would've sufficed. Second of all everything just worked out too smoothly and with no real losses.

Under Amber Skies by Maria V. Snyder ★★★★?

A girl who's father is a great inventor has to face Nazi soldiers who are looking for her father.

More like 3.5 stars. I liked it more than the previous stories. The family dynamics were very interesting to explore but some reactions (especially from Zosia's mother) felt unnatural, like I didn't know the character well enough yet to really believe the action. With more space to develop this would've made a great story. I loved Zosia's father's inventions, they reminded me of Maurice from Disney's Beauty and the Beast.

King of the Greenlight City by Tessa Gratton ★★★★?

A boy with an affinity for more than one element has to choose between developing his skills and the girl he loves.

So far this is my favourite story in the book. It doesn't really deal with Steampunk (actually all I remember is a clockwork horse) but it was very well told and had a beautiful fairytale touch to it. Unfortunately some parts felt rushed (like the romance), this story just needed a lot more space. I can easily picture this as a full-length novel. I really didn't expect this from Tessa Gratton because her novel Blood Magic didn't have much of an impact on me.

Emperor's Man by Tiffany Trent ★★???

A soldier starts questioning his past and the world he lives in when the princess he's supposed to protect tells him strange things.

Neat idea but I didn't care about the characters and it only scratched the surface of what it presented.

Chickie Hill's Badass Ride by Dia Reeves ★★★??

A girl and a boy try to save a group of kids from a monster "klan".

I love how Dia Reeves sets all her stories and novels in the fictional town Portero. So the setting and the monsters were great but the plot was a bit too straightforward. I liked the underlying theme of racism though, added more depth to the story.

Vast Machinery of Dreams by Caitlin Kittredge ★★★★?

A boy meets a girl and attempts to write stories about the strange things she shows him.

I loved this one because of the way it was written. There are a lot of paragraphs and each one takes a little step back in the plot and redefines the way the story is going. It's hard to explain but I found it very creative.

Tick, Tick, Boom by Kiersten White ★★★??

A girl of high stand is supposed to marry a lord she finds quite boring, she'd rather spend her time inventing things.

The story was sweet and uncomplicated, I liked the main character. The outcome wasn't too hard to guess though.

Chloe says

Ah, now these short stories are just my speed. I've read collections edited by Telep before and these delivered about the same level of satisfaction. Each story was probably somewhere around 40 pages, and they pack quite a punch.

Overall the stories were all quite good, though I definitely had a clear favorite, you'll be able to tell.

Rude Mechanicals-One of my favorites, though not the top. I really, really liked Quint, and I thought it was funny that his uncle was Agamemnon only because I find that name one of the most difficult for me to pronounce in my head. The only thing I did not like was that I wish that there would have been a death at the end, rather than what happened.

The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe-Halflings don't tend to show up often, and being of mixed race myself, I really appreciate them. I loved Silka's take no prisoner's attitude, and how it covered the life of her father as well as herself. I also liked the slightly open ending, it was nicely different.

Wild Magie-Also one of my favorites but still not there. Kind of predictable, yes, but still enjoyable. I really liked the idea of a portrait as a doorway, and Pick was quite dashing.

Deadwood-This was slightly meh. I thought the switching perspectives worked well, and the foreshadowing was decent. However the fight scene just read a little bit odd, and the captain was slightly ridiculous. The ending made me laugh a little bit (Also, it's really hard for me to take someone named Michael Scott seriously, being a die hard The Office fan).

Code of Blood-This one grew on me as I was reading. It was a bit confusing to try and figure out, but it was super action packed and really kept me guessing! Pietro was very charming and quick witted, which is honestly how Italian boys get painted a lot, but fine by me! Really liked this one.

The Clockwork Corset-Guessed the plot, but it did come nicely full circle with a detail you wouldn't really think of. Average.

The Airship Gemini-Conjoined twins are a rarity everywhere, especially in YA fiction, so it was a cool topic to be reading about. I thought the author did a good job of exploring the conjoined vs. separated mindsets and the pros and cons to both of them. I actually wanted there to be death at the end of this one too...all of this steampunk is making me slightly morbid apparently. And I kind of didn't like the paranormal twist.

Under Amber Skies-This was brilliant! But still not quite to my favorite. ALMOST there though. The idea of bringing steampunk forward and into Poland was really well done. I thought it was also a really good choice of the author to show the extreme nationalism on a side other than the Nazi's in WWII. The inventions seemed really awesome, and there was some great wordplay. Also, the romance was nicely interweaved.

King of the Greenlight City-OHMYGOSH guys, I wish this was a full length novel. I'm serious. It is such an amazing story. If it was flushed out into a novel I'm telling you, it would be one of my favorite books. This was a really well set up world, everything made perfect sense without going overboard. Alys and Ever made a really passionate couple, and I actually felt myself tearing up a little bit at the end. Opposite sentiment as I had felt for stories previous. I think it's really interesting that the elements and magic are often brought into steampunk, it's a good contrast.

