



Kaleidoscope: Diverse YA Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories

Alisa Krasnostein (Editor), Julia Rios (Editor), Garth Nix (Contributor), Sean Williams (Contributor), Tansy Rayner Roberts (Contributor), Amal El-Mohtar (Contributor), Karen Healey (Contributor), Jim C. Hines (Contributor), more... Ken Liu (Contributor), Vylar Kaftan (Contributor), John Chu (Contributor), Sean Eads (Contributor), Gabriela Lee (Contributor), Faith Mudge (Contributor), E.C. Myers (Contributor), Sofia Samatar (Contributor), Alena McNamara (Contributor), Holly Kench (Contributor), Tim Susman (Contributor), Shveta Thakrar (Contributor), William Alexander (Contributor), Dirk Flinthart (Contributor) ...less

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What do a disabled superhero, a time-traveling Chinese-American figure skater, and a transgendered animal shifter have in common? They're all stars of Kaleidoscope stories! Kaleidoscope collects fun, edgy, meditative, and hopeful YA science fiction and fantasy with diverse leads. These twenty original stories tell of scary futures, magical adventures, and the joys and heartbreaks of teenage life. Featuring New York Times bestselling and award winning authors along with newer voices: Garth Nix, Sofia Samatar, William Alexander, Karen Healey, E.C. Myers, Tansy Rayner Roberts, Ken Liu, Vylar Kaftan, Sean Williams, Amal El-Mohtar, Jim C. Hines, Faith Mudge, John Chu, Alena McNamara, Tim Susman, Gabriela Lee, Dirk Flinthart, Holly Kench, Sean Eads, and Shveta Thakrar

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From Reader Review Kaleidoscope: Diverse YA Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories for online ebook

Chrysten Lofton says

4.0 ? “???????? ??? ????? ?????”

* Spoilers*

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On Season 2, Episode 14 of Sticher podcast's LeVar Burton Reads, we're gifted with The Truth About Owls by Amal El-Mohtar.

My last few reviews have been lengthy, but I'm going to keep this one short for two reasons. One, because I think that'd be more in style with this author, who speaks in short, brisk prose. And two, because this story is incredibly self explanatory.

I don't like the flavor-description presented by Goodreads for this story, because I don't take the protagonist Anisa for a loner. A loner is someone who typically prefers solitude over company, or maybe has introverted tendencies. A loner may even be the victim of social disorders, mental health issues and so on. People that are corralled into isolation by morose circumstances are *not* loners. A rat in a cage isn't called *unfriendly*, it is called *imprisoned*. I almost take it as an affront on Anisa's behalf. She wouldn't be such a loner if she hadn't been left so very alone.

And does she not try? Isn't this whole story about how she's escaping all that forced isolation? Her father isolates her in his dire absence, her mother isolates her through her language and hectic life, and the kids at school isolate her through a combination of prejudice and eventually superstition—which she embraces, I think, because that superstition is her only stable identity. She has other things to draw from, but not things she can count on, stable identity builds over the course of her story.

The powers that Anisa picks up are real, there's no question in my mind, but we're left with the task of deciding if these powers are spiritual/emotional or something supernatural. Fine line, wouldn't you say?

This story has so much to unpack. Anisa is a refugee, but she's so *free* and I love that she insists on that freedom. She continues to learn Welsh, because it lifts her soul and enriches her thoughts. She spends time with Izzy and Blodeuwedd because it's a freedom over the isolation. No matter what comes for her, she keeps embracing her truth.

But, her circumstances, wisely surmised, “*every day a matter of someone else's opinions*”, corrupts the most essential part of that freedom. At school, she embraces the idea that she has otherworldly power because that's the place where the power is at service to her needs. It's a convenience in a place where school peers are

cruel and isolating, but when it comes to her family, and her friend Blodeuwedd, it's a slow-acting poison. Izzy steps in and shows her that her power, her core, is always protected. It's always up to her. Of all the things war and isolation can take, this is the one thing that can't be touched. If she's got the poison, she's got the antidote.

This story has a modern, honest, inevitable bleakness. The author could have carried that desolation all the way to fruition and would have told the story truthfully. Instead, he offers an alternative truth, still grave but, hopeful. A piece of the antidote. It's not a delusional hope either, it's much more like a silver lining. There are things Anisa can never stop, but there are things she can always hold to. In the face of say, her father's death, or a war-torn home, it doesn't seem like much. That's why ultimately, it's so complicated.

Thanks for reading my review and if you need more LeVar in your life, I recommend his reading of Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, available on Audible.

Francesca Forrest says

This review duplicates what I wrote on LJ

I've just finished *Kaleidoscope: Diverse YA Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories*. This excellent collection succeeds in every possible way: not only does it fulfill its mission to deliver fantasy stories with diverse protagonists (along many axes of diversity: ethnic, geographical, physical and mental status, sexual orientation, and gender,** written by equally diverse authors, but it also delivers diversity of mood, tone, and style. The stories are all excellent, some of them breathtakingly so. One editor, Julia Rios, is American; the other, Alisa Krasnostein, hails from Australia, and perhaps for that reason there's also a nice hemispheric balance in the collection.

You know a story's good when you're compelled to share it, which happened to me several times while reading—first with Ken Liu's **“Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon.”** The title refers to the Qixi Festival, commemorating the yearly meeting of the celestial lovers Zhinü, the Weaver Maiden, and Niulang, the Cowherd, on that date. When the story opens, Yuan, who lives in Hebei, China, is about to be separated from her friend and lover Jing, who is going to America for school. I assumed—wrongly!—that I was in for a connect-the-dots parallel between the two girls' present-day situation and the folktale. In fact, Liu had something better planned—a fantastic journey, and touching, unexpected advice, which an aged Zhinü shares with the lovers. I shared the story with a friend of mine who was suffering a separation from a friend, and she too was surprised and moved by it.

The second story I shared was the very next story in the anthology, **“The Legend Trap,”** by Sean Williams. Three friends enter a d-mat booth to test the urban legend that entering the destination “Bashert Ostension” will take you to an alternative universe, just a hair's breadth away from our own. I knew my sixteen-year-old son would love this: I had him read it to me, and we kept talking about it for days. It's a tense, exciting story with the atmosphere of an updated version of *The Twilight Zone*. Big applause for the names of all the nowhere destinations that Williams comes up with—things like Addison's Adit, the Fistula, and the Long Way Home. (*But where's the diversity?* you may be asking—more on that later.)

On the third occasion, I read the story to my son: it was Karen Healey's hugely inventive **“Careful Magic.”** Helen is an outsider in her school in part because of her OCD compulsions and in part because she's chosen to declare for Order magic, whereas most of her classmates prefer Chaos magic (her own mother has the rank

of Chaos Queen). Healey deftly introduces these magic systems and their differences in the context of an enchantment an unscrupulous fellow student has cast, which Helen must break. There's a whole novel's worth of invention and characterization in this story, in which Helen's OCD is emphatically *not* a source of her strength, but a reality she has to live with.

