



The Fierce Reads Anthology

Anna Banks , Leigh Bardugo , Jennifer Bosworth , Emmy Laybourne , Marissa Meyer

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This anthology includes short stories from five fierce young adult authors! Inside, you'll find a magical mermaid tale from Anna Banks, a fantastical Russian-influenced story from Leigh Bardugo, an electric thriller from Jennifer Bosworth, a post-apocalyptic drama from Emmy Laybourne, and a cybernetic fairytale from Marissa Meyer. This free anthology will give you an exciting taste of the fierceness of these authors' debut novels.

This anthology contains the following stories:

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo

Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth

Dress Your Marines in White by Emmy Laybourne

Glitches by Marissa Meyer

The Fierce Reads Anthology Details

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Author : Anna Banks , Leigh Bardugo , Jennifer Bosworth , Emmy Laybourne , Marissa Meyer

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From Reader Review The Fierce Reads Anthology for online ebook

Marissa says

This is a nice offer from Tor. The anthology features five short stories and some preview excerpts from novels by Tor authors. I was impressed by the strength of the stories included, and it certainly accomplished its goal with me - I am interested in checking out the related books now!

My major interest initially was in Meyer's *Glitches*, as I had already read *Cinder* and really enjoyed it. The story provided a nice back story for Cinder and explained how she found herself with her family, and how her bond with Peony developed.

Similar prequel lead-ins were included. Bosworth's *Prophet* seems to be a prequel to her *Struck*, based on the preview chapters. While I have not yet read more than the excerpt included, I get the impression that, as with Meyer's *Glitches*, *Prophet* likely rounds out Rance's character and provides the back story to describe how he came to be the person he is in the novel. Banks's *Legacy Lost* was a bittersweet tale of merpeople, which did a good job introducing the history and society of their universe, and appears to provide good background on a character featured in the preview.

The other short stories were not directly related to the preview excerpts, but were both intense tales that provided a good read. Laybourne's *Dress Your Marines in White* had quite a bit of suspense and had a bit of a train-wreck-can't-look-away feel to it, as the tension gradually builds. Bardugo's *The Witch of Duva* was a dark tale, tinged with spookiness and magic, and features a strong twist to the ending that wrapped it up quite well.

Steven says

Loved the Leigh Bardugo and Marissa Meyer stories. The rest weren't all bad, but those two are the ones that really stood out to me. The Emmy Laybourne story was pretty great too!

Fatima says

3 stars!

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks - 2 stars

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo - 4 stars

Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth - 2 stars

Dress Your Marines in White by Emmy Laybourne - 2 stars

Glitches by Marissa Meyer - 4 stars

I didn't love this anthology but it was a quick read! I loved Leigh Bardugo and Marissa Meyer's short stories, and I really liked that this was a little preview for some debut fantasy authors. I would love to see more fantasy short story anthologies, I think they're so much fun to read and I just love the different stories that authors manage to come up with. They're always so creative and so inspiring, and I honestly think there

aren't nearly enough short stories going around.

Amanda Butler says

This anthology, published by Tor Books, consists of five short stories, with four of those accompanied by previews to the authors' works. I had already read one of the short stories (Glitches by Marissa Meyer), which is still my favorite in this small collection.

I rated only the short stories, not the previews that came along with it. I rate anthologies by rating each story individually and using the average for the overall rating.

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks (2 stars): This short story is about mermaids, based on the series The Syrena Legacy. I found the protagonist to be very unlikeable in this story; for someone supposedly in love, he often thinks violent thoughts about his betrothed, at least at the beginning. Dialogue tags were often confusing, as new statements by new characters did not often start new paragraphs. The dialogue was dramatic, but that's to be expected from a love story with teenagers/young adults.

At first, the story made me want to read the main books, until I read the preview for the first book, Of Poseidon. Within the first few pages, the main character's black best friend gets on her nerves, so the protagonist jokes to herself about pulling out her weave. This is the type of casual racism that keeps me away from certain books. There are also instances of a sexist aspect of mermaid society that is apparently overlooked: getting married – mated – without the woman even being present or asked for her consent.