The Emperor's Man-This had quite an interesting plot twist, but other than that it was kind of boring. Oh, the interesting one was not where at the end the narrator is magically a werewolf. You don't need to combine paranormal and steampunk, really. They're quite happy separate.

Chickie Hill's Badass Ride-Honestly, I didn't understand how this was steampunk. It was paranormal for sure and a POC, but I really didn't get steampunk from it. I liked the music references and the lingo, but the plot was kind of boring to me.

The Vast Machinery of Dreams-It was kind of confusing, but I liked following the backtracking of this story. It would paint a picture and then throw paint thinner on it and make you reevaluate. However, the ending was slightly unclear, which is the only thing I would have changed.

Tick Tick Boom-This one was solidly in the middle. After Wild Magic and The Clockwork Corset the affluent female character that rebels was a little bit tired, but she was funny. And it shows you people can often surprise you. This one was by Kiersten White and I really got that from the word choice and sentence structures.

Overall, I would totally recommend this anthology if you're looking for anything steampunked out!

Stacey O'Neale says

Corsets & Clockwork is a collection of 13 Steampunk short stories by various authors. I really enjoyed this collection and I'm not a big fan of short stories. This is a great introduction into steampunk if you're not familiar with the genre, but have an interest in learning more. Each story was very different, but all had elements of steampunk and romance. I especially enjoyed the cool steampunk inventions and costumes. That's probably why I enjoy steampunk so much. I really liked the authors that combined magic and steampunk to make the inventions they designed. I especially enjoyed the stories from Dru Pagliassotti & Kiersten White. This book is fun and highly recommended. :D

April Sadowski says

I would call this a must-read. There might have only been one or two stories in the entire collection I wasn't entirely fond of (and even those weren't "bad", just hard to follow or somewhat cheesy), but the rest I couldn't stop reading. Ones that will stick with me are the last ones after "Code of Blood". *The Airship Gemini* was probably up there as one of my all-time favorites and was a bit like a steampunk *The Night Circus* but without the night. *The Clockwork Corset* was so riveting I had to tell the author how much I enjoyed it. *Under Amber Skies* was such a plot turner and the ending was nothing short of epic, but of course coming from Maria V. Snyder, I would expect no less. Then the love story in King of Greenlight City was heart-wrenching. The grand finale of *Tick, Tick, Boom* left you wanting more.

And the bad-ass quote from the book I liked so much I highlighted came from *Wild Magic*: "A name *given* means nothing. A name *earned* means everything."

Cecelia says

How can you tell that a genre has 'arrived?' Specifically, how do you know that steampunk has arrived? I got a clue when I heard that a young adult steampunk anthology was on its way, and that several bestselling authors contributed stories to it. Way to go, steampunk! You're all grown up and fabulous.

"Rude Mechanicals" by Lesley Livingston

This first in the collection is a little tale with many references to Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, much like

Livingston's other Bard-influenced fairy adventures. However, it suffers from too-flowery prose and too little charm. It is either saccharine sweet or I am a dyed-in-the-wool skeptic (or all of the above).

“The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe” by Frewin Jones

A disturbing and darkling thing, this yarn...and yet full of allure and mischief as well. Contains both fairy tale and steampunk elements to good effect. Entertaining and elusive, just as a short story ought to be. Probably my favorite of the collection.

“Wild Magic” by Ann Aguirre

A classic forbidden romance between classes, which also pits magic against technology, and disenfranchised natives against privileged invaders, is the foundation of this entry. Predictable and sweet, it's sure to please fans of YA paranormal romance.

“Deadwood” by Michael Scott

Old West, meet steampunk. This tale introduces two characters in an adventure too brief to do them justice. It feels a bit like the film *Wild, Wild West*, and skimps on personal development to describe a world that we might like better if we had more time in it.

“Code of Blood” by Dru Pagliassotti

A rousing adventurette set in Venice in the time of Napoleon, this story mixes steampunk with alchemical and magical elements. The third person narrative is a bit clunky, but the main characters are feisty and the result is fairly pleasing.

“The Clockwork Corset” by Adrienne Kress

A funny little story, in more than one sense. It's slightly comical, and also a bit strange. Not sure what to think, but I do know that the privileged girl falling for lower class boy trope is getting a solid workout in this anthology!

“The Airship Gemini” by Jaclyn Dolamore

Take Siamese twins, put them on an airship over the Atlantic, and stir in a shapeshifter hoping to separate them. Result: a quirky tale just on the wrong side of believable. Part of the trouble undoubtedly lay in the length of the story (too short), but the combination of fantastical elements didn't help either. Not without merit, but not essential.

“Under Amber Skies” by Maria V. Snyder

Snyder crafted a story of a technologically advanced Poland on the verge of World War II. While an engaging premise and mystery drive the plot, the dialogue felt forced and at times the heroine succumbed to TSTL syndrome (that's Too Stupid To Live for you newbies out there). Partially redeemed by its twisty nature.

