



If I Were An Evil Overlord

Martin H. Greenberg (Editor) , Russell Davis (Editor / Contributor) , Esther M. Friesner (Contributor) , David Bischoff (Contributor) , Jody Lynn Nye (Contributor) , Dean Wesley Smith (Contributor) , Jim C. Hines (Contributor) , J. Steven York (Contributor) , more... Fiona Patton (Contributor) , Donald J. Bingle (Contributor) , David Niall Wilson (Contributor) , Kristine Kathryn Rusch (Contributor) , Tanya Huff (Contributor) , Steven A. Roman (Contributor) , John Helfers (Contributor) , Nina Kiriki Hoffman (Contributor) ...less

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Who hasn't dreamed of being an evil overlord?

Today's finest fantasy authors have delivered fourteen tales that run the gamut from humorous to serious, fantasy to science fiction. Certain to appeal to role-playing gamers, fantasy lovers, and megalomaniacs who want to rule the world.

If I Were An Evil Overlord Details

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From Reader Review If I Were An Evil Overlord for online ebook

Aphie says

The first story was a humorous fantasy piece whose punchline was "the person the nasty Elf hero thought was the Evil Overlord's beautiful daughter was actually a BOY! Hawhaw!"

Not the strongest starting point, IMO.

It was probably the worst of the bunch, and there were some amusing stories in here. Particularly memorable is a piece about an air-conditioning technician foiling the Evil Overlord's plan and saving the world (with the help of an electrician) whilst on a routine repair call.

SFReader says

I picked up this anthology based solely on the title, I have to admit. However, I'm happy to say that it's a well-rounded anthology with some good stories in here. We see the Evil Overlord from his/her POV, from the second-in-command, from the beginning, near the end, from the minion's POV, the heir, and the hired hand sent to fix the air-conditioning. We have Seriously Evil Overlords, and others that are so over-the-top that they're hilarious. In fact, probably half of the stories in here have a tongue-in-cheek tone to them.

Comments on individual stories follow, but I'd recommend this anthology for some good, old-fashioned Evil Overlording fun.

If I Were An Evil Overlord review at SFReader.com

Kellye says

This story collection is ambitious and fun. Many of the stories are either not great, or not finished, and I think most of them were probably purpose-written to go together in a collection. Not that there's anything wrong with that! I would still recommend reading it to anyone who is interested in 'evil overlord' stories. Especially if you remember "The Evil Overlord Checklist" being one of the best things on the nascent internet. Just don't expect a polished, cherry-picked collection and do prepare your brain to have fun with these jolly meditations on what it means to be morals-free, narcissistic/nihilistic, and in possession of the means to rule the world. Some of the stories are wonderful, and all of them are passable, especially if you're willing to overlook atrocious grammar. Especially tense agreement. (Which would clearly be my hubristic downfall if I were an evil overlord. (Clearly I've been reading too many "World's/America's/Century's Best" collections lately and not enough of this kind of gritty collection that trains writers up to make it into the other kind.)

<http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php...>

<http://legendspbem.angelfire.com/evil...>

Joshua Palmatier says

If I Were an Evil Overlord

I picked up this anthology based solely on the title, I have to admit. However, I'm happy to say that it's a well-rounded anthology with some good stories in here. We see the Evil Overlord from his/her POV, from the second-in-command, from the beginning, near the end, from the minion's POV, the heir, and the hired hand sent to fix the air-conditioning. We have Seriously Evil Overlords, and others that are so over-the-top that they're hilarious. In fact, probably half of the stories in here have a tongue-in-cheek tone to them. Comments on individual stories follow, but I'd recommend this anthology for some good, old-fashioned Evil Overlording fun.

If Looks Could Kill by Esther Friesner: As expected, a funny, tongue-in-cheek story about an elf and his sidekick captured by an Evil Overlord. In this case, the Overlord is never seen, but instead the elf and sidekick are visited by the Overlord's daughter in the dungeon. Hilarity, of course, ensues.

The Man Who Would Be Overlord by David Bischoff: This time we see the Evil Overlord as he tells his tale of how he came to be the Evil Overlord. An OK story, although the build-up to the ending was a little too long . . . or it ended too quick.