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo (4 stars): My second favorite story in the series. Based on Russian fairytales, this short reminded me of Cinderella and Hansel and Gretel. A macabre storyline, this read was sad, but light. Even though it's based on the world of Shadow and Bone, the ending wrapped up nicely, and the reader does not need to read the aforementioned book for background context. This story creeped me out in all the best ways (one word: gingerbabies), with a surprising plot twist in the end. This is by far one of my favorite short stories.

The preview showed that the main book is not to my liking. After researching the series more, I discovered the many inconsistencies of Russian lore and culture. The main character seemed superficial, and I did not find myself engaged in the preview.

Prophet by Jennifer Boswell (4 stars): While I liked the story about a religious cult overall, it was too short for the rules of the story's world to align. The story held my interest, and the plot twist was intriguing, but the events and reactions felt forced to carry the story along. Some actions were unbelievable. Within the first few pages, the main character is planning an escape; he hears a voice in his head that is likely God's, and he chooses to stay.

The preview was for Struck, and while the beginning of the preview seemed interested, the protagonist felt like a Mary Sue. A girl addicted to getting struck by lightning and had scars from the experiences all over her body ~*except*~ her plain-but-pretty face? I'll pass.

Dress Your Marines in White by Emmy Laybourne (3 stars): I could not connect with this story at all. The premise of the flashback-to-disastrous-science-experiment was intriguing, and the suspense was evenly paced. Answers to the science experiment and the background of the story were answered throughout the

flashback. However, the main character – a scientist involved in the experiment – was unlikeable due to his shallow nature. Early in the book, he described his actions of pulling covers over his head like that of a 4-year-old; a few pages later, the story reads “Freckles on a full-grown man always made James feel sad, somehow. Like didn’t that guy know his childhood was over?” Shallow and hypocritical. (If a female character had similar thoughts in this scenario, she would be labeled as catty.) I could also not ignore the use of the G slur.

The casual racism bled into the preview as well, in the first chapter of Monument 14, this time apparently at Native Americans. While it is not straightforward, the preview links Native American stereotypes with racial features: “People called Niko ‘Brave Hunter Man,’ a nickname that fit him just right with his perfect posture, his thin, wiry frame, and his whole brown-skin-brown-eyes-brown-hair combo” (Location 1858). There is also a scene in which a bus full of kids is thrown to its side in a devastating accident, and apparently no one screams during this scene, which I found unbelievable. It ended on a cliffhanger, but I was not interested in what happened next.

Glitches by Marissa Meyer (5 stars): A short story that portrays partial backstory to the main character of Meyer’s *The Lunar Chronicles*. Part of the retelling of Cinderella, this short story shows how Cinder came to live with the Linh family, and is my favorite in the series. This is the only story in the anthology that is not paired with a preview.

Overall, this anthology full of mermaids, witches, fairytales, and science experiments was simultaneously entertaining and disappointing. While the short stories themselves may have enticed me to purchase some of the books they are based off of, the previews themselves convinced me otherwise. When there are instances of casual racism and inconsistencies within the first few chapters, I will avoid it (unless I’ve paid money for the book and am far enough into it to finish). While the short stories excited me and made me want to purchase their respective books, the previews disillusioned me. I’m glad to have read it, but I’m also glad to put it away back into the digital recesses of my Kindle.

Kris says

These are short stories/first chapters from some Tor authors who have stuff coming out - it was free on the Kindle (pretty good idea!) I really liked the Marissa Meyer story, but Cinder is already on my to-read list anyway. I also liked the Leigh Bardugo story and will look for more stuff by her. The others were readable but nothing that inspired me to go search for more.

Melissa says

Overall this anthology was pretty weak, but there was one stand-out story that I really enjoyed and have continued to think about.

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks - I found parts of this story fascinating - like the general premise of the *Syrena* - but was thrown off by the ending and some of the writing. The teaser for her novel - set in the same world - was interesting but not intriguing enough for me to have sought it out.