“The King of Greenlight City” by Tessa Gratton

A charming and surprising story that grabbed my attention and didn't let go. It reminded me that magic is dangerous AND wondrous (which is the best sort of realization). Definitely an example of the kind of tale that takes you somewhere you didn't expect to go, and teaches you something new about the world.

“The Emperor's Man” by Tiffany Trent

A lovely little romance, this one. The author wove a dream-like fairy story, with just a touch of darkness for good measure and realism. Very light on steampunk, but entertaining regardless.

“Chickie Hill’s Badass Ride” by Dia Reeves

Oh. Dear. Me. Dia Reeves’ contribution took strange and turned it sideways. Not steampunk, but all sorts of weird and remarkable. I’m not sure I liked it or understood it completely, but it certainly made me sit up and notice. Bonus Factor: minorities in YA fiction!

“The Vast Machinery of Dreams” by Caitlin Kittredge

Bizarre, science-fictiony, and ultimately opaque. Written as a series of explanations of reality, this tale wasn’t straight-forward (sometimes a plus), but it also left one with a sense that they never truly knew any of the characters. If you’re here for enigmatic mysteries, this one’s for you.

“Tick, Tick, Boom” by Kiersten White

Girls dressing as boys in Victorian London? It’s becoming a cliché in steampunk circles. Thankfully White’s creation is something more than cliché. Although the romantic portion of the story feels a bit contrived, the feisty heroine is a genuine article and she (and her inventions) manage to pull off fun rather than boring. Good stuff.

As you can tell from today’s entry and part one, this collection had its moments. It was uneven, but when it was brilliant it was quite good. Frewin Jones and Tessa Gratton get A+ marks. I’m happy to report that steampunk has ARRIVED, and that I found several new-to-me authors through this short story excursion. Well worth my time, and yours, loves.

Recommended for: fans of YA paranormal romance, especially of the Clockwork Angel variety, steampunk devotees AND neophytes, fans of light sci-fi, and anyone with a taste for historical fiction.

Kathy Davie says

A steampunk anthology of 13 short stories for young adults with a main theme of romance...in some way, shape, or form. The depth of the steampunk varies from story to story but there's a gear pretty much everywhere.

The Stories

Lesley Livingston's "Rude Mechanicals" is pure theatre with its so-very-lifelike Actromaton, a Jule of an actress who takes things a little too far but brings life in the end. Excellent with the only odd note on page 11 when this unknown man gets Quint and Agamemnon to come away with him in the night without any questions.

Frewin Jones's "Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe" is rather funny in a very sad and frothy tale of finding love between a mermaid-human and a Thames mudlark as they go about bamboozling the Beadle.

Ann Aguirre's "Wild Magic" has a completely different perspective on magic and Under-the-Hill with her invading great houses who lock down magic, and the unlucky daughter of House Magnus born with too much magic seduced into unlocking it with a not-unexpected betrayal. I enjoyed Aguirre's imagination right up to the end when she took the easy way out.

Michael Scott's "Deadwood" is a tale of kidnapping, slavery, and rescue by notorious outlaws when a dirigible sets down in Deadwood.

Dru Pagliasottii's "Code of Blood" interrupts the doge's marriage to the sea ceremony in Venice when the French invade through treachery. Only the resolution and quick thinking of the doge's granddaughter saves everyone when she appeals to the elementals.

Adrienne Kress's "Clockwork Corset" is a triumph of the tomboy over societal expectations when the girl saves the boy who saves the girl right back with his mechanical genius.

Jaclyn Dolamore's "Airship Gemini" is a sad tale of exploitation and love. Just as a pair of Siamese are about to start a working trip across the Atlantic in a dirigible, a mage who has been hounding them into allowing him to separate them as a paean to his powers, boards the ship. The twins are in a panic for they know their "aunt" is all for it and so it proves. Although, in the end, rescue comes from an unexpected source. Very imaginative tale.

Maria V. Snyder's "Under Amber Skies" is a scary story of Nazis and an unexpected psychotic in Leba, Poland. Zosia's father has gone into hiding. As a well-known inventor, he refuses to be taken by the Nazis to create war machines for them. It's been months since Zosie has seen him, and now it seems he was right for the Nazis are hunting her. Her and her mother. Oh man, what a twist...!

Tessa Gratton's "King of the Greenlight City" is another very sad tale of love gone awry. In Ever's world, one may only have one magical elemental. And he has two. Not daring to seek help in his own world, Ever begs it of the Titan and receives more than he bargained for.

Tiffany Trent's "Emperor's Man" unfolds into tyranny and deception as the Princess and the Guard rescue the "reality" within their world of magic. I sure hope this one is a series because I must know what happens next! Very nice writing.

Dia Reeves's "Chickie Hill's Badass Ride" veers between hilarious and frightening and fascinating between Chickie's obsession with his very smooth ride, a restored 1958 Ford Thunderbird, and his girlfriend's rockin' between protesting for civil rights and wanting to make out. The frightening is the nine-lived who steal children and won't accept a rescue. The fascinating is Chickie's mad skills...that boy has got a head on his shoulders! Dude.