Ensuring the Succession by Jody Lynn Nye: Here, the Evil Overlord is attempting to secure his succession by testing his heir for his suitability as Evil Overlord replacement. (This is not a spoiler; did you read the title of the story?) I liked the story, but found myself thinking that parts of the story would have been more interesting if they'd been written from the heir's POV, rather than strictly from the current Evil Overlord's POV.

The Life and Death of Fortune Cookie Tyrant by Dean Wesley Smith: This story begins with the first tentative steps of a man destined to be Evil Overlord . . . if he doesn't make any mistakes along the way. So we get to see how an Evil Overlord might develop. An interesting premise on how the main character gets his powers, and a little tongue-in-cheek overall.

Daddy's Little Girl by Jim C. Hines: The main character here isn't an Evil Overlord, but rather a minion who died and has been brought back to life by the Evil Overlord's daughter to help her take over her father's business, so to speak. I liked the fact that . . . well, if I tell you what I liked it would spoil the story. But there's a twist regarding the main character and the daughter that I liked and that made the story different.

Gordie Culligan vs. Dr. Longbeach & the HVAC of Doom by J. Steven York: A fun little story where the main character is an air conditioning maintenance man, with an apprentice sidekick. I really enjoyed reading this story, and totally believed that the man's expertise would enable him to save the day . . . or at least get most of the way there. Lots of fun.

The Sins of the Sons by Fiona Patton: A much more serious take on the theme here than some of the previous stories. I love the world that Fiona creates here in such a small space, and the characters were particularly interesting. The author doesn't shy away from some of the more gruesome aspects either, giving you just enough details to make you squirm and leaving the rest to imagination. I found the names a little hard to keep track of, but really enjoyed the story overall.

Loser Takes All by Donald J. Bingle: This story starts off a little light-hearted, with the main character intent

on playing and winning the video game Ultimate Overlord. The story also has a unique structure, since we are told the rules he intends to play the game (and his life), with little vignettes on the actual game play in progress. It has a slightly darker turn to it by the end though, that I can't say much about without ruining the story.

The Next Level by David Niall Wilson: Another story that sort of crosses a video game with a main character, although much different than the last story. Here, the computer game is more real than what's happening in the real world. In fact, the story is more about the supposed computer game than anything else. An interesting take though.

Advisors at Naptime by Kristine Kathryn Rusch: This is a play on that old adage that a "five-year-old could have solved that." The main character is a five-year-old who simply wants a nap. She doesn't realize the importance of the job she actually has to do. A fun story with some real tension in it, especially toward the end. The author did a great job of keeping us in the POV of the child—who doesn't really understand what's going on around her—while still giving us everything we need to know what's really going on.

A Woman's Work . . . by Tanya Huff: A great Evil Overlord in this story, someone who knows what they want, why they want it, and how to get it. The reason this one is memorable is because the Evil Overlord isn't over the top. She's smart and practical . . . and will perhaps remind you suspiciously of your mother.

To Sit In Darkness Here, Hatching Vain Empires by Steven A. Roman: A truly evil Evil Overlord here, who perhaps goes a step too far. It takes a little while to get to the main story here, but once you do, the story is interesting and engrossing.

Stronger Than Fate by John Helfers: I like that this story plays on the tropes of the epic fantasy novel . . . probably because I'm an epic fantasy novelist. *grin* There is, of course, a twist at the end that you really should be expecting.

Art Therapy by Nina Kiriki Hoffman: I absolutely love the idea behind this story, where two young boys from the slums vow to aid each other on their climb to Evil Overlord, one being the Overlord and the other their trusted second-in-command. But what happens when the Evil Overlord starts going a little soft? What can the second-in-command do? The answer is obvious and leads to some great humor.

Aaron says

A good collection of stories, I tended to like the funny ones more - but even the serious tales were well written, and of the 14 there was only one or two that I would say I "didn't like". The first story, "If Looks Could Kill" was definitely my favorite. I had never heard of these 14 authors before, but if I found something else written by them in the future, I can imagine picking it up and trying it out!

Rebecca says

A couple of these stories are quite fun. Unfortunately, most of them are kind of obvious and overly purple in prose.

David says

Quite boring. You'd think evil overlords would make for thrilling stories, but none of the authors in this anthology managed to deliver more than predictable, badly written or even outright copied tales. I skipped many stories because the writing was just awful.

Kirsten says

2,5

Erika says

Some authors really nailed the Evil Overlord aspect. Some didn't.