My final most-favorite story, Sofia Samatar's "**Walkdog**," takes the form of an essay by teen student Yolanda Price, complete with footnotes and occasional spelling errors. Writing on the topic "Know Your Environment," Yolanda describes for her teacher, Ms. Patterson, the mythical Walkdog, sourcing her information primarily from a lonely boy's imagination, supplemented with scraps of news, scholarship, and the songs of blueswoman Maisie Oates. Yolanda's voice is superb, and her transition from somewhat scornful of her main source of information—the geeky Andrew Bookman—to remorseful and bereft is masterful and heart wrenching. This is a true gem of a story, a compelling mix of humor and sorrow.

(Under the spoiler cut are thoughts on the other stories, individually--no actual spoilers)

(view spoiler)

Anisa, the protagonist of Amal El-Mohtar's "**The Truth about Owls**," finds relief from the alienation she feels as a Lebanese immigrant in Scotland by spending time with Izzy at the Scottish Owl Centre. One of the elements of this story that I found most moving was Anisa's interest in learning Welsh (one of the owls is named after Blodeuwedd, from the Mabinogion), and the reaction that provokes in her mother:

Anisa looks up from her notebook to her mother, and shakes her head. "No. It's Welsh stuff."
"Oh." Her mother pauses, and Anisa can see her mentally donning the gloves with which to handle her. "Why Welsh?"
She shrugs. "I like it." Then, seeing her mother unsatisfied, adds, "I like the stories. I'd like to

read them in the original language eventually.”

Her mother hesitates. “You know, there’s a rich tradition of Arabic storytelling—”

Often, young people are expected to be proud proponents of their culture—while, paradoxically, the dominant culture denigrates or exoticizes it. All this can be too much for a teen, who may just want to be free to follow a personal interest. “The Truth about Owls” showed this, and I appreciated that.

With just a term of endearment here and a description of an evening meal there, Shveta Thakrar brings to life a South Asian American family and its alienated younger daughter Neha in “**Krishna Blue.**” Neha has a gift for art but chafes under the culturally insensitive tutelage of her art teacher. Delight in the vivid colors in her tubes of paint leads her to an empowering, but frightening, discovery regarding her relationship to those colors. This is an unsettling, imaginative story.

In Holly Kench’s “**Every Little Thing,**” Mandy seeks to put a love spell on beautiful Leah, whom Mandy has had a crush on ever since Leah helped her out one day last year. Mandy clearly hasn’t read “Careful Magic,” or she’d know she shouldn’t pursue this course of action. As it is, she has her geeky friend Natasha to advise her, but Natasha’s rather judgmental when it comes to Leah. The story was a bit too high school oriented for my tastes, but that very quality ought to make it appealing to Mandy-aged readers, and to Kench’s credit, all the characters are engagingly written.

Garth Nix takes the present-day plight of migrants who make life-threatening journeys in leaky boats and transposes it to the future, with the boats becoming spaceships and orbiting settlements replacing present-day destination countries. In “**Happy Go Lucky,**” Jean is a privileged member of a society where status is keyed to one’s luck, but all that changes when one of her two dads writes a subversive article. When the family is redesignated unlucky, Jean’s parents make plans for her to have a better future.

In Vylar Kaftan’s “**Ordinary Things,**” Katie’s anxiety manifests itself in OCD-like rituals that she constructs to keep herself safe. Unfortunately, they don’t always work; in fact, when emotional push comes to literal shove, they don’t work very well at all. This is a sad story. Katie’s future looks bleak. However, her insight into the power of ordinary things offer both her, and the reader, a glimmer of hope.

“**Double Time,**” by John Chu, is a fabulously clever story about the world of competitive figure skating, in a future in which you can go back in time about five minutes—a fact that figure skaters are exploiting by sending their future selves back in time to partner their five-minutes-ago self. Shelly’s mother named her after Michelle Kwan, and the pressure on her to succeed is almost unbearable. I was both fascinated by the skating lingo and details and impressed with the finely drawn relationship between Shelly and her mother.

The anthology ends not with a farewell but with a salutation, William Alexander’s “**Welcome,**” which features one of my favorite SF motifs, sailing to the moon. For quite some time, Antonio’s been making the smugglers’ run from Earth to the Moon, on the nights when the tidal bridge between the earthly and lunar seas makes it possible, but now his Abuela wants to give the run to someone else, because of Antonio’s chronic pain. This short, lyrical story, which is dreamlike, but tangible, is the perfect conclusion for the anthology. (hide spoiler)]

Now to return to the question of diversity and how noticeable it is, or isn’t, in the stories. An important part of having diverse stories with diverse protagonists is having stories that *aren’t* focused primarily on the fact of the diversity itself. The protagonist’s difference—whatever it might be—from the majority population is just one of their characteristics and may be incidental to the plot itself. So, for instance, Yolanda, the

protagonist of “Walkdog,” says, “I mean I consider myself a New Jersey native, what else would I be, even though I’m African and German and Spanish and God knows what else,” but her ethnic makeup isn’t the focus of the story. The Walkdog itself, part canefield legend and part blues fragment, shows more clearly the way in which minority voices can be present and powerful, and yet go unnoticed by the dominant culture—and yet, important as this element is to the story, it’s secondary to the themes of friendship and remorse.

Similarly, in “The Legend Trap,” two of the three friends are lesbians, in a relationship with each other, and while the fact of their relationship adds tension and drama to the story, it’s the relationship, not the fact that it’s a lesbian relationship, that’s important.

In many of the stories, the protagonist’s difference is more important to the story. This is the case with Helen’s compulsions in “Careful Magic,” Rene’s schizophrenia in “Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell,” Neha’s South Asian family life in “Krishna Blue,” and Anisa’s Lebanese background in “The Truth about Owls.” These tales aren’t *about* compulsion or schizophrenia or coming from a South Asian or Lebanese family, but those realities are central to the story.

“Terms of Service,” by contrast, is actually *about* the harshness of the life of overseas workers, and the toll the arrangement takes on their families. Similarly, “The Lovely Duckling” and “Celebration” are *about* the protagonists’ differences. And the presence of this spectrum of emphasis is as it should be: wanting to normalize difference and diversity doesn’t mean we should forgo stories that focus on the hardships associated with those differences.

In the end, though, I think the shining achievement of this anthology is that the stories are exciting, funny, moving, and powerful; they’re thought provoking, and they’re fun to read. I’m sure you’ll end up with at least as many favorites as I did.

**The only imbalance I could perceive in the anthology is in the sex of the protagonist: the protagonists are almost all female.

S.B. Wright says

I can’t remember at which point I forgot that this collection was diverse YA and just plain enjoyed the read. I’d backed this particular project out of a belief in the publishing team, the writers they managed to bring on board and the idea that a diverse world is a better world.

So I am biased, but bias can only get you so far if the product is lacking. Thankfully (though I can’t say I honestly doubted the editorial team) Kaleidoscope, is not lacking, far from it. Sure there were stories that weren’t “my thing” (two from memory that I just couldn’t get into) but on the whole this project seemed to have a coherence, flow and quality that I have come to experience more in single author collections.