Caitlin Kittredge's "Vast Machinery of Dreams" is a very confusing story. I had no idea what was truth or fiction until the very end when Matt Edison gets what he has always wanted...eeek....

Kiersten White's "Tick, Tick, Boom" is an odd combination of good, funny, and clichéd. The very proper daughter of Lord Ashworth spends her free time building bombs to sabotage her father's factories and avoiding the milquetoast suitors her father parades before her. Little does Catherine realize that more than one person can hide.

The Cover and Title

Great cover! Clockwork gears caress the lovely face of a young woman of soft, dewy cheek, moistened full lip, and glistening, knowing eye.

The title is perfect — *Corsets & Clockwork* with that combination of romance and steampunk.

Sworthen says

I enjoyed this in spite of it getting off to a poor start, with an incoherent introduction. (Indeed, some sloppy editing throughout, most egregiously, three very incorrectly-used "whom"s in two different stories.)

"Rude Mechanicals" - Lesley Livingston - Good story concept about an automaton in the theater, poor pacing.

"The Cannibal Field of Rotherhithe" - Frewin Jones - Weak first two pages (overwrought, plus "grey stew in a Crock-pot inconsistent with setting), gets rapidly better after that with surprises, shocks, and charms.

"Wild Magic" - Ann Aguirre - Solid story of adventures with fey, magic, and love

"Deadwood" - Michael Scott - Delightful, good sense of humor, well-matched resourceful main characters in the Wild West by dirigible.

"Code of Blood" - Dru Pagliassotti - Solid, some typos in the Italian, but nicely told and satisfying magical version of Napoleon's troops invading Venice.

"The Clockwork Corset" - Adrienne Kress - The title was nearly a distraction, but I liked the voice enough I'm not interested in what else she may have written. Boyishly-raised female heir discovers love, disguises herself as a man, has adventures in a British war against France with clockwork inventor.

"The Airship Gemini" - Jaclyn Dolamore - A story of Siamese twins, magic, airship, vampire, and freak shows.

"Under Amber Skies" - Maria V. Snyder - Very much grew on me, and much more satisfying than the only other thing I've read by this author. Set in Poland during Nazi resistance, with clockwork mysteries.

"King of the Greenlight City" - Tessa Gratton - Liked the worldbuilding, but the story didn't wholly work for me. Six magics, competing powers, heirs to magic, arranged marriage, and disaster.

"The Emperor's Man" - Tiffany Trent - Better worldbuilding than story, but reasonably solid.

"Chickie Hill's Badass Ride" - Dia Reeves - Took a while to settle into it, but it went interesting places with a touch of time travel, 1950s civil rights resistance, faerie soulsuckers, circle skirts, and kitted-out cars.

"The Vast Machinery of Dreams" - Caitlin Kittredge - Rather abstract story musing on alternate versions of what might have happened or may have been remembered by a man whose dreams have been cannibalized by what might be Great Old Ones.

"Tick Tick, Boom" - Kiersten White - Loved the title, enjoyed the story. Fun, restrained, sly, if broadly predictable.

Rui says

Well, for an anthology whose tagline is “Come for the steam, stay for the punk” I have to say I felt there was a remarkable absence of either steam or punk in most stories. Having said this I have to add that this was my first incursion into a Steam Punk universe outside the “League of Extraordinary Gentlemen”, so maybe my expectations were off. Still most stories were quite enjoyable.

“Rude Mechanicals”

This was a promising beginning, I liked the way it mixed theater elements with the steam punk. It was an interesting concept. The references to both Pygmalion (I swear I half expected someone to burst into a song about rain in Spain at some point) and Romeo and Juliet were nice touches, and the way the universe was subtly established was well achieved. But the problem with it was the pacing. When I reached the end I felt it was a bit rushed, as if the author remembered that he had to wrap the show up in a very small number of lines. And it lost a lot for that.

“The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhite”

Mermaids, vernian submarines, a dark secret, rape, incestuous attempts, murder, extremely impractical but cool machinery... this story has a lot going for it, including a streak of dark humour underneath. The steampunk elements here felt a bit pasted on, though, not really relevant to the whole thing, yet I liked the writing quite a lot and, against my better judgement, I sympathized with the main character, Silka, so much that it gets a 4 of 5.

“Wild Magic”

And, as opposed to the previous story, I really didn't find much charm in this. The setting, a XIX Century London where magic and technology compete (with an advantage to technology) had potential, but the characters, I found, were just too annoying for me to care. The main girl tried to be strong, and she sure had a lot of power, but ultimately she was always relegated to the part of damsel in distress. The boy, on the other hand was just the typical big ball of ego, manipulation and overconfidence, so much that he doesn't amuse as much as he annoys. Oh...and the "romantic" part of falling for a boy in a portrait? Really? I could only find it shallow. And the last nail in the coffin was that every "twist" (and I use the term loosely here) was predictable from a mile away.

