



# Not So Much, Said the Cat

*Michael Swanwick*

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## Not So Much, Said the Cat Michael Swanwick

The master of short science-fiction follows up his acclaimed collection *The Dog Said Bow-Wow* with feline grace, precision, and total impertinence. Michael Swanwick takes us on a whirlwind journey across the globe and across time and space, where magic and science exist in possibilities that are not of this world. These tales are intimate in their telling, galactic in their scope, and delightfully sesquipedalian in their verbiage.

Join the caravan through Swanwick's worlds and into the playground of his mind. Discover a calculus problem that rocks the ages and robots who both nurture and kill. Meet a magical horse who protects the innocent, a confused but semi-repentant troll, a savvy teenager who takes on the Devil, and time travelers from the Mesozoic who party till the end of time...

## Not So Much, Said the Cat Details

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Author : Michael Swanwick

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# From Reader Review Not So Much, Said the Cat for online ebook

## Leah Bayer says

Let's be real: I read this book because the word cat is in the name. It's a chronic weakness of mine. Book is about cats? I'm gonna read it. Cat on the cover? Gonna read it. Cat in the title? You know the drill. But while this was a ridiculous impulse read (I barely skimmed the description before picking it up) I fell head-over-heels in love with this collection of stories.

It's hard to describe the overall feel of this book, because so many different genres and moods are tackled. There's surreal, futuristic fairy tales. Hard science fiction. More traditional fantasy. Horror. A lot of the inspiration is pulled from folklore or fairy tales, but none of these feel familiar. "The Dala Horse," for example, has some classic Red Riding Hood traits (along with, I swear, Dora the Explorer--our girl has a talking backpack and map!) but it's so utterly bizarre and indescribable. "Of Finest Scarlet Was Her Gown," my favorite from the collection, is about a girl's deal with the devil while in hell, but it's like no hell I've seen in literature and the deal is so interesting and novel.

Of course not every story was for me (is there ever a collection where you like 100% of the inclusions?), like "Pushkin the American" or "Libertarian Russia." Oddly enough, those are two of the more realistic, contemporary tales. I enjoyed the more quirky, bizarre stories like "Tawny Petticoats" (about a scam artist in a weird futuristic New Orleans), "The House of Dreams" (spies vs doctors with mind-reading powers), "The Man in Grey" (all of life's a stage, literally), and "An Empty House" (the reason why we should never make sentient homes).

And while it's not a theme that runs through every story, there are lots of animals here. A cat, a horse, worms, and two wolf stories. It's just so many things I love!

[arc provided by netgalley in exchange for an honest review]

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## Metaphorosis says

2.5 stars - Metaphorosis Reviews

A collection of speculative fiction by Michael Swanwick.

My database tells me I've read a Michael Swanwick novel, *Griffin's Egg*. I don't recall it in the slightest, but yes, there it is, on my shelf - a very slim book I now remember owning, but not reading. As far as my memory goes, the only Swanwick I've read is a couple of technically adept but not enthralling relatively recent stories. I keep hearing his name, so I picked this book up to remedy my ignorance. I read it in tandem with a Piers Anthony book figuring they would balance each other out. They did - neither of them was good.

I'm somewhat at a loss to understand why Swanwick has been nominated for and won so many awards. The book doesn't have an auspicious start. Swanwick's introduction gradually dips from description into light braggadocio before resurfacing. The stories here are competent, but often thin. Nothing about them stands out - not the style, not the concepts, not the characters. Some of the prose is clumsy. Several of them make only a thin stab at emotional depth.

All that said, the best stories were:

**3 A.M. in the Mesozoic Bar** - the dinosaurs weren't the only ones to go. Simple, but well done.

**The Woman Who Shook the World Tree** - an unusual love story. One of the few stories that surprised me.

**Pushkin the American** - arguing exactly that. One of the few in which Swanwick doesn't go for the easy ending.

**An Empty House** - love across dimensions. It starts poorly, but ends well.

All in all a collection that will likely please Swanwick fans, but won't make any new ones.

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## Seregil of Rhiminee says

Originally published at Risingshadow.

Ah, what a pleasure it was to read Michael Swanwick's *Not So Much, Said the Cat*. This magnificent collection was everything I hoped it would be and more, because it contained imaginative and well written stories. It wonderfully demonstrates Michael Swanwick's strengths as an author and lets readers marvel at his vast imagination. It's a collection that I can wholeheartedly praise and recommend, because it's excellent.

