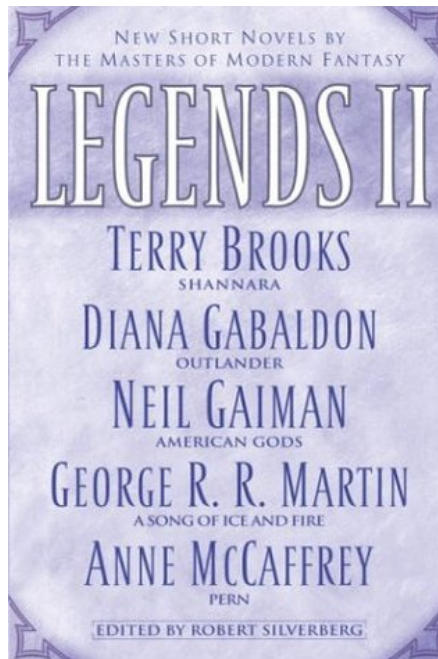




Legends II

Robert Silverberg (Editor/Contributor) , Terry Brooks (Contributor) , Diana Gabaldon (Contributor) , Neil Gaiman (Contributor) , George R.R. Martin (Contributor) , Anne McCaffrey (Contributor) , Elizabeth Haydon (Contributor) , Robin Hobb (Contributor) , more... Orson Scott Card (Contributor) , Tad Williams (Contributor) , Raymond E. Feist (Contributor) ...less

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Realm of the Elderlings: Homecoming / Robin Hobb

A Song of Ice and Fire: The Sworn Sword / George R.R. Martin

The Tales of Alvin Maker: The Yazoo Queen / Orson Scott Card

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Otherland: The Happiest Dead Boy in the World / Tad Williams

Pern: Beyond Between / Anne McCaffrey

The Riftwar: The Messenger / Raymond E. Feist

The Symphony of Ages: Threshold / Elizabeth Haydon

American gods: The Monarch of the Glen / Neil Gaiman

Shannara: Indomitable / Terry Brooks

1 ROBIN HOBB returns to the Realm of the Elderlings with “Homecoming,” a powerful tale in which exiles sent to colonize the Cursed Shores find themselves sinking into an intoxicating but deadly dream . . . or is it a memory?

2 GEORGE R. R. MARTIN continues with Dunk, a young hedge knight, and his unusual squire, Egg, in “The Sworn Sword.”

3 ORSON SCOTT CARD puts Alvin Maker on the mighty Mississippi with ne’er-do-wells Jim Bowie and Abe Lincoln, in “The Yazoo Queen.”

4 DIANE GABALDON puts Outlander misfit in “Lord John and the Succubus,” a supernatural thriller set in the early days of the Seven Years War.

5 ROBERT SILVERBERG has a dilettantish poet in “The Book of Changes.”

6 TAD WILLIAMS explores the strange afterlife of Orlando Gardiner from Otherland in “The Happiest Dead Boy in the World.”

7 ANNE McCAFFREY shines a light into Pern in “Beyond Between.”

8 RAYMOND E. FEIST sends one soldier on the ride of his life, an ordinary time for “The Messenger.”

9 ELIZABETH HAYDON relates the destruction of Serendair and the fate of its last defenders in “Threshold,”

10 NEIL GAIMAN tells of the man Shadow, after *American Gods* in “The Monarch of the Glen.”

11 TERRY BROOKS adds an exciting epilogue to *The Wishsong of Shannara* in “Indomitable,” how Jair Ohmsford’ destroys the evil Ildatch, armed only with illusion.

Legends II Details

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Author : Robert Silverberg (Editor/Contributor) , Terry Brooks (Contributor) , Diana Gabaldon (Contributor) , Neil Gaiman (Contributor) , George R.R. Martin (Contributor) , Anne McCaffrey (Contributor) , Elizabeth Haydon (Contributor) , Robin Hobb (Contributor) , more... Orson Scott Card (Contributor) , Tad Williams (Contributor) , Raymond E. Feist (Contributor) ...less

Format : Hardcover 644 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction, Anthologies, Fantasy, Science Fiction

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From Reader Review Legends II for online ebook

David Melbie says

I actually read these eleven stories in the two paperback editions that were published in 2004; *Legends II: Shadows, Gods, and Demons* and *Legends II: Dragon, Sword, and King*. I knew from reading the first *Legends* that I would not be disappointed, and I was not.

The first *Legends* was where I first learned of Terry Goodkind, Orson Scott Card, Robert Jordan, and Stephen King's *Dark Tower* horror/fantasy series. Silverberg himself was new to me, and I eventually read some of his stories as well. I am glad that I read all of these because, had I not read these books, I would never have read Haydon, Brooks, Williams (Tad), and Gabaldon. I still need to read Robin Hobb!

I recommend to anyone who wants to jump into the SciFi/Fantasy genre for the first time to find an anthology and start there; from there you can choose the authors that appeal to you and you can enter many strange, beautiful, and wondrous worlds!