If you ask me: 1 out of 5, and “I'm Cutting My Own Throat” here.

“Deadwood”

This one is mainly an adventure story, but a rather well crafted one at that. The steam punk and the wild west thing mix up quite well. The characters were fun to read in pretty much the same way Indiana Jones is fun to watch. This was mainly an entertaining read, but it didn't mean to be anything other than that, so it does deserve a solid 4 out of 5. And I should add I wouldn't mind at all following further adventures of Martha and JW in that universe of cowboys and clockwork.

“Code of Blood”

This one wasn't bad, It just seems...forgettable in the long run. I liked the alchemical Venice, and Chiara and Pietro where enjoyable enough as protagonists but, in the end, I don't think this story would be hurt by a few more pages. Maybe this would work better in a full length novel format than in a short story form. But still it gets 3 out 5.

“The Clockwork Corset”

This one, to me, was one of the best. The plot is very much a traditional one that's been done to death (a young girl disguises herself as a boy to join the army and protect her love), but the characters are so well developed that I ended up going along with it, almost forgetting I had read all that before. The steampunk element was added as a flavour, but it was a good kind of seasoning here, not too much, not too little, just enough to be palatable. In the end it all works quite well and I ended up considering this story as one of the few deserving 5 out of 5 in this anthology.

“The Airship Gemini”

Too many interesting ideas and few pages hurt this one to death. The idea of writing a story from the point of view of a siamese twin from a wandering freak show was quite good, setting it on a huge Zeppelin crossing the Atlantic, could be interesting , the addition of vampires and other supernatural creatures out of nowhere, could be good if it didn't feel too sudden and out of nowhere. That was the problem. Maybe the author could have gotten away with it if she had more space to explore and explain the universe, as it was it just felt badly glued together from several good ideas. 2 out of 5.

“Under Amber Skies”

At first, having read some reviews here, I was preparing myself for a disappointment. But as I read it the only thing I didn't like so much was Inek, the male protagonist, I simply wouldn't have much effort picturing him riding a big white stallion and saving the day, with a glint in his smile. Glad he didn't do that though, instead he was not over used, and showed some nice character flaws. I can live with that. Zosia, the girl from whose point of view we see the story, was not very hard to follow and had enough personality to keep me interested. Besides this story did something that really works for me, it used the steam punk setting (although Poland in WW II might be a bit too late to be considered “Steam”, but I'll let that slide) to talk about real issues. In the end it made no difference if there were mechanically engineered Nazis and robotic spiders or not, we get the feeling that this is all about the madness and pointlessness of war, be it in this or any other universe. 5 out of 5. (Oh, and that blasted blasted end, it left me with a bitter after taste and my mouth open, but it was rather appropriate for this.)

“King of The Greenlight City”

I very much liked this one for completely different reasons than I did the previous one. What “Under Amber Skies” had of realism, this one had of brilliant flights of fancy and of imagination. This has easily the most imaginative setting in the whole book (even though calling it steam punk might be stretching the concept a bit, so thin, in fact, as to near non existence). Still I enjoyed the images I was left with and the characters are classic (dark) fairytale stuff. One note, though, after “Under Amber Skies” I really didn't need another unhappy ending, nothing against it, but putting one right after the other might be a bit too bleak.

5 out of 5.

“The Emperor's Man”

Even though I enjoyed this one it felt a lot like the first chapter of something. The idea of a large part of Victorian London being transported to fairyland by an experiment gone wrong, (yes, buildings and all), was quite good, and it was not badly executed. No problem there, really. The only thing is that by the end of it all, I felt so much was left unsaid and unsolved that it was frustrating. And that grants this a 3 out 5 by my book.

“Chickie Hill's Baddass Ride”

If WW II Poland seems too late for “steam”, then don't even get me started on 1950's USA. The only way I can see this being steam punk related is through the reference, somewhere, of a “1890's rocket”, which suggests that this is, in fact, the future of a steam punk universe. Again, I'll let that slide. The rest was quite enjoyable. It was fun, well crafted and even pertinent. The idea of having a story that mixes interdimensional Lovecraftian monsters plaguing a small US Town with the very real issues of Racial Segregation was well executed and none of the elements ended up conflicting with the others (in fact, the irony of using references to Lovecraft in order to discuss racial issues was not lost on me, intentionally or not). Chickie Hill was a fun guy to follow, and his girlfriend Sue Jean a good down to earth viewpoint for the story.

This takes a 5 out of 5.

“The Vast Machinery of Dreams”

This is not for everyone's tastes, I know that. It is the kind of story in which the reader has to do half the work to understand the plot, and, even by the end, a lot is left unanswered. Still this was dark, uncomfortable, and it does drill into your brain even though you might not know why. This makes it stand out.