Michael Swanwick is an author who probably needs no introduction to speculative fiction readers who love quality fiction and well written stories. However, if there happen to be readers out there who are not familiar with his works, here are a few words about him. Michael Swanwick is an author who has won many awards for his fiction. He is the author of such amazing novels as *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*, *The Dragons of Babel* and *Stations of the Tide*.

I've personally admired Michael Swanwick's writing skills ever since I first read *The Iron Dragon's Daughter*. It made a huge impression on me, because it was something different and refreshingly original. I like his novels and stories a lot, because he doesn't try please everyone, but boldly plays with different ideas and creates unique and memorable fiction.

*Not So Much, Said the Cat* is an excellent collection of imaginative and beautifully written stories that deftly explore various themes, issues and elements ranging from magic and robots to love and aliens. There's something for everyone in this collection.

*Not So Much, Said the Cat* contains the following stories:

- Steadfast Castle
- The Man in Grey
- The Dala Horse
- The Woman Who Shook the World-Tree
- Of Finest Scarlet Was Her Gown
- 3 A.M. in the Mesozoic Bar
- Passage of Earth
- From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled...
- For I Have Lain Me Down on the Stone of Loneliness and I'll Not Be Back Again
- Libertarian Russia
- The Scarecrow's Boy
- The She-Wolf's Hidden Grin

- Goblin Lake
- Pushkin the American
- An Empty House with Many Doors
- Tawny Petticoats
- The House of Dreams

I had previously read a few of these stories, because they've been published elsewhere, but it was enjoyable to re-read them. I have to admit that I had almost forgotten how good, inventive and thought-provoking they are (I find it interesting how easily the author combines entertainment with thought-provoking elements).

I'm impressed by the author's ability to blend science fiction with fantasy elements. He's one of the few authors who succeed in combining these genres in a flawless way, because his stories are at their best wildly imaginative. He even manages to spice up some of his stories with a few horror elements.

I like the author's storytelling skills, because he's a masterful storyteller who takes his readers on a journey into fascinating places. He writes imaginative stories that offer plenty of food for thoughts.

Here are a few words about some of the stories:

"The Dala Horse" is a fascinating post-apocalyptic retelling of the well-known fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood, because it's a story about Linnéa who is travelling to her grandmother's house. I like the author's way of combining fairy tale elements and Scandinavian elements with post-apocalyptic fiction, because it works well.

"The Woman Who Shook the World-Tree" is an interesting story, because - if I'm not mistaken - it was inspired by an illustration from John Jude Palencar. I won't go into details about the contents of this story, but I can mention that it's an extraordinary love story featuring Dr. Mariella Coudy and her junior partner Richard M. Zhang.

"Passage of Earth" is a brilliant story about an alien autopsy. I have to mention that this is one of the best first encounter stories I've ever had the pleasure of reading, because it's a fantastic and atmospheric story.

In "From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled..." the author fascinatingly tells about how a human (Quivera), who wears a suit which is embedded with the simulated personality of his lover (Rosamund), and a millipede-like alien (Uncle Vanya) escape from a destroyed city. It's an intelligent and entertaining story that is simultaneously adventurous and original. The ending of this story is excellent.

"The Scarecrow's Boy" is a marvellous story about a mechanical scarecrow and a little boy. In this story, the author writes well about an obsolete housebot that was stuck out to the field to keep the birds away from the crops. One day the scarecrow meets a little boy called Pierre.

"Goblin Lake" is a brilliantly written folktale-like story. The events in this story take place in 1646 when Hessian cavalymen hear from a captured peasant about the Mummelsee, which means Goblin Lake. It is said that the lake changes everything that is thrown into it into something else (for example, if you throw pebbles into the lake, they may turn into rubies). I enjoyed this story, because it has a charmingly old-fashioned feel to it.

"Tawny Petticoats" is a fantastic story set in a futuristic New Orleans. It's one of the most entertaining stories I've ever read about grifters, because the author has come up with an inventive story. It was interesting that

the author wrote about a bit different kind of zombies in this story.

"The House of Dreams" is an especially interesting piece of speculative fiction, because its events are set in an alternate fin de siècle Europe, and it's part of the author's Mongolian Wizard series. I found this story intriguing.