Some of the stories were about the people around the Evil Overlord, and those were a mixed set as well.

It was definitely a unique theme for an anthology that wasn't zombies, fantasy creatures, wizards, etc. and it would be cool to see other unique ones.

Lolly's Library says

Anthologies, especially fantasy anthologies, can often be hit-and-miss affairs, a sort-of Russian Roulette of the literary kind. Many times I have read anthologies in which most of the stories were duds, with only one or two real winners and one or two real bombs--I'm talking nuclear-warhead, weapon-of-mass-destruction bombs. However, I was pleasantly surprised upon finishing **If I Were An Evil Overlord**. Taken as a whole, the stories rate better-than-average, with several rating excellent. (Those by Tanya Huff, Nina Kiriki Hoffman, Jody Lynn Nye, Jim C. Hines, and, my personal favorite, Esther Friesner were highest on my list.) Perhaps it was the subject matter which inspired such sparkling creativity. After all, when it comes to the subject of what you would do if you were an Evil Overlord, well, how could you not get creative with that?

Kaoru says

All in all, a good book. Like any compilation of short stories by different authors, some were better than others. Usually, I found I had a preference for the more humorous stories ("Gordie Culligan vs Dr. Longbeach and the HVAC of Doom" for example), but I really feel my favorite stories were the ones that flirted with humor but had a generally serious feel, like Tanya Huff's contribution "A Woman's Work..." (which confronts evil overlord stereotypes without getting heavy-handed about it, and makes excellent points on good governance) or the enigmatically-titled Steven Roman piece, "To Sit in Darkness Here, Hatching Vain Empire."

That being said, there were some stories that by virtue of being too silly or pointless I just didn't like. "Life and Death of the Fortune Cookie Tyrant" feels like it was written by an elementary school kid. "The Next Level" is about a kid who's been abducted and is forced to play a video game to control the fate of an evil empire in an alternate dimension, though they never bother to explain why/how that kid was kidnapped, why this works, or even why it has to be a video game at all other than that it appeals to geeks like me to have video games that control worlds.

All in all, read this book, but skip around and if a story doesn't catch you pretty quick, it's probably not worth it.

Wealhtheow says

A mediocre-at-best collection of stories about Evil Overlords. Tanya Huff and Nina Kiriki Hoffman (no surprise there) wrote the only two stories worth reading. The stories aren't even offensively or impressively bad--just sort of boring and banal.

Susan says

If Looks Could Kill • novelette by Esther M. Friesner [as by Esther Friesner]
The Man Who Would Be Overlord • novelette by David Bischoff
Ensuring the Succession • novelette by Jody Lynn Nye
The Life & Death Of Fortune Cookie Tyrant • shortstory by Dean Wesley Smith
Daddy's Little Girl • novelette by Jim C. Hines
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Loser Takes All • novelette by Donald J. Bingle
The Next Level • shortstory by David Niall Wilson
Advisors At Naptime • shortstory by Kristine Kathryn Rusch

"A Woman's Work ..." by Tanya Huff reprinted in *Finding Magic and Nights of the Round Table* reread
3/9/2015

To Sit in Darkness Here, Hatching Vain Empires • novelette by Steven A. Roman
Stronger Than Fate • shortstory by John Helfers
Art Therapy • novelette by Nina Kiriki Hoffman

Tom Loock says

This was my when-I-go-out-and-have-to-wait-somewhere book ... until the Kindle.
I'm read about 2/3 of the stories, and sampled the remaining ones to the extent where I could decide I would not finish them.
If I Were An Evil Overlord is the typical anthology, if there is such a thing: some great stuff, some good stuff, some okay stuff, some rubbish. The only new author (to me) was J. Steven York, whose excellent story stood out.

Overall recommended if you like the usual suspects (*and I mean that in a good way*): Esther M. Friesner, David Bischoff, Jody Lynn Nye, Jim C. Hines, Kristine Kathryn Rusch etc.

Amélie says

I generally love the bad guy in novels and found them essential to make a good story. It was therefore with great pleasure that I found this collection which puts them in the spotlight.

Some novels were really great, I particularly appreciate Tanya Huff's one figuring a great female overlord aware of all the tropes of the genre. Some novels were of course less interesting than the others, but it was overall a great read, with lot of humour and originality.