I can’t comment on some of the stories due to Aurealis Award Judging commitments but I will draw your attention to stories that in light of current discussions around YA in Australia, struck me as pertinent:

Tansy Rayner Roberts, *Cookie Cutter Superhero*, really buried any idea that YA fiction can’t interrogate complex issues. Tansy came out swinging in this story and never really let up. I kept saying to myself “Oh, she

didn't just...yes she did." You can view this one as a critique of the comic book industry its sexism and lack of diversity. This story doesn't "make nice".

"Happy Go Lucky" by Garth Nix is another interrogation of complex issues, this time refugees. I read this as Australia, in the form of Scott Morrison is attempting to give himself the power to effectively do what occurs in this story. Very timely.

Having some awareness of issues around the Filipino Diaspora, I found End of Service by Gabriela Lee, to be very clever and very subtle. Yet again we have another story that looks at exploitation, pair this sort of story with a critique of vulture capitalism and you can approach another complex issue from fiction and non-fiction standpoint.

So there were stories that focussed on broad issues and included diverse characters as part of the backdrop i.e. not every main character had to be the diverse character and not every story was about that diversity. Some stories mentioned gay characters in passing, as in John Chu's Double Time, where there's a one line mention of the male coach's boyfriend. Others like Garth Nix's Happy Go Lucky had gay parents as secondary characters. There's no reason why any author couldn't do this in an effort to present more diversity.

All the stories though, put story first or entertainment first, Karen Healey in Careful Magic takes an OCD witch in training, which would have been interesting just as an exploration of that condition in a contemporary world with magic and turns it into a edge of your seat story of suspense. John Cho meshes short term time travel with figure skating and overbearing parents; high concept meets human story.

Only one thing is better than finding a character that you can identify with, who is just like you. That thing is having other people see and perhaps gain insight and understanding into what it means to be "different". Kaleidoscope, should achieve this, it has for me.

If you are critical of YA fiction I'd like to have you read this collection. If you can find stories that tackle diversity better than this collection, I'd also like to know. On reflection I am content to say that if this collection is anything to go by, Kaleidoscope is evidence that some of the best diverse fiction is being written in the YA category.

Tsana Dolichva says

Kaleidoscope: Diverse YA Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories edited by Alisa Krasnostein and Julia Rios is a crowd-funded anthology that does what it says in the tag line.

It's an incredibly strong anthology, filled with thoughtful and creative stories. The stories cover a wide range of diverse characters, with diversity stemming from race, gender, chronic/mental illness and disability. I was pleasantly surprised to see several stories deal with characters who fit into more than one of those labels. I also found it awesome that most of the stories weren't about being black/queer/sick/etc but had those aspects as background to the main plot, generally a fantastical one (since it is an SFF anthology).

It's really hard to pick favourites in this collection. Although I didn't love the stories equally, there weren't any duds. (The one I talk about disliking below was because of a theme I'm sick of, not because there was anything wrong with the story per se.) Really, I liked all of them. However, some that stood out to me more than the others were: "Cookie Cutter Superhero" by Tansy Rayner Roberts, which was just awesome and needs a novel set in its universe; "Signature" by Faith Mudge, which was clever, amusing and ultimately happy-making; "Careful Magic" by Karen Healey about a magical school and a girl dealing with being an outsider for her eccentricities; and "Double Time" by John Chu, which was about ice-skating and having a pushy parent.

Most of the stories, I found, were reasonably upbeat but the anthology was punctuated with a few sadder stories. For example "The Legend Trap" by Sean Williams and "Krishna Blue" by Shveta Thakrar both have ambiguous and not entirely happy endings.

It's hard not to comment on all the stories now, but I've already done that below as I usually do with anthologies and collections. Kaleidoscope is an excellent anthology and I strongly recommend it to everyone. If you haven't already picked up a copy, do so!

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Cookie Cutter Superhero | Tansy Rayner Roberts — A very strong start to the anthology. A girl with one hand is chosen to join a superhero team. It touches on the lack of female super heroes and deals with the main character's fear that if the superhero machine "fixes" her, then what does that do to her sense of identity? What would then happen to her when she stopped being a superhero (because they have a limited tenure) and went back to being normal?

The Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon | Ken Liu — A portmanteau of two teenage girls in love and a Chinese Fairytale, with a twist on the take of the Fairytale's ending (I think, I'll have to google it later)

The Legend Trap | Sean Williams — Set in the Twinmaker universe and an odd story. It deals with the idea of d-mat teleportation sending people to a parallel universe and some of the consequences of that. I say odd mainly because of the ambiguous ending.

End of Service | Gabriela Lee — A story about the daughter of an overseas worker from the Philippines, struggling to come to terms with her mother's work choices. And of course with a speculative twist.

Chupacabra's Song | Jim C. Hines — A girl discovers chupacabras, magic and cruelty.

The Day the God Died | Alena McNamara — A short story about a character dealing with some heavy issues and a series of encounters with a dying old god.

Signature | Faith Mudge — I loved this story! It was clever and lovely and funny. Bookshops, supernatural contracts and an especially diverse cast.

The Lovely Duckling | Tim Susman — A story told in transcripts and other documents. A trans character works to escape her oppressive father in a world where people can also be shape-shifters. It had several pretty great elements, including the ending.

Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell | E.C. Myers — A drug that lets teenagers see into the future while they are kidding someone. Or a possible future, anyway. A girl on psych meds has a different reaction to it than her

peers do and fixates on leaning more.

Vanilla | Dirk Flinthart — Alien refugees have come to live on Earth in this story about an Australian girl with Somalian parents whose two best friends are aliens.

Careful Magic | Karen Healey — A girl with powerful magic and possibly OCD gets caught up in some of her magic-school classmates' shenanigans. A high-stakes magical story.

Walkdog | Sofia Samatar — A progressively sad story told in the form of a school-girl's essay. (Crappy grammar and all.) It's hard to comment on without spoiling, but the essay is ostensibly about the urban legend of Walkdog, the dog who walks you.

Celebration | Sean Eads — A gay teen is sent to gay camp (you know, the deprogramming kind) but when he gets there it's not quite the kind of brainwashing he expected.

The Truth About Owls | Amal El-Mohtar — A girl from Lebanon moves to Glasgow and discovers the joy of owls, Welsh and the truth about the power she feels inside herself. (Sort of.)

Krishna Blue | Shveta Thakrar — This was a weird story and one of the most horrifying. The story itself is wide open to interpretation, so I don't want to blatantly say what it's about other than a girl who doesn't fit in.

Every Little Thing | Holly Kench — A witch who also happen to be chronically ill, her supportive friend and her crush. About the importance of having friends that understand your needs/problems.

Happy Go Lucky | Garth Nix — Honestly, this story didn't really do it for me. It wasn't terrible, but it reminded me of far too many YA dystopian novels, with the usual variation on a theme. The "privileged youth hits hard times in dystopia" is a formula I've run out of patience for. (But I'm torn as to whether the diverse elements' complete irrelevance to the plot is a good or bad thing.)