Much more than the story itself I loved the way this managed to convey unsettling emotions and confuse me at every turn. It felt a bit like the film “Inception” and all its “what the hell is real and what the hell is not” brothers.

4 of 5

“Tick, Tick, Boom”

This last story was quite well written, and structured, with a delightful main character. There are hints of steam, of punk, of a stuffy society, rebels, bombings...the works. And the universe never becomes overwhelming in the face of the characters. Still I found it way too short, this is another one that would be a perfect first chapter for a novel, which made it slightly frustrating. But unlike "The Emperor's Man" it doesn't feel unfinished, instead it just made me long for more. The "twist" is predictable though, yet the rest is very much spot on.

4of5

Crystal ♥ RBtWBC says

Overall there were only four stories out of the thirteen that I really loved in this anthology, I like to see happy endings and many of these shorts did not have this. They were also pretty dark and depressing to me. But those four stories were amazing which is why I give this anthology a three instead of a two. You can see my thoughts on each story below.

Rude Mechanicals by Lesley Livingston:

A story about a young man who grew up in the theatre and now directs. The theatre business is failing until a stranger approaches them with a wonderful creation that may save The Aurora but could also cost Quint his life.

Good short story, but extremely short – 24 pages. I liked the MC Quint, I do wish the end was more detailed though with Sapphy.

Rating – 3 (Good)

The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe by Frewin Jones:

A dark tale of a girl who was born of both land and sea, but knew nothing of either. Her father held her mother captive until she died during childbirth and then kept Selka a prisoner as well until he mistook her one-day for her dead mother and she ate him. She then goes in search of London and her true love but finds men with evil intentions and an unlikely friend along the way. This is a somewhat disturbing short story (43 pages) of rape, cannibalism and abuse.

Rating - 1 (Not for me)

Wild Magic by Ann Aguirre:

An enchanting tale of magic and the prejudice between the Wild court and the great houses all centered around one extraordinary girl. The Ferisher are like the Fae, possessing magic and glamour. They came to this land and the four princes and princesses from the great houses had to intermarry to save themselves. Now, they disparage their mix heritage of magic and have turned to technology, leaving those who possess a great ability outcast. Pearl can resurrect the magics of their past, but will the Wild let her survive to see her dreams to fruition?

I really enjoyed this story, the main characters and the world built around them. Though I would have liked to read more about the history this world was built on I understand details have to be limited in short stories. 39 Pages.

Rating – 4 (Loved it)

Deadwood by Michael Scott

An action-packed airship adventure set around a young girl searching for her brothers and the young man she

meets who is a shootist and a gambler. When none other then the Captain himself takes down their air ship they must work together to save the passengers and orphaned children from being held captive and forced to work in the minds.

This was a wonderful short story, 28 pages, full of action and adventure with characters that I would love to see more of.

Rating – 4 (Loved it)

Code of Blood by Dru Pagliassotti

A sweet story about a small republic gifted with elemental powers and steam engine technology. The French are invading their town, taking by surprise on their holy day. After Chiara's grandfather falls to a bullet she must make her way to the Guild if they are to have any chance against the French.

The world building was a little confusing and too detailed for such a short story, 49 pages, but the dialogue between characters was enjoyable and Chiara and Pietro brought a smile to my face.

Rating – 3 (Good)

The Clockwork Corset by Adrienne Kress

A beautiful tale about a girl who grew up on a house filled with clocks, the boy she grew up with and the promises that they made to each other.

I really enjoyed Imogen (though not her name =P) and Rafe, the clockwork inventions he made and Imogen's loyalty to him. It was a full story packed into a small space, 40 pages.

Rating – 4 (Loved it)

The Airship Gemini by Jaclyn Dolamore

This is a moving story about siamese twins, Faith and Patience, who've had a rather sad upbringing being paraded around as a freak show for their 'Aunt' to make money. They are performing on the airship Gemini; surrounded by mages, the fey, vampires and even werewolves when they are faced with a choice to remain together or be separated.

Good story, 28 pages, with an interesting array of characters.

Rating – 3 (Good)

Under Amber Skies by Maria V. Snyder

A young polish girl's father has been locked in the basement making war inventions and she hasn't seen him in months. When she is confronted in town by nazis posing as polish officials she must accept help from the boy who abandoned her and rescue her mother.

This short story (35 pages) was well written and had unexpected twists but it was dark and disturbing.

Rating – 2 (Okay)

King of the Greenlight City by Tessa Gratton

A fire prince learns he can fly. When he goes into the city to meet his betrothed he finds love and an ostracized king that can teach him how to use his powers. But the king soon asks for more than Ever is willing to give.

An interesting short story, 24 Pages, but a bit confusing and I couldn't connect with the characters. I also did not like the sad ending, which this anthology has in abundance.

Rating – 2 (Okay)

The Emperor's Man by Tiffany Trent

After a secret experiment went wrong a hole was ripped in time and space causing the whole of London to be transported to the land of Faery.