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo- Hands down the best story in this anthology and the only story I'd

heartily recommend to anyone. I'm always a sucker for a re-told fairy tale and you figure out pretty quick that this is a twisted Hansel and Gretel. But not in the way you think. This was by far the best written and most interesting story and the only one I'd bother re-reading.

Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth- This one was ghastly and not in a good way. I got the concept quickly but found the writing mediocre to the point of being distracting.

Dress Your Marines in White by Emma Laybourne - DITTO

Glitches by Marissa Meyer- Fans of Cinder may enjoy this origin story. While I read Cinder a few years ago, I didn't have strong feelings about the novel and I didn't love this story either.

Kaethe says

w00t! The Fierce Reads Anthology is available in the U.S. starting today for Kindle and Nook, iBooks and other e-book retailers.

Chris says

Hands down, without a doubt the best story in the collection is "The Witch of Duva" by Leigh Bardigo. It is a completely wonderful retelling of Hansel and Gretel set in a Russia like fantasy world. Technically the collection is marketed as Young Adult, but this story transcends ages. You should note that "Duva" and the Cinder short story both appear as well in the second Fierce Reads Collection. There are also previews of novels (using the first two chapters) after most of the short stories.

As for the other stories, I enjoyed "Dress Your Marines in White" which is very dark. The rest were not bad, but didn't really suit my tastes. "Prophet" was a good story, but it also was almost too short. It showed, however, an ability to capture character. I didn't really like "Legacy Lost" (basically the style was not to my personal taste); however, bonus points for a very good ending.

But "Duva" is awesome!

Virginia says

Tor is very clever. They hooked me with the short stories and now I have to read more from the featured authors.

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks - I loved this world! I immediately reserved my copy of *Of Poseidon* upon reading the prequel short story as well as the sample chapters. Loved the characters and love story. Fascinating world!

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo - The best story in the anthology. Super creepy and sinister. Just perfect. *shudders* LOVED. 5 STARS for this story. Plus, I hadn't realized I already put the book, *Smoke and Bone* on hold. Can't wait.

The other stories were fine, but by far the stand outs were the first two.

(yikes) says

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks-

I liked this one well enough, though it was too fleeting to form an attachment to it. It involves Grom and Nalia from the world of *Of Poseidon*

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo-

This one was so thrilling. There was blood and dancing and witches and gingerbread people, and it was so dark! So deliciously macabre and horrifically dark! It's set in the world of Shadow and Bone, though it does not involve any of the main characters and features a girl named Nadya.

At first I thought that it was pretty much like Hansel and Gretel, but with Gretel only instead of them both- but the book QUICKLY DEBUNKS it and we discover a more sinister plot which proves that truly, we are too quick to judge others. *shudders*

Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth-

Oh I laughed for all the wrong reasons.

First, I laughed at how a THIRTEEN YEAR OLD BOY thinks that HIS VERY FIRST KISS could have developed into sex (someone's hormones have been escalating quickly) which he believes, would've gotten the girl pregnant. Now I'm sure this is all very realistic and that the girl COULD'VE gotten pregnant if they actually got around to having some hot nookie (where are your contraceptives boyo), but slippery slope much? His behaviour was too incredible to believe.

Second, the prophet, his father, actually said *THE END IS NIGH*. *crickets chirping* There was much sputtering from my part. In normal conversations it would be "*The end is nigh m'boy! There are no more cookies!*" or "*Frodo, the end is nigh! Go to Mount Doom!*" but this one was again, too incredible to believe. If my priest said that... well I wouldn't laugh OUTRIGHT but oh you know, record it for Derek Landy.

At least the girl in the excerpt from Struck had the right feelings. (which I may read just because of her reaction)

"The end of the world is at hand.

Those who surrender their souls to Prophet will be saved.

Those who don't will suffer and die and suffer some more.

Yeah, yeah, yeah. We heard you the first time."

Footnote: If the short story meant to portray the crazy in the Prophets, well then I APPLAUD YOUR SKILL, DEAR AUTHOR.

Dress Your Marines in White by Emma Laybourne-

This wasn't really my type so I dropped it after a while.