Ordinary Things | Vylar Kaftan — Probably the least YA story with a 19 year old protagonist. Girl dealing with the end of a serious relationship and seeking safety in ritual.

Double Time | John Chu — An elite figure skating teen in a world where it's possible to jump back in time by up to four minutes to watch your practice or even skate with yourself. It was bittersweet.

Welcome | William Alexander — I think this was the shortest story, and certainly the most fantastical in the collection. The moon and earth are connected by a magical bridge, which smugglers cross at night. A whimsical (if not entirely cheerful) end to the anthology.

5 / 5 stars

Kaitlin says

I started reading this anthology waaaaaay back (so far back I can't even remember when) and then in the middle of reading I totally forgot that I owned it and so I took a good few months 'off' before rediscovering it and continuing with the stories. What I enjoyed most about this was that the title is explicit and the content follows the title really well, this DOES have diverse characters and SFF stories in YA and I really, really

enjoyed seeing them and seeing such a range of people, characters, authors and plots being recognised and represented.

I'm going to talk a little bit about each of the stories below as with any collection or anthology there were some I liked more than others:

* Cookie Cutter Superhero by Tansy Rayner Roberts - A really enjoyable and fun so far and I have to say I liked this idea of people becoming heroes. This reminded me a little bit of Wicked + Divine. 4*s

* Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon by Ken Liu - Beautiful imagery about lesbian lovers and ancient stories. Love the blend of sci-fi and fantasy within these, a 3.5*s

* The Legend Trap by Sean Williams - This one wasn't as good as the first two for me. Still interesting and definitely had some diverse elements but I didn't love the idea and therefore it just wasn't as fun. Pretty average, 2*s

* End of Service by Gabriela Lee - Again not really my thing. A bit too odd and short with the twist coming a bit too abruptly and suddenly for my liking. Still well written but just not a brilliant tale 2.5*s.

* Chupacabra's Song by Jim C. Hines - An interesting story for sure. Kind of hinted at attention deficit disorders and yet in a very cool way. The story was short and sweet but some nice ideas were shown and I think it could even have been pushed a bit further into a longer book. 3.5*s

The Day the God Died by Alena McNamara - Not my thing at all, very short, very dull, not even a real story - 1*

* Signature - A very cool little story about a book shop and the people who work there. Our main character is fun and strong-willed, but equally resourceful, and when problems take a supernatural turn for the shop, she steps in. 3.5*s

* The Lovely Duckling by Tim Susman - A wonderfully written story about a girl who cannot escape her father and just wants to fly free... Beautiful, moving and definitely a story I think people can relate to! 4*s

* Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell by E.C.Myers - About a strange new drug that gives vision of possible futures when you kiss another. Weird yet interesting 3.5*s

* Vanilla by Dirk Flinthart - I really liked this as it was about inclusion and alien races. Very good messages and well written too! 4*s

* Careful Magic by Karen Healey - About witches and their powers and also deals a little with bullying and OCD. Likeable, but not so memorable 2.5*s

* Walkdog by Sofia Samatar - Not my thing at all, just dull for me 1*

* Celebration by Sean Eads - Interesting mix of topics. Not sure quite how well it worked in my mind but it was a likeable and easy-to-follow story :) 3*s

* The Truth About Owls by Amal El-Mohtar - A strange story. I liked the metaphors back to the Owls, but I'm not sure I fully 'got' this one. It was late at night when I read it. 2*s

* Krishna Blue by Shveta Thakrar - This one I liked a lot, it's about a girl who discovers an awful power she can't control, absorbing colours. Cool idea, nice execution. 4*s

* Every Little Thing by Holly Kench - This one was certainly focused on friendship coming first and I liked that idea a lot. Nicely written, and the characters realise what's important at the end. 3.5*s

* Happy Go Lucky by Garth Nix - I loved this one and I am happy to say that as I have enjoyed a fair amount of Garth Nix's books and I wanted to try out his shorter fiction. This focuses on a world where Luck is everything and society is based on it. When our main character's family is tested for their Luck things change, not in a great way. 4*s

* Ordinary Things by Vylar Kaftan - This one focused on OCD tendencies and an abusive relationship and I have to say it was a little moving at times seeing through the eyes of a character so stuck in a rut. 4*s

* Double Time by John Chu - This focused on figure skating (something I love to watch) but it wasn't really my thing in terms of where the story went and ended up. 2*s

* Welcome by William Alexander - I really liked the idea of sailing from the Moon to Earth and between the two on one special night of the year. The ideas within this would have translated really well to a longer story in my opinion. 4*s

I'm giving this one a 3.5-4*s out of 5 because a lot of the stories within this were really good. Although I didn't have one which totally blew me away there are certainly a few which I will remember and I will be on the look out for more fiction from some of these authors. Definitely an anthology I would recommend trying out!

Rich in Color says

Review Copy: From Publisher

Science-fiction and fantasy are my favorite genres, but I've been painfully aware of how few people like me survived an apocalypse, let alone got to be the main character. So it comes as no surprise that I did a mental fist pump when I came across "A Note From the Editors" in Kaleidoscope:

"...in some ways this is a purely selfish drive: we want to see ourselves reflected in the stories we read. But it's not limited to that; we also want everyone else to have the chance to see themselves, and we want to see stories about people who aren't like us."

Oh, does Kaleidoscope deliver. It's filled with all sorts of diversity—racial, ability, sexuality—and several stories feature characters who are diverse in more than one way. There are people of color who have disabilities ("Signature" by Faith Mudge), LGBTQ characters who deal with mental illness ("Ordinary Things" by Vylar Kaftan), and a host of other intersectional combinations. Many of these stories don't have their diverse characters exist in isolation, either. Throughout the 400+ pages of this anthology, the writers have resisted the white/straight/cis/able-bodied-character-as-default way of thinking and have created rich, vibrant worlds that are much closer to representing the real world in spite of the SFF trappings than many other books I've read.

Perhaps the best part about this Kaleidoscope is how genuinely entertaining these stories are. Editors Alisa Krasnostein and Julia Rios did an excellent job of curating this anthology. There are dystopian societies, time-travelling, parallel universes, superheroes, mythology tie-ins, aliens, and more. Chances are, if you're at all interested in SFF, you'll find a story in here that you'll love.

As in all anthologies, not every story is perfect. Some stories simply don't linger once you're finished with them, but I don't remember disliking any of them in particular. My personal favorites were some of the darker ones: "The Legend Trap" by Sean Williams, "Krishna Blue" by Shveta Thakrar, "Walkdog" by Sofia Samatar, and "The Day the God Died" by Alena McNamara. Some of these stories have triggering content, such as suicidal thoughts, violent deaths, or homophobic slurs ("Celebration" by Sean Eads is set in a conversion therapy center). I should note that the anthology as a whole is not all grim—it has a good mix of fun, lighthearted stories, too.