The plot is original and the concept interesting but the story just didn't pull it off for me. It didn't hold my

attention and it was another dark tale with an abrupt ending. -30 pages

Rating - 1 (Not for me)

Chickie Hill's Badass Ride by Dia Reeves

Chickie always had a way with inventing things but when the nine-lives attack his friends and kidnap young boys he intercedes on his girlfriends behalf and risks changing the world.

Set in the 60's with segregation a main topic this young couple deals with social issues and scary creatures. - 33 pages

Rating - 1 (Not for me)

The Vast Machinery of Dreams by Caitlin Kittredge

Matt longs to be a writer. He has been kicked out of school, fired from jobs and disciplined by his father for daydreaming but he can't seem to help it. When he enters a movie theatre and meets Isabelle the stories come with intensity and he needs to be around her to set them free. But Isabelle is not human and needs him and his stories to feed her race.

Very short (17 pages) and confusing story that kept re-starting at 'This is what happened:' so you never were quite sure what really happened.

Rating - 1 (Not for me)

Tick, Tick, Boom by Kiersten White

Catherine Ashbury is no ordinary empty-headed heiress; she secretly makes clockwork weapons to aid the rebellion against factory conditions and anything that will annoy her father. When she meets a mysterious buyer though, her life becomes even more exciting, and dangerous.

This short story, 25 pages, held my attention the entire time. The writing was captivating, the story entertaining and the characters interesting.

Rating – 5 (Perfect!)

Angela Oliver says

As I am currently "researching" Steampunk for my Book Club, I thought a collection of short stories would be a good way to get the concept of "steampunk". Because this is short stories, I thought I would review each one at a time, and therefore will be updating my review as I continue:

Rude Mechanicals by *Lesley Livingston* 4/5

A brief foray into the theatre, with a clockwork woman. An intriguing concept, with a bit of a twist. Fairly simplistic plot - good for a short story.

The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe by *Freewin Jones* 5/5

A man captures a mermaid, and she births for him a daughter, dying in the process. He discards the body and raises the child without love or affection. After his untimely and gruesome death, she travels to London seeking her True Love... I really liked this one - the writing style was quirky, with some rather dark deeds discussed subtly but sinister, and an intriguing character in the form of Silka. It did have a bit of an abrupt ending and I am rather wishing the author had continued with this concept and turned it into a novel.

Wild Magic by *Ann Aguirre* 3/5

A young girl from a wealthy family, with a magical background, purchases a painting of a young man. It

opens a door into another realm - a realm of magic. As far as romantic fables go - it's a bit predictable, despite a minor twist.

Deadwood by *Michael Scott* 3/5

A young lady is travelling across the continent to trace her missing brothers, the airship makes an unexpected stop - in isolated Deadwood, and things soon take a turn for the worst... Rather predictable, too many threads left hanging and a somewhat corny ending.

Code of Blood by *Dru Pagliassotti* 3/5

Venice - and the annual "wedding" ceremony is interrupted by a French invasion. Our heroine, Chiara, must complete the ceremony and help save her city. I liked the writing style, but felt the romance was rather tossed in because it was compulsory and it didn't feel entirely convincing. The elemental familiars were quite nifty - should have played a more major part in the plot.

The Clockwork Corset by *Adrienne Kress* 4/5

A young noble woman follows her love to the front line of war, by masquerading as a man. I really like the writing style of this one, which has a charmingly whimsical air. And a hint of darkness.

The Airship Gemini by *Jaclyn Dolamore* 2/5

Siamese twins aboard a travelling dirigible sideshow are threatened with separation. This one was not particularly well plotted, since I could not understand why their "Auntie" would want them separated for a brief glimpse of fame when they were money spinners while cojoined. The motives seemed wrong and the writing was not particularly outstanding.

Under Amber Skies by *Maria V. Snyder* 5/5

A young girl lives in Poland, during the war, when Nazis threaten her parents - her father is a fantastic inventor of clockwork tools, potential weapons, but noone has seen him for some months. A very nicely written piece, with evocative language and some rather dark twists.

King of the Greenlight City by *Tessa Gratton* 4/5

A young man with elemental powers seeks his future on the dark side of the city, while his fiance waits for him. Intriguing concepts, nice writing style, some dark twists.

The Emperor's Man by *Tiffany Trent* 4/5

A young soldier is required to protect the emperor's daughter, but in doing so he learns some dark truths about the world. Another with nifty concept and interesting plot - again some darker moments.

Chickie Hill's Badass Ride by *Dia Reeves* 2/5

USA in the 1960s (or so). Not steampunk. A couple of children are kidnapped one evening by some fearsome pale shapes - not the Ku Klux Klan as previously expected - but something darker, more primeaval. Not particularly well written, not steampunk and overall a let down.

The Vast Machinery of Dreams by *Caitlin Kittredge* 2/5

A young writer finds dark inspiration from an even darker source. The writing style was confusing, thus making the plot difficult to follow and the best thing about it was the Lovecraftian vibe.

