



Smart Dragons, Foolish Elves

Alan Dean Foster (Editor) , Martin H. Greenberg (Editor) , Anthony Boucher , Theodore R. Cogswell , John Collier , Avram Davidson , Daniel P. Dem , George Alec Effinger , more... Harlan Ellison , Esther M. Friesner , H.L. Gold , Ron Goulart , Nina Kiriki Hoffman , Harvey Jacobs , Marvin Kaye , Mike Resnick , Robert Sheckley , Robert Silverberg , William Tenn , Roger Zelazny ...less

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Do wizards were funny hats? Do dragons have bad breath? Do dwarves have long, silly names without any vowels? Elf-indulgent collections of tales that skew the knight life, mock the magic, and hoot at hellspawn. By Boucher, Effinger, Ellison, Friesner, Resnick, Sheckley, Silverberg, Zelazny, and more.

Stories in the collection:

As Is by Robert Silverberg
The Same to You Doubled by Robert Sheckley
The Egg of the Glak by Harvey Jacobs
Beibermann's Soul by Mike Resnick
Thims by Theodore R. Cogswell
Ms. Lipshutz and the Goblin by Marvin Kaye
Unferno by George Alec Effinger
Unicorn Variations by Roger Zelazny
Yes Sir That's My by Daniel P. Dern
Please Stand By by Ron Goulart
Bottle Party by John Collier
My Mother Was a Witch by William Tenn
Djinn, NO Chaser by Harlan Ellison
Up the Wall by Esther M. Friesner
Trouble With Water by Horace L. Gold
Savage Breasts by Nina Kiriki Hoffman
Or the Grasses Grow by Avram Davidson
Snulbug by Anthony Boucher

Smart Dragons, Foolish Elves Details

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From Reader Review Smart Dragons, Foolish Elves for online ebook

M— says

not really very fun. No elves to speak of, and one very minor mention of a dragon. The cover illustration has nothing to do with any story in this book, and the humor proproted available here is really not funny.

As Is by Robert Silverberg (1968) -- car buying used

The Same to You Doubled by Robert Sheckley (1971) -- a forced, ha ha now my worst enemy will be forced to have too much sex.

The Egg of the Glak by Harvey Jacobs (1969) -- dnf

Beibermann's Soul by Mike Resnick (1988) -- dnf

Thimgs by Theodore R. Cogswell (1958) -- dnf

Ms. Lipshutz and the Goblin by Marvin Kaye (1971) -- ugly woman finds happiness in marring goblin, becomes pretty, goblin manfully deals

Unferno by George Alec Effinger (1985) -- dnf

Unicorn Variation by Roger Zelazny (1982) -- single actually good story in this entire collection. What is it doing here?

Yes Sir, That's My by Daniel P. Dern (1978) -- actually classy mpreg story.

Please Stand By by Ron Goulart (1961) -- dnf

Bottle Party by John Collier (1939) -- Man conjourns up sex parners via giny, eventually tricked and punished in an implied gangbang.

My Mother Was a Witch by William Tenn (1966) -- clever and fun.

Djinn, No Chaser by Harlan Ellison (1982) -- getting the geene out of the bottle

Up the Wall by Esther M. Friesner (1990) -- dnf, has dragon minor character. and romans. and king author.

Trouble with Water by Horace L. Gold (1939) -- dnf

Savage Breasts by Nina Kiriki Hoffman (1988) -- breasts grow, become aggressive

Or the Grasses Grow by Avram Davidson (1958) -- Swindled native amerians abide by teh letter of the contract.

Snulbug by Anthony Boucher (1941) -- dnf

Katherine says

Nice little collection of fantasy short stories which lean towards comedy. I think in particular I liked the Roger Zelazny one, and there's another one called "Savage Breasts" that made me giggle. There are a couple of so-so stories, and that brings it down somewhat.

Krista says

I remember reading this as a teenager and being disappointed. I thought I'd given the book away long ago, but recently found it in a box. I flipped through the stories to see if they were as bad as I remembered, and yeah, they are. There's a lot of heavily forced Jewish "humor" that relies on racial and sexist stereotypes, and

just simply isn't funny or clever. There aren't many actual dragons or elves, but several immature revenge fantasies, a good deal of misogyny and shrewish women, and the token "feminist" story that's apparently supposed to balance those out. (But is actually pretty offensive to me as a woman, because it literally reduces a woman's power solely to her breasts.) Most of the authors and characters are also heavy-handed with the Jewish stereotypes, which distracts from the few decent stories. But I didn't find any of these stories FUNNY, despite this being marketed as a humor collection. It's lame at best and offensive at worst. Go ahead and pass this one up.

Nanci says

A marvelous and vastly entertaining collection of tales by numerous talented writers. Highly recommended for any lovers of fantasy stories.

Paul Knighton says

Many different styles of comedy story with a wry twist, quite a few slightly showing their age with anachronistic stereotypes. Funny and charming nonetheless. Just dated.

Kelsey says

One of the best book of short stories I have read.

Chris says

Why should you read this collection?

Two words:

Attack breasts!