What makes these stories especially good and memorable is the author's literary writing style, because he charms readers with his fluent and atmospheric prose. His prose is irresistibly beautiful, vibrant and vivid, but also strikingly effective.

If you're a newcomer to Michael Swanwick's fiction, you're in for a special treat when you pick up this collection and begin to turn its pages. I'm sure that you'll find each of the stories intriguing, because they're well-created stories with lots of imagination.

I highly recommend Michael Swanwick's *Not So Much, Said the Cat* to speculative fiction readers. This magnificent collection is essential reading material to those who love quality and originality. The stories contained within its covers are simply marvellous and offer plenty of entertainment, excellent prose, memorable scenes and thought-provoking moments to readers. What more could you possibly hope to find in a speculative fiction short story collection?

Highly recommended!

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### **Tim Hicks says**

If anyone asks you what a fully-professional short story is like, hand over this book.

Swanwick is a master. Every story is exactly as long as it needs to be, and perfectly scoped to tell just the right amount of story.

I don't recall whether any of these stories had ANYthing in common except that they used English words. I recall a delightful, slightly dry style. I remember thinking at least ten times, "hmm, that's a damn clever way to resolve this."

Five stars except that I usually reserve that for stories that take me to another world for a while. Short stories don't do that for me. But they are a wonderful way to clear the palate for the next novel. And if these stories are just a plate of little pastries, they are from that expensive bakery where you are baffled by the high prices till you take one bite and go, "Ah! I understand now," and you can never again eat a Twinkie.

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### **Bruce Gargoyle says**

I received a copy of this title from the publisher via Netgalley.

Ten Second Synopsis:

This is a cracking collection of sci-fi and fantasy short stories well worth immersing one's self in. The stories span multiple fantasy worlds with humour and plenty of twists.

All of the stories in this collection reek of quality writing. Swanwick clearly knows his craft because each story, though set in its own discrete universe, feels like a complete world in itself. The opener, *The Man in Grey*, is a mind-boggling speculative piece steeped in humour that will have you questioning every set piece of your ordinary existence. Some of the stories read like fables or fairy tales, others like cutting-edge science fiction. There really is something for everyone here and as most of the stories span more than a few pages each, you can take the time to get lost in your particular little world without fearing it will be over before it really begins. The best thing about these stories is that they don't feel like they are variations on a similar theme or even slight twists on familiar tropes, but like actual original tales. Our favourites of the bunch are *The Scarecrow's Boy*, a bizarre but touching story about a child on the run, and *Goblin Lake*, a fairy tale complete with revenge, riddles, ruination and redemption. I would definitely recommend this to lovers of all things left-of-centre.

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## **Marjolein says**

Full review to come!

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## **Rose says**

There are a lot of short-stories in this compilation but I only really liked two. The rest were either OK or I didn't like them at all. Swanwick had some interesting ideas but the stories he told to express those ideas just didn't do it for me. Try it if you like but it's not a book I'd recommend, not when there are so many good ones out there.

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## **Peter Tillman says**

Collected stories, from 2008 to 2014. They're all good, all different, all ... Amazing! Fantastic! Astounding!

Comments on individual stories follow. If you somehow missed "From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fleed" STOP RIGHT NOW and go read it! (link below). By far the best in the book, in my pointy-head Space Cadet opinion....

- Introduction: "Where I am now, I think" • Original essay, and one of the high-points, for me.
- "The Man in Grey" • (2011, Eclipse 4). All the world's a stage ..... POV of a stage-hand.
- "The Dala Horse" • (2011, tor.com) • novelette. Russian-themed science-fantasy. Check out the great Julie Dillon art at the link:  
<http://www.tor.com/2011/07/13/the-dal...>
- "The Scarecrow's Boy" • (2008, F&SF) . Housebot and carbot to the rescue!
- "Passage of Earth" • (2014, Clarkeworld). "The Agency needs you to perform an autopsy." Ick ;-}  
<http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/swanw...>
- "3 A.M. in the Mesozoic Bar" • (2014, Far Voyager) . ... and Chicxulub falls at Dawn!
- "Of Finest Scarlet Was Her Gown" • (2014, Asimovs) • novelette. Beelzebub the Cover Cat from Hell.
- The Woman Who Shook the World-Tree • (2012, tor.com) . Love over Science, and a BIG bang. One of 5 stories based on an intriguing painting by John Jude Palencar:

<http://www.tor.com/2012/03/21/the-wom...>

- “Goblin Lake” • (2010, STORIES anthology). An oddball historical fantasy. Didn’t work well for me.
- ” From Babel’s Fall’n Glory We Fled ...” • (2008, Asimov’s). A great story, one of his best short space-operas. “Hello. I’m Rosamund. I’m Dead.”