Recommendation: Buy it now. (Or, if you have a U.S. mailing address, you could enter to win a copy below.) Kaleidoscope features a great mix of twenty stories with diverse characters. The variety of stories is a great thing for people who like to read widely in the SFF genres, as I do.

Review originally published at Rich in Color <http://richincolor.com/2014/08/review...>

Rob says

...The art of editing a good anthology is to select the stories and present them in such a way that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Krasnostein and Rios would probably have been able to achieve that effect if they had chosen to narrow the theme down just a little bit. *Kaleidoscope* is so diverse, that apart from showing what is possible in Young Adult fiction, it does not quite achieve that synergy. What I do very much appreciate in this anthology is the fact that the authors do not shy away from difficult themes and accept the reader's ability to handle them. There is no underestimation of the audience anywhere in the selection the editors made. Looking at the stories individually, it contains a number of excellent stories, material even that would not look out of place on the awards ballots. That alone makes *Kaleidoscope* more than worth reading. It also, as should be apparent from my comments, raises a lot of interesting questions on diversity and the lack of in genre fiction. Looking over all of my comments, the English as well as the Dutch ones, I come to the conclusion that I have much more reading to do before I really have a firm grasp on the subject. If, like me, you are interested in such questions, *Kaleidoscope* is definitely a good place to start.

Full Random Comments review

Jen says

Another Levar Burton Reads Podcast offering. I didn't quite get or enjoy this one. I am 100% with the character who said "Bullsh*t!" re: the Power.

3 stars.

Blue says

Listened via LeVar Burton Reads podcast. (#14)

This one did not draw me into the world as #13 did, perhaps from something missing in the presentation of the story. Then beyond that, the end felt rushed making it seem like an incomplete story. Most of LeVar's picks do an impressive job of being a contained short, but this one seemed to want to be not necessarily a full novel, but at least a short chapter book.

Sidsel Pedersen says

“Cookie Cutter Superhero” by Tansy Rayner Roberts and it was wonderful. I really would love to read more in that universe. I want more of our main character! She is wonderful. Read my full review: <http://www.mackat.dk/book/2014/08/coo...>

“Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon” by aka Ken Liu which was really touching. It actually somehow took me by surprise when the fantastical element showed up because I was enjoying the story so much by that point

“The Legend Trap” by Sean Williams: I am not a particular fan of horror, so this was far from my favourite story. It did hit a lot of emotional notes with me but really I would rather that it hadn't. Full review <http://www.mackat.dk/book/2014/08/the...>

"End of Service" by Gabriela Lee: Aya just lost her mom, who has been living as a migrant worker, somewhere else. Her mom has never been home much and that is making the grief process harder on Aya, who does not know what to think and feel. A good story, but it didn't quite connect with me. See my full review: <http://www.mackat.dk/book/2014/08/end...>

“Chupacabra’s Song” by Jim Hines: This story is about a teenager, Nicola Pallas, with some sort of disorder, that makes it hard for her to concentrate. Music is extremely important for her and for the story. It is also a story set around a veterinarian clinic where Nicola helps her dad. Nicola meets someone like her self for the very first time and that sets off the story. This story works around the idea we have in our heads, that people who are like us in one aspect must be like us in others - that people who has the same interest as us, like the same thing or has the same job as us, must be good people. And why should they be any better than other people - well it of course turns out that might not be. I don't think I can say more about the story without spoiling it. I liked the story, though it was not one of my favourites in the collection. As always with Hines' stories it is very emotional and made me feel what Nicola was feeling, which was what made it work for me.

“The Day the God Died” by Alena McNamara: For me this was not a very satisfying story. Mostly because as it says, it is not a story - or rather it doesn't follow a conventional narrative path. As the title says, this is the story of a dying god. It is also a story of young quiltbag man, choosing not to deal with his sexuality. Choosing not to be himself. To me the story left me sad and unsettled, which was probably the intent of the story. But that sadly means that I will not be recommending this one to anyone.

“Signature” by Faith Mudge: As a child the story of Rumpelstiltskin, was one of the many stories my aunt told us. She is quite the storyteller - always telling stories from memory, never reading them aloud like my

mom would do. So this story instantly resonated with me. Not only was it a modern take on Rumpelstiltskin, the protagonist, Priya Gowda, adores books. I will not tell you a lot of the plot, because it is great. I greatly enjoyed the story and I found a lot of emotional resonance with this one. I very much recommend this one!

“The Lovely Duckling” by Tim Susman: This is the story of Mara Pachacutec who wants to be a shapeshifter, so she applies to shapeshifter school (because of course there is such a thing). Her conservative father, really does not want her to go. That is the main conflict of the story. The story is told as the school files on her application and their correspondence with the school. The form really add to the story, but does make the ending a bit awkward. There is a cute little fairytale in the material as well. I really liked the story, it was very emotional and rather enjoyable.

“Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell” by E. C. Myers: Rene is a medicated schizophrenic and a totally normal teenager in high school. This story is all about teenage life as well as about memory and precognition. Both the protagonist and the other main character is not really good people - or at least they didn't use to be. However they have both grown and are still growing over the course of the story. The story is also about substance use and about sexuality. I enjoyed the story and I really felt with the characters.

"Vanilla" by Dirk Flinthart: To me this was a really brave story. The story is about an Australian-somali teenage girl, Kylie Haward, who befriend some alien creatures who settled on Earth after their world was destroyed. The story is very much one about friendship, about being an outsider, about belonging and about identity. I really enjoyed the story and I really felt for Kylie. Great story. Read my full review: <http://wp.me/p40HVI-tK>

“Careful Magic” by Karen Healey: This was definitely one of my favourite stories of the anthology. Helen is such a wonderful protagonist and I was sad when the story ended. Not because it was a sad ending, but because it ended. That's what you want from a short story isn't it? Helen has some sort of OCD, she is also a mage and a really good one at that. It is not her disorder who makes her good at that - it is her talent and her eye for detail - which is great. To me it was a super enjoyable story. Read my full review: <http://www.mackat.dk/book/2014/08/car...>

“Walkdog” by Sofia Samatar*: About half way through this story I was about to declare that i didn't particularly like it. But then it really kicked into gear. In many ways it reminded me of "If you were a Dinosaur my Love" by Rachel Swirsky. It had the same kind of twist to it, where all the sudden it turned a lot darker. It pretty much kicked me in the gut. That is one of the things I like about short stories, they can pull tricks like this because you are more likely to read them to the end than a novel, that don't catch you in the first third. The essay style story really worked for this story. Like Swirsky's story it is really hard to talk about without spoiling. Even sharing the themes of the story would really be spoiling it. I suggest you read it your self.

“Celebration” by Sean Eads: This was another sad story - at least to me. I find it heart wrenching that parents refuse to accept that their children's sexuality is something other than what they would want it to be. That they can bring themselves to send their children off to have other people "cure" them of their deviance. I really liked the protagonist, Jim, he seems like such an awesome kid.