Yes, those type of breasts.

Steven says

Sometimes it's hard to believe how much our society has changed in just a two decades. I mean, the Honeymooners had a threat of domestic violence as its catchphrase. This collection of humorous fantasy stories, originally published in 1991, isn't quite as bad as all that, but many of the stories assume gender and even racial stereotypes that no longer pass muster.

Some of the tales - such as the contributions from Roger Zelazny and Robert Silverberg - hold up extremely well. Their humor is character based, rather than situational.

Too many of the others, though, rely on stereotypical roles for women (secretaries, "needing a man", shrewish wife) or racist stereotypes about Jewish business owners for their humor. (I really don't know if the authors were/are Jewish themselves, but honestly, that's kind of beside the point.) Alan Dean Foster's introductions are, by today's standards, quite chauvinistic indeed.

As a result, many (over half) of the stories fall flat. Or you might find them funny - but unintentionally so. It's a shame, because the good stories herein **are** worth reading. Pick this book up at a library, or on the cheap at a used bookstore, if for no other reason than to realize how far we've come towards gender equity and race relationship since 1991.

Liana says

...I didn't find any of these stories to be funny. In fact, I thought most of them were kind of... disrespectful. And even a bit racist.

There are plenty of other ways to be funny without stereotyping and mocking groups of people. :P

Oh, and this book barely has anything to do with dragons and elves. Lol. I'm not even going to list this fantasy, because it... isn't? x'D

Beverly says

The only story that really had me laughing out loud was "Savage Breasts" in which a flat-chested young lady ordered a chest enhancer, and boy did she get enhanced! Her breasts started punching out her lovers. I chuckled some at some of the other stories, but this was the stand out story for me.

Bruno Silva says

Algumas histórias são engraçadas, algumas não entretêm nada e uma é hilariante (a do homem que tinha sido amaldiçoado para se transformar num animal volumoso em alturas festivas). Podia ter sido uma compilação bem mais forte e impactante do que acabou por ser. Um entretenimento agradável.

K.T. Katzmann says

You ever revisit a childhood classic and kinda wish you didn't?

I've had this one since before my Bar Mitzvah. I don't know whether I bought the beaten paperback from the library or "forgot" to return it, but it's seen plenty of bookshelves. I've taken it down once or twice a year to reread my favorites, but now I'm decided to dive in and reread them all. I loved it as a kid. It has to hold up,

right?

So... I've learned a few lessons about rereading the SF/F of my youth.

1) If it's funny fantasy from the 50's, Jews are everywhere.

Which is awesome... unless it isn't.

I'm pretty sure this was the first Non-YA book I read where I saw other Jews in it. There's a brilliant story by William Tenn about Yiddish witches, and I'm pretty sure it's the ancient DNA stuck around my consciousness long enough to evolve into the way I write Judaism in *Murder With Monsters*.

A Jewish guy annoys a water-gnome. A Jewish guy takes over Hell, and talks with an angel who speaks Yiddish. Maybe "funny Jewish guy" was a stock comedy character back then. I didn't see any overtly racist portrayals, but they seem so prevalent. Take out a half dozen stories, and this could almost be the Jewish fantasy anthology.

Are we the joke?

2) You Miss the Uncomfortable Stuff When You're Young

In "Mrs. Lipshutz and the Goblin," the punchline is that an unattractive feminist is willing to settle for a goblin. Women want to marry, after all.

Traces of 50's misogyny definitely show up. Not everywhere, certainly. Not in Harlan Ellison's delightful "Djinn, No Chaser." It's there, though, along with a homophobic part I completely missed as a kid.

I never liked "The Egg of the Glak" as a kid. The prose was above me. Now I realize that the entire story is about a guy basically babysitting a dodo egg while getting laid.

3) Some Stories Aren't as Good... Because You've Read Them Too Much

It is entirely possible to ruin an anthology by rereading the surprise away.

4) Those That Kick Ass May Yet Kick Ass

Aside from Tenn's, there's the beauty of Unicorn Variations. I can honestly say that I'm a published writer today because of that book, and the eponymous story about black unicorns, chess, and bars is still amazing. Even its origin rules: Zelazny had offers to write for a chess anthology, a bar anthology, and a unicorn anthology, so he wrote one story with all three and, with the editors' knowledge, sold it three times.

"My Mother is a Witch," "Djinn, No Chaser," and "Unicorn Variations" are all brilliant. If you can't find

them elsewhere, they're worth tracking down here.

So how is it overall? There's a story about a woman's whose breasts start punching people, and one about a were-elephant. With my earlier caveats, that should really be all the pertinent information you need to know.

Jenniffer says

Fantasy stories by such authors as Robert Silverberg, Marvin Kaye, Mike Resnick, etc. Despite the title, don't expect Dragon stories, let alone ones about Elves. Cute none the less!

Dana says

Great fun to read a book copyright 1991. Typewriters, books, newspapers, not a whiff of the internet... took me back to when I bought it and this was relevant to the then current world. Hilarious!

Chandra says

Like any short story collection, it's hit and miss. Some are very good, some are dreadfully dull.