<http://clarkesworldmagazine.com/swanw...>

- “For I Have Lain Me Down on the Stone of Loneliness and I’ll Not Be Back Again” • (2011, Asimovs). Future terrorism, Irish style, with a sexy master (mistress?)-mind. Why, oh why didn’t this story win a major award?
- “Libertarian Russia” • (2010, Asimovs). Easy Rider in a post-post Soviet Russia. Won Asimov’s Readers award.
- “Tawny Petticoats” [Darger and Surplus #4] • (2014, Rogues ) • novelette. An elaborate scam in a \*way\* post-post antebellum New Orleans. Another FAIL by the award voters. What is it with these people??
- “Steadfast Castle” • (2010, F&SF). Sort-of homage to “There Will Come Soft Rains”, the Bradbury classic.
- “Pushkin the American” • (2012, Unfit for Eden). A novel Alt-“true history”.
- “An Empty House With Many Doors” • (2011, Asimovs). “For a Foggy Night” revisited, or sub your own favorite Many Worlds tale. Not as grim as some. Sort-of a happy ending....
- “The She-Wolf’s Hidden Grin” • [The Fifth Head of Cerberus] • (2013, Shadows of the New Sun). \*Very\* grim story of two sisters’ Coming of Age, and (view spoiler) . Not for the easily-squicked.
- “The House of Dreams” [Mongolian Wizard #4] • (2013, tor.com). Not one of my faves in the series. But try some others, and check Gregory Manchess’s cool cover-art:

<http://www.tor.com/2013/11/27/house-o...>

The series, all FREE at Tor.com, if memory serves: <http://www.isfdb.org/cgi-bin/pe.cgi?3...>

Start at #1, is my advice, & go from there.

This is a \*really, really good\* collection. I’ve linked the stories available online, so you can judge for yourself. What a pity the author has been paid so little, for such stellar results!

Disclosures: I’m a fan, and a friend. I bought my copy out of my own pocket. So there!

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## Mike Boutot says

I really enjoyed this short story collection. I was not familiar with Michael Swanwick until I read a review of this book and decided to pick it up. I will definitely get more of his work at this point.

This collection reminded me a little of Ray Bradbury. Not just because "The Scarecrow's Boy" seems like something Bradbury would have written and "Steadfast Castle" has an intelligent computerized house like "And There Will Come Soft Rains" but just the general subject matter of many of the stories and the fondness for "twist" endings. All of the stories are diverse, and ever single one managed to pull me in at some point. That's a rare achievement where there's not a dud in the bunch. I was also happy to hear that the main characters on "Tawny Petticoats," two post-apocalyptic con-men (or rather one con-man and one intelligent con-dog) appear in other stories and books by Swanwick. I can't wait to get those as the adventures of Darger and Surplus are amazingly fun.

Other stories in the collection have different tones, and some are quite dark. I was surprised for instance that I found "Passage to Earth" so disturbing. It had a note of existential horror right up there with H.P. Lovecraft. And the story "3 A.M. In the Mesozoic Bar" (written because the author said he wanted to do a story set in the time of the dinosaurs ... that didn't have any dinosaurs in it) gradually builds in just a few short pages to



the big reveal and a real sense of futility and helplessness.

If you enjoy clever sci-fi and fantasy short stories that are fast paced and well written, I would really recommend this latest book from Michael Swanwick. It certainly made me a fan.

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## **Brit says**

What an incredibly creative mind.

I'll be honest, I picked this book up because of the title. And also because I wanted to challenge myself to read outside of my normal genres and explore the short story world. I didn't want to stray too far outside of sci-fi, fantasy or YA and didn't really have to given the nature of these short stories.

It is hard for me to rate this book. I have to say, I love his writing style, his creativity, how he kept me on edge but not necessarily the content of his stories. Sometimes it felt shocking just to be shocking. Or bizarre for bizarreness' sake.

Would I recommend it? Maybe for the right reader capable of handling mature content who would be able to see his writing gift for what it is: a well-honed gift.

It's not for everyone. But it felt good to stretch my literary muscles with this book of short stories.