“The Truth about Owls” by Amal El-Mohtar: I adored this story! This is another story about a child of immigrants and about her struggle with identity. It is also a story about owls and about fairytales. It is a story about the power of belief and a story about the power of language. The story really filled me with emotion and made me feel with and for Anisa. I loved the ending. And yeah owls!

“Krishna Blue” by Shveta Thakrar: I liked the meat of this story, but I really didn't particularly liked where the story was going or where it was ending. I liked the prose and I liked the descriptions of art and color. I liked Naha as a character. But the ending left me kind of cold.

“Every Little Thing” by Holly Kench: Uh I liked this one. I really liked Many and her friend Natasha. They seemed like very real and kind of awesome teenagers. I can definitely recognize both from my classroom. The plot (if you can call it that) was sweet and I really enjoyed the ending. I find myself liking stories with happier endings better than the ones with unhappy endings. I like stories about friendship - especially female friendship and was that. Yeah!

“Happy Go Lucky” by Garth Nix: This story I did not particularly like. I thought the exposition was a bit clumsy and the setup for the story was not fully developed enough to care much about the characters change from Lucky to Unlucky. To me it felt like a clumsy analog for poverty. It was also another sad story in a stack of sad stories - here the order of the stories didn't do the stories any favours.

“Ordinary Things” by Vylar Kaftan: Kate has OCD (or something a lot like it) but she does not recognize that she has it. She just perform rituals. Kate also has a girlfriend who is not what she need at all. Throughout the story she tries to deal with the stress in her life. It is not a fluffy story at all - it is quite dark and grim. But it is also very much a story about friendship. I liked the story but it was quite sad - and wasn't really what I needed at that point.

“Double Time” by John Chu: This story is about ice skating, about parental pressures, about achieving success and about freedom. Shelly has a mother who really pushes her to achieve everything she can be and then some. The mother pushes to the point where Shelly no longer enjoy skating and this is where the story starts. It was a really neat story and I liked how the sci-fi element was just sneaked in there without any fuss.

“Welcome” by William Alexander: "Antonio sailed to the moon" now that is a great opening! This story is almost a fable isn't it? But it is also a story about family relationships. Again this was not my favourite story, but it was quite enjoyable. It ends the anthology on a sad but also joyas note.

Read my full review of the anthology here: <http://www.mackat.dk/book/2014/08/rea...>

Jasmine says

Cookie Cutter Superhero— Tansy Rayner Roberts— 5/5

A teenage girl is chosen by the lottery to be a new superhero. She's worried about what this means. Will she be disliked because her presence removes the popular Astra? Because of course, there can only be one girl on the team at a time. Will she miss too much school? What will her teammates treat her like? And will the superhero machine "fix" her handless arm?

This one is fabulous. I read it and then went around shoving the book at people. "Read the first story! Read it! I don't know about the others yet, but read the first story!"

The Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon— Ken Liu 5/5

Jing is going to America to study english. Yuan must stay behind. Jing wants to break up so that her girlfriend isn't trapped, Yuan doesn't care, she wants to stay together. "I'll text you in English, I'll do anything."

It's a story about love, and about parting, and it's lovely.

The Legend Trap— Sean Williams 4/5

Three teens test an urban myth. Can the de-materialization booth REALLY take you to the universe next door if you treat it right? And what does that mean? And how do they get back?

NOTHING GOOD EVER COMES OF TESTING URBAN LEGENDS. WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU.

End of Service— Gabriela Lee 4/5

Aya's mum is an overseas worker. She's been gone for most of Aya's life. When she dies, Aya doesn't know how to grieve for this person she hardly knows. The situation isn't helped by the secrets everyone is keeping.

Good GRAVY that one was good. What is wrong with this anthology? How is it so good?

Chupacabra's Song— Jim C. Hines

The local vet (and his assistant) get more than they expected when the wounded animal a neighbour brings in is magical— and followed by hunters.

This one wasn't to my taste, but I don't have music-based magic, so I'm not going to criticize how it works here.

The Day the God Died— Alena McNamara

Sometimes things don't end in a satisfying way. Usually they don't. The death of a god fits that pattern, for sure.

Signature— Faith Mudge 5/5

Rumplestitskin, or his (her?) ilk, is still out there granting desperate desires in return for heart's desires.

Eheheheheheheheheheheh. Look at my delight. I have SO MUCH OF IT for this story.

The Lovely Duckling— Tim Susman

Mara P. wants to become a shifter, to travel into the otherlands in the shape of a Condor, and live on a mountain, and to be Mark, not Mara. Mr. P thinks this is just a phase and the best way to treat it is to keep his daughter far away from the shifter school.

I really like the found-footage style of this one, and I want more in this world.

Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell— E. C. Myers

The latest drug in school is Nemo, which lets you see into the future with someone you're kissing. But Rene is able to see much farther into the future than anyone else, and she starts researching what that means. Is it a hallucination her anti-psychotics can't control, or something else?

Vanilla— Dirk Flinthart

Kylie's school has aliens in attendance, which is doesn't make her teenage years any more complicated than they normally would be. Well, except for the one thing with the perfume.

This is a story about belonging and friendship, and the mistakes that come with teenager hood, and another stellar one. Well done.

***Careful Magic*— Karen Healey**

Karen is a Careful mage, an aberration in a world where nearly everyone else is oriented to Chaos.

I WANT AN ENTIRE TRILOGY IN THIS WORLD.

***Walkdog*— Sofia Samatar**

***Celebration*— Sean Eads**

Jim is trying to look on the bright side about going to gay re-education camp— at least he'll meet other gay guys— but he didn't expect the telepathic recon team.

***The Truth About Owls*— Amar El-Mohtar**

I don't know how to describe this one. A girl has a power, or doesn't. She curses her father, or doesn't. She learns welsh to understand owls. Anyways (I've been reading for a while today and I'm losing language), it's lovely.

***Krishna Blue*— Shveta Thakrar**

***Every Little Thing*— Holly Kench**

Friends sympathize with you over crushes. BEST friends out themselves as nerds to cause a distraction while you're in the process of setting a love spell.

***Happy Go Lucky*— Garth Nix**

Starts out cheerful, and gets SUPER dark. Whoa, Garth.

***Ordinary Things*— Vylar Kaftan**

***Double Time*— John Chu**

John Chu is a master of taking one— often somewhat silly— fantastic idea and making the best story out of it. I don't just mean the best story he can make, I mean the best story. He's flipping phenomenal. In this one, competitive figure skating has embraced time hops so that competitors can skate programs with themselves, and this is used to discuss expectations, achievement, and family.

SHELLEY FOR THE GOLD.

***Welcome*— William Alexander**

Sherwood Smith says

Not only does this anthology meet its goal of presenting stories with diverse settings, cultural backgrounds, and sexuality/gender/identities but it's entertaining, and furthermore, I think that the teens it's aimed at would enjoy it—which is not always the case with “issues” books marketed to teens.