Glitches by Marissa Meyer-

This I had already read before and it was just as amazing as usual. It was really great to see Cinder as a child and how she started out and coped with Adri.

Cinder by Marissa Meyer

nizza says

3.5 stars.

I don't think I can write a review about this anthology without being in favor of Leigh Bardugo and Marissa Meyer... LOL. I've always loved Bardugo and Meyer and reading their stories the second time around was just as fun as before!

As for the other stories, I enjoyed Dress Your Marines in White by Emmy Laybourne. The other two, I couldn't finish reading as I felt disconnected with them...

Michael says

Anthologies are always a mixed bag, so I tend to rate them 3 stars. I still read them occasionally as a way to find new authors, and I would say this one was successful because I liked 2 out of the 5 stories, and could recommend a third. However, I did not like the format of this particular anthology.

Usually an anthology is just a collection of short stories, perhaps with an author's note describing the inspiration or other relevant commentary. In this one, however, each short story is from a series the author has written, and each story is immediately followed by an excerpt from a book in that series. Because they are just excerpts, you still have to go and buy the whole book if you want to read it. And so it felt like the authors were telling us, "We have given you a sample of our work, but we also want to advertise our books, so here is another sample." It feels like a cheat, particularly when you realize you can't tell how long each story is by the index because the chapter marks start at each short story; meanwhile the book sample is included in the page count whether you read it or not.

Special commendation goes to Marissa Meyer, who did not actually include a book sample; her short story Glitches was a great way to end the anthology!

I've done a separate review on each of the 5 stories (I am ignoring the book excerpts here, on principle), so here I will just give you a five-word review, with a link to my review of the story on Goodreads, plus the link at Tor.com (who published the anthology) where you can read each story (for free!):

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks - 3 stars

Tag: "Funny, romantic, ocean politics. I didn't like the ending."

Full Review: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Read it for free: <http://www.tor.com/stories/2012/05/le...>

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo - 5 stars

Tag: "Beautiful, dark, heart-breaking fairy tale"

Full Review: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Read it for free: <http://www.tor.com/stories/2012/06/th...>

Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth - 2 stars

Tag: "Good writing, unenjoyable story"

Full Review: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Read it for free: <http://www.tor.com/stories/2012/04/pr...>

Dress Your Marines in White by Emmy Laybourne - 3 stars

Tag: "Tense, hypnotic, horrific. Not for the squeamish."

Full Review: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Read it for free: <http://www.tor.com/stories/2012/05/dr...>

Glitches by Marissa Meyer - 4 stars

Tag: "Melancholy tale of trying to find one's place."

Full Review: <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Read it for free: <http://www.tor.com/stories/2011/12/gl...>

Kira says

Overall: 3 Stars

I read this anthology because I was interested in Bardugo's and Meyer's novels...and this anthology pretty much cemented that they're the most interesting and well-written of the bunch. Still, I liked this offer from Tor - a quality product (the cover art for each individual story is AM-AH-ZING) and a chance for readers to sample authors for **FREE** !!! If you have an ereader, I highly recommend you check it out, *especially* for Bardugo's story. It's excellent. Oddly enough, the individual stories themselves aren't free. Oh and did I say it's **FREE** ??????

Favorite: The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo

Worst: Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth

Standouts : Glitches by Marissa Meyer

Legacy Lost by Anna Banks

2.5 Stars

A mermaid prince must wed a mermaid princess to ensure the survival of their race. One problem: Grom hates her. However, fate has other plans.

If I was a bigger fan of mermaids, this story may have worked more for me. It was interesting, but not completely original. The world-building was clunkily inserted yet still left gaps in the readers' understanding. The prose vacillated between needlessly wordy and beautiful imagery.

The Witch of Duva by Leigh Bardugo

5 Stars

In a Russian-based fantasy world, young girls are going missing in the Nadya's village. She suspects the beautiful widow who is vying for her father.