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## **Nikki "The Crazie Betty" V. says**

I really don't know how to review this. Through the majority of the stories I just kept wondering what it was exactly that I was reading? There are some stories that really pull you in, that you would love to have a full book done for. And then others that were just bleh, or too weird to make any sense of. I definitely feel like the stories started out strong, took a dip towards the middle, then slightly came back up again at the end. I'm not sure if I'd recommend this though since it's so hard to categorize and to provide an opinion on. The best I can do is tell you some of my favorites in the collection:

**The Man in Grey:** Loved the whole idea that the world is literally a stage and we all play a part.

**Passage of Earth:** Aliens. This was a very interesting read and I thoroughly enjoyed the sci-fi of it all.

**3 A.M. in the Mesozoic Bar:** A crazy look at a few people during their last few hours alive.

**Of Finest Scarlet Was Her Gown:** I think this one was my favorite. I daughter goes to Hell in search of her Father that was taken away.

**Goblin Lake:** So weird, but I loved the idea of book characters knowing they are in a story.

**Tawny Petticoats:** Quite the entertaining story of 3 con-artists.

**Steadfast Castle:** Killer house. Need I say more?

Now that I'm sitting here writing this out, I realize that I actually enjoyed more of these stories than I thought I did so I'm bumping my rating from 3 stars to 4. Guess I just needed some time to let these stories sit on my brain.

*Copy received for free from Netgalley in exchange for my honest review.*

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## **Bradley says**

This man is a superlative author.

I'm deathly worried about spoiling anything about this short story collection because all I want to do is gush and gush about the transposition of ideas here, the character building there, the truly awesome amount of storytelling SKILLS that he seems to effortlessly embody. He lays out words with such clarity and beauty and beastly knowledge about the SF (and fantasy!) fields, that I'm frankly floored. He's consistently original, widely exploratory, and best of all, he is consummately entertaining.

I could gush on and on, but what I really, really want to do is discuss his stories. There's really a ton that I want to say, but spoiling anything at this point would do everyone a disservice, and that's precisely the opposite of what I want. I want to tell EVERYONE that Michael Swanwick has got to be one of the very best SF authors alive.

Granted, I only read a single one of his novels and I gushed over it, but I do remember reading a few years worth of Issac Asimov Magazines back in the eighties and early nineties and I remember his name as always writing the stories I most wanted to read in every issue.

It's the ideas. It's always the ideas first. Then it's the brilliance of the writing. Mind you, it's not flowery language or anything crass like that. It's all about telling wonderful stories that make you think and feel and go, "Ah!" and make you go, "Oh, that's awesome!"

So why did I ever lose track of this guy? Probably because I got into a novel kick shortly after and left all those gorgeous short stories behind. Hell if I know why. He's a better short story writer than practically any other author I've ever read, and they stick with you like neon signs or the smell of pancakes with syrup or the furry lining of your favorite winter coat as you step out into the harsh night.

Well I can tell you right now, I'm never turning my back on short stories again if this guy is still writing them. I didn't meet a single story I didn't absolutely love.

They were all a perfect marriage of classic stories and bleeding edge tech, from godlike continental AIs to the abolishment of time, clever discourse on libertarianism and zero-sum economics in a mirroring tale of humanity and alien bugs, fairy tales and one of the best futuristic con-games I've ever had the pleasure of consuming. :) There was even a literary love-story of an American Pushkin that surprised and delighted the hell out of me even as it baffled me, too. :)

Some of my absolute favorites, even though I loved them all, were:

The Dala Horse - Great worldbuilding, great fairy tale.

Passage of Earth - NICE and twisty invasion story.

The Woman Who Shook the World-Tree - I'm NOT spoiling this one, but trust me. It's COOL. :)

Tawny Pettycoats - I'm a sucker for con games.