I've begun a lot of anthologies that make similar claims, to be bludgeoned by Message fiction, earnest but grim, often depressing in its cautionary finger-shaking. Unfortunately, no doubt because I am a bad human being, I often set aside such books unfinished, thinking, I would rather have read a (shorter) grim, earnest essay packed with bleak statistics proving how very far we need to go as a civilization before we can live in harmony with others' spectrum of choices. My fiction is meant to get me away from the crappy aspects of

Real Life.

But then I'm not the intended audience, so maybe those Issues books get the job done.

Anyway, it's the variety in tone here—funny and sad, tense and moody, poetic and satiric—that made me look forward to each new story, as well as the diversity.

Further, perhaps because the editors each hail from different hemispheres as well as continents, the writers weren't all North Americans in outlook and setting. Win!

"Cookie Cutter Superhero," Will Joey, who's been chosen to join Australia's superhero squad, be a "legacy" (taking over from an old superhero) or a new superhero? And should she let the mysterious superhero machine "fix" her handicapped limb? I loved the tone, the pacing, and how this story played out.

Ken Liu's "Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon" centers around the Qixi Festival that celebrates mythic lovers Zhinü the Weaver Maiden, and Niulang the Cowherd. Liu does not follow the usual path in writing parallel tales (mythic and modern), but combines the two in a journey into magic, emotion, and insight that I couldn't predict.

I had some trouble understanding "The Legend Trap," by Sean Williams, but I often have trouble with time paradox stories. I venture to suggest that fans of Dr. Who might comprehend it better than I did, but I enjoyed some of the names, and the hints of the dynamics between the three central characters, in spite of their squabbling.

"End of Service," by Gabriela Lee, explores the price families pay when parents have to go far away in order to support those left home. Aya's mother's body is returned to Manila from Saudi Arabia, but Aya can't mourn—and then she finds out that even in death, her mother isn't free from her work obligations. Clear-eyed and complex look at conflicting emotions.

Another I enjoyed was Jim Hines's "Chupacabra's Song," about autistic Nicola who helps her veterinarian dad take care of animals. She has a secret Dad wants her to hide, until someone brings in a chupacabra. Then things go pear-shaped.

I had to read Alena McNamara's "The Day the God Died" twice. It seemed like an entire novel pared down to a poetic, minimalist glimpse of the narrator's life, with its questions about gender, as the narrator encounters a dying god. I had to admit I found the conversations with the god less interesting than the narrator's life—which made me wish this story were really a novel. It was those glimpses of that complicated, sad life that I wanted to see, and to fix! McNamara skillfully evokes emotion and mood.

"Signature," by Faith Mudge, features a pleasant ensemble cast representing several sorts of diversity (race, physical status—one character is in a wheelchair—and sexual orientation), all of whom have had the misfortune to make a deal with a Rumplestiltskin-like character.

Tim Susman's "The Lovely Duckling" features a transgender protagonist who's trying to escape from parental control so as to attend a school for shapeshifters. The story's told through memos and emails, a format I love.

"Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell," by E.C. Myers. Nemo, the latest street drug, gives you a glimpse of a

possible future with the person you kiss, so Rene and her friends shut themselves into closets in pairs to test it out. Only Rene's runs orthogonal to the other kids'. Because of her schizophrenia meds? This time travel tale did not lose me, as Rene explores. Tightly written, with humor, compassion, and insight.

Dirk Flinthart's "Vanilla" features Kylie, born in Australia, with a Somali dad. The journal her teacher wants her to keep to aid in developing her sense of identity is about her friendship with the alien "Hairies." I could go with the rather heavy-handed message if the story didn't trip me up with some casual bigotry that made the otherwise promising ending less effective. Bigotry toward the unhip (in this case organized religion) is still bigotry, imo. Other readers may feel differently.

My two favorite stories began with Karen Healey's "Careful Magic," about Helen whose OCD quirks make her an outsider at school. Healey brings in two magical systems and a mystery. The characters were nicely complex, especially well drawn for a short piece; I was deeply involved as Helen solves the mystery. No easy, sentimental out that too many writers choose (your worst weakness nets you extra powerz) which made the tale doubly satisfying.

My second fave was Sofia Samatar's "Walkdog," in the form of an essay by teen student Yolanda Price, complete with footnotes and student spelling. Yolanda gives her report on the mythical Walkdog, basing her data mostly from her lonely, outcast friend's tales, mixing in real life data and music. Not only does Yolanda come to life through her report, so does the teacher it is written for, and the outcast friend. Loved it.

Sean Eads in "Celebration" asks what would happen if the fate of humanity lay in the hands of aliens who were going to judge us based on what they saw at a camp intended to "straighten" gay teens. This story veers at a jet-speed pace between humor and horror that kept me glued to those phosphors.

Amal El-Mohtar's "The Truth about Owls," puts Anisa, a Lebanese immigrant in Scotland, with Izzy at the Scottish Owl Centre. Anisa clashes with her mom over wanting to learn something about the history and language of her new home, rather than her old one. Interesting story that I could not predict.

Shveta Thakrar mixes food, color, and horror in "Krishna Blue." Neha has a gift for art, but is stuck with a narrow-minded art teacher. Meanwhile she is experimenting with color . . . does not go where one expects at all.

Holly Kench's "Every Little Thing" explores Mandy wanting to enchant with a love spell the beautiful Leah, who was kind to her the year before. Resonate-with-the-real high school dynamics here.

Garth Nix in "Happy Go Lucky" is a futuristic tale about Jean, who comes from a "lucky" or privileged family. But when one of her dads writes a politically hot article, their luck vanishes—and the family has to deal with the consequences. Deftly done story.

Vylar Kaftan's "Ordinary Things" is another dark tale about OCD and its rituals and safety that isn't safe. I think this one will be disturbing for teen readers (which isn't necessarily a bad thing).

"Double Time," by John Chu, hits a different tone with its focus on the killer competition of figure skating, and more time travel (five minutes' worth). Even if you don't know the figure skating world, the vivid description is sure to draw in the reader, and Shelly and her mom ring emotionally true.

William Alexander's "Welcome" ends the anthology with a story about travel to the moon. Antonio's Abuela wants him to stop smuggling during lunar tides because of his chronic pain. Graceful, evocative

writing brings the antho to a memorable close.

I'd love to see this one in schools where kids outside of the white/cis/binary norm can find it, and hey, I would also like those white/cis/norm kids to be reading about protagonists that aren't them.

Stephanie says

Cookie Cutter Superhero by Tansy Rayner Roberts: 5/5

This felt like the opening chapter to a long excellent superhero book that I would like to read.

The Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon by Ken Liu: 5/5

I haven't heard the "fairy tale" at the heart of this story before so I'm not sure if it's "real" or made up for this story. But it feels like a reimagining/retelling/subversion of a fairy tale I haven't heard before, and it's very well done at making the ordinary feel magical.

The Legend Trap by Sean Williams: 5/5

I loved this. It's the urban legend to end all urban legends, and scary as hell.

End of Service by Gabriela Lee: 4/5

This had an urban legend feeling to it. The protagonist's arc was well done, but besides that the story was mostly operating on shock-value.