I really enjoy fairytale retellings, especially those that turn fairytales on their heads. I was held rapt while

Nadya discovered the secret behind the disappearances and discovers her place in the world. I loved how Bardugo created a world and creatures different from traditional Russian folklore, yet one that fits right into the traditional mythology at the same time. I'm really excited to read her full-length novel set in this world, *Shadow and Bone*.

Prophet by Jennifer Bosworth
2 Stars

A teenage son of a cult leader comes of age and accepts his destiny.

This is a *very* short story (6-13 pages on my Nook) and has hardly any time to develop the characters or for the reader to develop any sort of bond or emotional response. It's a very traditional villain origin story, but doesn't add anything new or do anything interesting. It's competently written, but rushed. Considering I've read many similar stories with similar plot devices this fell flat.

Dress Your Marines in White by Emmy Laybourne
3 Stars

A scientist relives an experiment that goes horribly wrong.

While this story was gripping and interesting, the more I thought about it, the more problems I had. How could blood type possibly cause aggression or hallucinations - things that are caused by the nervous system rather than the circulatory system? There were also plot points that made no logical sense (especially in a high-security military research facility). I didn't understand or connect with the POV character or his eventual decision and the rest of the characters were flat and stereotypical. Despite my (many) misgivings, the story kept me glued to the page. The narrative jumped back and forth between the report, flashbacks, and the current setting. A lesser writer could have muddled that terribly, but Laybourne does have storytelling skills. It's just too bad it's wrapped up in bad pseudo-science and weak characters.

Also, the adult male protagonist says "a-hole" instead of "asshole" 3 times, making him sound like a 10-year-old girl who is still uncomfortable with swearing. He's an ADULT. Get over it. Teenagers will not die if they read the word "asshole."

Glitches by Marissa Meyer
4 Stars

In this sci-fi retelling of Cinderella, Cinder, a cyborg, is adopted into the family of a well-meaning if flighty inventor. Cinder tries to form relationships and find her place, while trying to adjust to life as a cyborg.

I was drawn to this story because of the Asian-inspired sci-fi setting and the unique world-building. The small domestic glimpse of Cinder's world is fascinating and makes me curious about the greater world of her story. Meyer has a very easy voice that draws you in. However, I had assumed Cinder was Asian, but it is revealed that she is European. I was a bit put off that the author didn't have an Asian heroine. Cinder's plight is heart-breaking and I'm looking forward to reading the rest of *The Lunar Chronicles*.

Metaphorosis says

It seems to be the thing these days to give away short stories packed with a teaser for a novel. Sometimes (as in Peter F. Hamilton's *If at First . . .*), the teaser is longer than the story.

I think this is a great idea. The reader gets free stories, and information about where to get more from that author. It works particularly well with anthologies like this one.

What I don't like is that many publishers aren't particularly upfront about what they're doing. I like to know what I'm getting. If (as with Hamilton) it's primarily a marketing tactic, fine. But when I open an anthology, I expect it to be mostly stories.

To be fair, in this anthology, Tor does include a note about the authors' debut novels, but the table of contents shows only the stories. I was expecting more story, less novel. *Caveat emptor*, but if the publisher had been more clear about what they offered, I still would have downloaded and read the book, just with lower expectations.

Here, the novel excerpts are largely related to the stories. In fact, I assume that most of the stories were written specifically for this particular marketing device. That's not bad, but some of them feel more like prefaces than true stories.

My opinion seems to largely track that of other commenters. Leigh Bardugo's "The Witch of Duva" is the best piece here, and the only one that tempted me to follow up on the author. While it was nice to see a faux-Slavic setting, it wasn't entirely convincing. Marissa Meyer's "Glitches" was also a nice piece, though in contrast to others, it seemed to work best as a short story. I'm not sure I'd be interested in the novel. Anna Banks' "Legacy Lost" had some positive points, but it leaned far more toward romance than fantasy, and the novel excerpt only confirmed this.

All in all, a decent free way to check out the writing style of some new authors.