I'm LOVING these, but don't get the idea that I didn't love the rest. Some were like having OZ step from behind the curtain, while others were a deeply emotional look at their last moments of life, as in "3 A.M. in the Mesozoic Bar", which was also funny at the same time as it was horrifying, or "Libertarian Russia" which captured the contradictory flavors of a true Russia despite a future depopulation, or the last story, "The House of Dreams", which was some of the most clever modern UF/Alternate Histories I've ever read that included magic and a literary gotcha. :)

I'm almost dancing in my seat as I write this. I want to get my hands on everything else he's ever written, now, and devour it all. :)

I can tell that he's a huge fan of the genre. He's doing all of this out of pure love. It's not like any author can survive on short stories in this day and age. He's writing awesome fiction because he's obviously driven to get this great stuff out. :) A calling, perhaps? An obsession? Great Love? Who cares! We are all the grand winners, here! :) :)

Great thanks goes to Netgalley for the opportunity of reading this great stuff! :)

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## **Scott Firestone says**

Michael Swanwick is one of the best and most-prolific short story writers in the business. In fact, he's one of the few writers who is actually far better at the short form than the long one. Each collection brings new wonders (and, admittedly, a few stories that are just okay).

Notable stories include:

"The Man in Grey," where we get a glimpse of the real world behind our known one, with a twist on the usual narrator.

"The Scarecrow's Boy" is a horrific children's fairy tale.

"The Woman Who Shook the World Tree" is a beautiful story that I won't ruin.

"From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled" is a fascinating alien story.

"Goblin Lake" is another fairy tale with a twist.

"Tawny Petticoats" is a con story starring his characters Darger and Surplus--a man and an anthropomorphic dog.

In "The She-Wolf's Hidden Grin," Swanwick has the audacity to take one of Gene Wolfe's best creations (The Fifth Head of Cerberus), deconstruct it, and put it back together again. And by gum, it works.

If I loved this so much, why 4 stars instead of 5? It's because the few stories I didn't like REALLY fell flat for me. That said, this is still a terrific collection of stories written by a talented author.

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## **Rachel (Kalanadi) says**

I started reading Swanwick's short stories this year when I binge read the Mongolian Wizard stories

available for free on Tor.com, and I was really impressed at how well Swanwick told complete stories as mini-episodes in the short story format. So, I went looking for more of his work. *Not So Much, Said the Cat* comes out very soon from Tachyon Publications, and I really enjoyed it! It is a very strong and entertaining collection of Swanwick's more recent stories. Every story is succinct and well-crafted, even if I didn't appreciate the content of a few.

In the introduction, Swanwick says that this is his first collection that feels like every story is written by the same author. I agree with this, though I would emphasize that the stories have enough variety to never bore, switching settings, genre, protagonists, and so on. There are definitely enough similarities in style and setting to clearly be from the same author. I appreciate collections that feel cohesive, as a chunk of an author's work that represents their style.

Swanwick has really honed his craft and studied the short story format. From the very first story, "The Man in Grey", I felt the stories were strong and taut, and efficiently and effectively conveyed in brief but rich sentences and passages, and often humorously.

Some of the stories I enjoyed the most were:

"The Dala Horse", a "Red Riding Hood" SF dystopia type of story about a young girl traveling to her grandmother's house and waylaid by a troll.

"The Scarecrow's Boy", which surprised me at every single turn. This is the one story that I went back to reread parts of it to untangle the progression. It's about a robot scarecrow rescuing a diplomat's child. There's a revelation at the end that you could almost miss.

"The Woman Who Shook the World-Tree" has burst of energetic scientific activity that you know must eventually end in disaster, but results in a pretty touching romantic moment.

"From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled..." was my favorite science fiction story, about human settlers who want to be granted a home on an alien planet. The aliens look like millipedes/centipedes. Their economy is a capitalism of trust; the humans' is based on information. When an enemy faction destroys one of the alien cities, an alien survivor goes with a human to take all his people's knowledge to another city to restart it. And like a lot of Swanwick's stories in this collection, it did not end in the way that I thought it would.

The Surplus and Darger story, "Tawny Petticoats". I think Swanwick has written a lot of stories and at least one novel about Surplus and Darger. They're kind of con men... and in this story, they recruit a woman to help them with a black money scheme in a fantasy New Orleans.

I didn't like a handful of stories, mostly because of their content. For example, I'm not super fond of stories in general that feature lots of sex and drinking and debauchery on the eve of disaster, like "3 A.M. in the Mesozoic Bar". Some stories like "Libertarian Russia", had darker, more depressing Russian moody setting that don't appeal to me personally either. However, I can easily see other people loving these!

This will not be my last Michael Swanwick collection. I absolutely want to read his other short stories and hopefully get my hands on a few of his novels.

**Watch the video version of this review!**

*I received this book as an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review*

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**Melki says**

I really liked *Of Finest Scarlet Was Her Gown*, but the rest of the stories were forgettable.

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