Chupacabra's Song by Jim C. Hines: 5/5

This one is definitely one of my favorites. It's a pretty great day at the vets when you get a chupacabra and magic animal hunters all in one day. I would like a whole book about this protagonist.

The Day The God Died by Alena McNamara: 5/5

I always love stories that show what looks like an ordinary day but has one extraordinary magical thing in it. I also liked the almost-Beauty-and-the-Beast-but-TOTALLY-NOT tone.

Signature by Faith Mudge: 5/5

Rumpelstiltskin retelling forged from the fires of heaven! I loved this. I want more of this wonderful bookselling team.

The Lovely Duckling by Tim Susman: 5/5

I was impressed at the full story told here using only documents and letters, with strong impressions of the characters. It left me wanting more.

Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell by E.C Myers: 4/5

Take the Nemo pill and kiss somebody and see the ultimate WHAT-IF - unless you're Rene. Rene's visions were bleak and sometimes boring, but the overall story was really great. I liked the slow unveiling of what was going on and of Sam's story, and the hopefulness.

Vanilla by Dirk Flinthart: 5/5

Yet another story in this collection that I would read an entire book of. For most of it I was thinking "Awww I want alien cuddle-buddies!" which made the end 10-times better bahahaha. I love social commentary in a

story if the story is really great, which this one is.

Careful Magic by Karen Healey: 5/5

ANOTHER FAVORITE. I love the magic system, I love the characters, I love this story, I want a five-book series. Please and thank you.

Walkdog by Sofia Samatar: 5/5

I almost put this one down in a huff, but I am so glad I didn't. The style is a little hard to read (it's told as if it's a school paper written by a student) and the protagonist is really off-putting (at first?) but there is so much going on here and a really powerful conclusion.

Celebration by Sean Eads: 5/5

Guy goes to therapy camp and everybody acts like they're possessed. No, really. This story was terrifying and I have a lot of questions about the human race tbqh but this is a very well done little thriller.

The Truth About Owls by Amal El-Mohtar: 3/5

Protagonist is sent to London to escape Middle-eastern conflicts and live with her mother, but she's not sure how to deal with her -mostly absent father and two different cultures. Also, owls. I was really confused about how much of the protagonist's powers were "real" and how much were just in her head - but I'm not sure that matters.

Krishna Blue by Shveta Thakrar: 3/5

Eating paint to get magical powers isn't something I've seen done before, but the protagonist was an angry baby and the story was a little repetitive. I'm probably too harsh- there was a lot here and it probably was not my cup of tea.

Every Little Thing by Holly Kench: 3/5

Teenage witch feels like her last resort is to use a love-spell on her crush. Just a little love-spell, just to get her crush to see the light. I liked the bits with the protagonist and her BFF.

Happy Go Lucky by Garth Nix:

Ordinary Things by Vylar Kaftan:

Double Time by John Chu:

Welcome by William Alexander:

Tehani says

Kaleidoscope is one of the best anthologies I have read for a very long time. It's not just the concept, which is both necessary and overdue; it's not just the stories, which are engaging and beautiful and thoughtful and brilliant; it's not just the way the authors explore science fiction and fantasy from perspectives all too frequently unseen in fiction; it's all of these things, and that it seems so natural. In this anthology, every story takes a character (or two or three) who is often "othered" in fiction (and life), and makes their differences a part of the story. Readers will see themselves, they will see their friends, they will see their families, their cultures, their religious beliefs, their sexuality, their physical and mental states and they will see them as

normal, as okay, as special. Not othered. Important and relevant and very very good, *Kaleidoscope* offers a powerful message to our society about difference, and about what we, as readers, want (and need) to see in our stories.

Some pieces, such as Tansy Rayner Roberts' "Cookie Cutter Superhero", offer a biting commentary on popular culture, couched in humour and teen spirit; others, such as "Seventh Day of the Seventh Moon" by Ken Liu, take a gentler approach, examining first love with a fantastical twist. Some stories shade darker, as with "The Legend Trap" by Sean Williams (set in his Twinmaker universe, an added bonus for fans) and "Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell" by E.C. Myers; still others take a familiar trope and turn it sideways, like Faith Mudge's "Signature" and "The Lovely Duckling" by Tim Susman. Some of my favourite works in the book were those that embedded the story in the protagonist's nature, like the magic of Jim C. Hines' "Chupacabra's Song" and Karen Healey's astonishingly good "Careful Magic". There are so many wonderful stories in the pages of *Kaleidoscope* that every reader will find a favourite (or two or three), and every reader, teen or adult, will find at least one that speaks to them in deeper ways.

Thank you to the publisher for my review copy of the book. *Kaleidoscope* will launch on August 5, 2014 and can be preordered [here](#).

Sunil says

Kaleidoscope: Diverse YA Science Fiction and Fantasy Stories seeks to fill an underrepresented niche, specified right there in the title. When I was a young adult, I read some anthologies of short stories, but as far as I can remember, they were about cis, straight, white, able-bodied, neurotypical people. Every story in *Kaleidoscope* features characters who break from that "default" type, and, more importantly, the *protagonist* falls in the spectrum of diversity. One thing that sets *Kaleidoscope* apart from some other anthologies that tell diverse stories is a commitment to showing diversity in more than race, gender, and sexuality. Yes, the book has Chinese characters, Indian characters, black characters. A couple trans characters. Gay characters. I'm seeing more of this sort of diversity in anthologies and magazines that don't specifically have a diversity theme. But *Kaleidoscope* has a superhero-in-training who's missing a hand. A bookseller in a wheelchair. An autistic chupacabra whisperer. Characters with OCD and schizophrenia. It's important for young adults of all kinds to see themselves represented in fiction, and *Kaleidoscope* strives to strike a chord with those kids who have never had that experience. I appreciated that the stories had a good balance between those where the character's diversity was critical to the story and those where it was incidental: not every story "needs" to break away from the usual character type, but it takes nothing away that they do.

And what a great set of stories to look for yourself in! While a few stories left me unsatisfied, it's a strong collection as diverse in style and topic as it is in its characters. As a superhero fan, I enjoyed Tansy Rayner Roberts's "Cookie-Cutter Superhero," which reminded me of Seanan McGuire's Velveteen stories in its take on media-made superheroes. Faith Mudge's "Signature" is a fun spin on a classic fairy tale. E.C. Myers's "Kiss and Kiss and Kiss and Tell," about a drug that shows you the future when you kiss, follows a dark, downward spiral that gripped me to the end. John Chu's "Double Time" nails the relationship between a Chinese-American girl and her mother, who wants her to be a figure-skating champion...by using time travel. I could praise plenty of stories in the book, but for me, the stand-out is Sofia Samatar's "Walkdog," told in the form of a girl's research paper (with spelling and grammar errors preserved). In the beginning, I was laughing, and by the end, I was in tears. It's a fantastic, powerful story.

For readers looking for new, different, interesting stories about young adults, look no further: they're in