Tick, Tick, BOOM by *Kierstin White* 5/5

A young woman plays "daddy's girl" to her manipulative father, whilst trying to avoid potential suitors and creating explosives in her free time. One day she has a run in with a client - a mysterious stranger who

bedazzles her with a kiss. Loved the fiesty attitude of Kitty, the writing style and the general feel to the plot, although it felt decidedly modern in tone, despite the relative gritty english feel of the setting. A fun read, with a satisfying ending. I'd definitely be interested in reading more by this author!

* * *

In conclusion:

There is a reason I do not normally read short stories: once I get to know the characters, I really want to read more about them and with short stories, you just get to know and like them and the story is over and on with the next. There are always threads left hanging, and the plot has to be more tightly edited to fit the word limit. Of these stories, some were pretty good reads - little tasters that might inspire me to look into more by that author in the future - others were naff and bland. As for the love - the requirement for each of these stories to feature romance of some kind sometimes worked and sometimes didn't. Ultimately, it made the plots quite predictable but often the relationships felt rushed and false. In terms of writing romance in short stories, I found the most convincing to be the ones in which the relationship was just implied, or hinted at as a future possibility.

So, what is steampunk? Steampunk is cogs and clockwork, steam powered engines and aether lighting. Steampunk is women in fancy garb - corsets and petticoats and skirts. It is elemental beings and supernatural creatures like vampires, werewolves and mermaids. It is dark, and gritty, with things that blow up and things that crash. It is love that is impossible, or improbable, or indeed, merely practical to the plot. It is a concept, I think, that requires further research.

Maggie Desmond-O'Brien says

Geek that I am, you have probably assumed all this time that I love steampunk. In this assumption you would be 100%. The problem? I am sadly undereducated. Beyond the already-classics like Philip Pullman's His Dark Material trilogy and Joss Whedon's TV show Firefly, I have yet to venture far into the steampunk genre. So I picked up this anthology in my library. What could possibly go wrong?

A lot, unfortunately. Despite a few standout stories, I was decidedly underwhelmed by this anthology, which felt more like an attempt to cash in on a trend than a genuine bringing-together of YA greats. I was especially disappointed considering the strength of the names of this anthology, many of whom I love when writing in novel-length but didn't enjoy in their short stories here. Still, standout stories by Dia Reeves, Jaclyn Dolamore, and Maria V. Snyder made it well worth picking up.

Of course, no anthology review would be complete without breaking it down story by story, so here goes:

Story-by-story reviews:

"Rude Mechanicals" by Lesley Livingston: Cool concept, but an obnoxious narrator I couldn't relate to at all. Not for me.

"The Cannibal Fiend of Rotherhithe" by Frewin Jones: Slow to start, but exactly the sort of narrator and writing I like to see in steampunk. Gave me the chills! Liked it.

"Wild Magic" by Ann Aguirre: Again, cool concept, but a contrived romance and an ending I saw coming

from a mile away. Meh.

"Deadwood" by Michael Scott: A witty and wonderful Wild West story I didn't want to end. Speaking of endings, the twist was fantastic! This should be a novel. Loved it.

"Code of Blood" by Dru Pagliassotti: One of the most fantastic worlds in the anthology, it reminded me a lot of *City of Masks* by Mary Hoffman. The writing didn't quite deliver (which was a recurring theme here), but it definitely made for fun reading. Liked it.

"The Clockwork Corset" by Adrienne Kress: Sweet, but too formulaic. It felt like the author looked up everything that should be in a steampunk romance and wrote it instead of following her story. Not for me.

"The Airship Gemini" by Jaclyn Dolamore: Such a brave and bizarre mix of breezy and creepy I couldn't help but love it. Loved it.

"Under Amber Skies" by Maria V. Snyder: I love the idea of a WWII steampunk. I also love how Snyder doesn't pull any punches, leaving me breathless by the end. Loved it.

"King of the Greenlight City" by Tessa Gratton: Another writer that doesn't pull any punches in an unusual world, but the writing was painfully stiff. Liked it.

"The Emperor's Man" by Tiffany Trent: Kept me guessing the whole way through with a fantastic world that reminded me, no joke, of Philip Pullman. It didn't quite capture me, but I think at this point that was more my disappointment in the anthology as a whole than a problem with the story itself. Liked it.

"Chickie Hill's Badass Ride" by Dia Reeves: Unsurprisingly, Reeves' '60s era steampunk Portero story is the best in the collection. If you loved Bleeding Violet and Slice of Cherry, Corsets and Clockwork is worth picking up for this story alone. Loved it.

"The Vast Machinery of Dreams" by Caitlin Kittredge: I saw what the writer was trying to do--steampunk Inception meets homicidal fairies--I just wish she had executed it a little better. Meh.

"Tick, Tick, Boom" by Kiersten White: So silly and flirty that I didn't really mind that I could see the end coming a mile off. This has definitely convinced me to try White's other work. Liked it.