Jessica says

'Legacy Lost' reminded me an awful lot of *The Swan Princess* - here are a young man and woman who have been destined to marry their entire lives, and now that they're older, the boy catches sight of the girl and it's insta!love because she's beautiful. I mean, eventually he finds that she's independent and strong, brave and intelligent, but that isn't what ends the animosity. Is it The Pull? Maybe. But as Grom himself said, shouldn't he have sensed Nalia years earlier, when he first became old enough to mate? And besides, at the beginning of the story, he senses her in the Chamber of Ceremonies, but he feels nothing but loathing for her. It's only after he realizes that she's turned into a total babe since the last time he saw her that he's like, "Oh, okay, so maybe it won't be so bad." And then he gets super angry when she doesn't want him back and plots to embarrass her by making her love him and then reject her. I mean, how petty can you get? I'm super pissed that she dies in the end, because she was the only remotely interesting character in this story, even if she did end up falling in love with an idiot.

'The Witch of Duva' has one of the best first lines I've ever read:

There was a time when the woods near Duva ate girls.

And it was so, so good. It has all the elements of a perfect story: cannibalism, a witch who isn't a monster and a loving father who is, murky and frightening woods, an eyeless crow, and a pet bear cub. I love dark stories, and I especially love stories that make me squirm before I'm certain of what is happening because of the bad feeling I get in my gut. Is that bizarre? Probably. Do I care? Not really. I will definitely keep my eye on Leigh Bardugo. Her prose is wonderful and haunting, and marvelously crafts the atmosphere for this story, making you shiver as Nadya walks through the woods of Duva and smell and taste the scrumptious stew Magda cooks for her.

'Prophet' was interesting - the religious compound, presumably isolated from everything else, how even kissing is an affront to the Almighty, the leader or 'Prophet' who predicts that floods will come and still knowingly sentences a thirteen year old girl to three days in a cellar where she will most likely die drowned, and who then takes his son - MC Rance - to the hospital when he's struck by lightning, which I'm assuming is a no-no. I mean, most people who live in religious compounds like that don't believe in hospitals, right? And then Rance kills his father because he let Olivia - the aforementioned thirteen year old and the girl he was in love with - die. I mean, all that was great. It's just. It's just. I... wanted... more? Maybe that's a good thing, I'm not sure. I wanted to see what happened next, if he'd gone crazy or if he'd *really* been chosen by some supernatural power, which would have been really creepy but also great.

'Dress Your Marines in White' was chilling. I liked the small touch that those with type B blood would feel no effect - of course *someone* has to be immune to your weapon. The idea for the story was interesting, and the different effects that MORS had on people was, as well. Dr. Massey was a complete sociopath, and her characterization was nicely done. I especially loved the scene when she's described as watching the bloodbath with her hands on the glass, as if she were looking at a Christmas window at a store. I also liked how isolated James is from his family by his experience - because they weren't there, and they can't possibly relate. Still, there was something about how this story was written, especially some of the dialogue, that irked me. Sometimes it felt forced, or just not right. I would've liked to have seen the scene where General Montez shoots himself be a little longer, so we could have appreciated the effect MORS had on him. Instead, it was very quick, and all of the sudden he's on the floor dead along with Privates Sands and Gruin and the two guards who'd also been in the room and it's all over.

'Glitches' was fantastic. I've been wanting to read *Cinder* for a while and the voice and the setting of this short story, a prequel to that novel, didn't disappoint me. This, along with 'The Witch of Duva,' were probably my favorites from the anthology. 'Glitches' tells the story of how Cinder left Europe and arrived to New Beijing, and how she came to find that she had a very useful talent for mechanics. I really liked the following line, spoken by Iko, the family's android:

"I have a glitch, too. Sometimes I forget that I'm not human. I don't think that happens to most androids."

I'm looking forward to seeing Iko more often when I finally make it to *Cinder*.

As a whole, this anthology was pretty great. It struck a good balance between sci-fi and fantasy, and stories that are set in the future, in the past, or in time indeterminate. My favorites, as I said, were 'Glitches' and 'The Witch of Duva.' My least favorite was probably 'Legacy Lost,' mostly because I really didn't like Grom.

If you would like to read this, you can get a free Kindle copy [here](#).