The Stories:

Homecoming, by Robin Hobb

The Book of Changes, by Robert Silverberg

The Happiest Dead Boy in the World, by Tad Williams

Beyond Between, by Anne McCaffrey

The Messenger, by Raymond E. Feist

The Monarch of the Glen, by Neil Gaiman

The Sworn Sword, by Geroge R. R. Martin

The Yazoo Queen, by Orson Scott Card

Lord John and the Succubus, by Diana Gabaldon

Threshold, by Elizabeth Haydon

Indomitable, by Terry Brooks

Becca says

I greatly enjoy fantasy stories, even if I am not very well read in the genre, so this was a blast to work through. (And it is something that one might have to "work through" - 642 pages!) My favorite stories were by the following authors: Robin Hobb, Diana Gabaldon, Tad Williams, Anne McCaffrey, Elizabeth Haydon, and Neil Gaiman (of course - American Gods 'verse? Yes please!).

Elizabeth Mallory says

One of my favorite fantasy books of all time, this collection of novellas is easy to read (all the works are short!) and gives you a good overview of definitive authors in the genre. It's a good place to find new writers worth reading.

Favorites:

1. "Lord John and the Succubus" by Diana Gabaldon.

2. "Homecoming" by Robin Hobb.
 3. "The Yazoo Queen" by Orson Scott Card.
-

Maura says

This contains short stories by 6 authors:

Neil Gaiman
Anne McCaffrey
Tad Williams
Robin Hobb
Robert Silverberg
Raymond E. Feist

I hadn't read anything by Robert Silverberg before and will now track down a full length work or two of his. Anne McCaffrey was just as you'd suspect (I read about 4 of her books in the past and was sated; this story was fine, but isn't enticing me back for more). Tad Williams was better in short form than i remember his Otherland being. Robin Hobb came back into my good graces (i started out loving his Assassin's trilogy, but halfway through the 3rd book just couldn't be bothered to care about the characters anymore; i've been fearful of trying other of her books since then). Feist's story is set back in the Riftwar, and reminded me of the good early books rather than the Krondor or Serpentine series. And i fear i might have had too high of hopes for Gaiman's piece, because it was fine but didn't quite satisfy the way i expected.

overall, a good collection and worth reading. but heck, we knew that from the author list. :)

Eric says

The stories I read from this collection are:

'The Sworn Sword' by George R.R. Martin

In the same league as its predecessor, 'The Hedge Knight', and its successor, 'The Mystery Knight', all three of which tell tales of the hedge knight Ser Duncan the Tall and his squire Egg.

'The Yazoo Queen' by Orson Scott Card

Another interesting alternate America story about Alvin Maker and his pupil Arthur Stuart. Like 'Grinning Man', which featured Davey Crockett, this story features appearances by multiple famous historical figures.

'The Monarch of the Glen' by Neil Gaiman

This novella functions incredibly well as an epilogue for American Gods, especially considering Shadow is already in Europe at the end of that novel, and apprehensive about returning to America, which is addressed in this story.

Bookwraiths says

Originally reviewed at Bookwraiths.

Legends II is an anthology edited by Robert Silverberg, who has gathered together an outstanding group of diverse stories for this collection. From George R.R. Martin to Diane Gabaldon to Terry Brooks, the big name authors have seemingly jumped at the chance to be featured here, and they have produced some fine tales, running the gamut from classic fantasy to urban fantasy to alternate history to science fiction. All of which means there is sure to be something in this anthology to satisfy or peak the interest of every reader.

Naturally, however, the diverse nature of any anthology means certain stories will connect better to some individuals than others. Certain authors more palatable than others; one story more compelling than another. And since I'm a reader first and foremost that goes for me as well, and so this review will focus on and rate each story individually, so as to help others determine if this collection is one they wish to obtain.

Homecoming by Robin Hobbs 5 stars

This return to the *Realms of the Elderlings* is an autobiographical story of a hapless colonist to the Cursed Shores. Her diary entries reading like a fantastical Robinson Crusoe tale, where this civilized lady must shed her modern ways, adapt to her harsh wilderness home, and deal with the strange madness which her fellow survivors begin to succumb to. All in all, it was a fantastic story, which I would recommend to everyone.

The Sword Sworn by George R.R. Martin 5 star

Like so many fantasy fans, I love *A Song of Ice and Fire*, as well as the *Game of Thrones* television series. Can't get enough of anything to do with place, including the tales of Hedge Knight Dunk and his squire Egg. And this was yet another great tale of the duo, one where Dunk's loyalty to his liege is challenged by the realization of how and why this elder knight has fallen on such hard times.

The Yanzoo Queen by Orson Scott Card 2 stars

I can't say I've ever been a huge fan of this author or his alternate history series featuring Alvin Maker. And this story of the didn't convert me, but I'm sure fans will enjoy this one, especially all the famous historical figures who make appearances.

Lord John and the Succubus by Diane Galbadon 1 star

Outlander is another series I've never really gotten hooked on. It just doesn't appeal to me. And this supernatural thriller set during the Seven Years War with a good deal of eroticism mixed in did not appeal to me either. In fact, I DNF'd it about halfway through. I'm sure fans of the series will love it though.

The Book of Change by Robert Silverberg 2 stars

A *Marjipoor* story set in both the past and present, presented through the eyes of a frivolous poet. I couldn't really get interested in it, but then again I've never enjoyed the *Marjipoor* series.

The Happiest Dead Boy in the World by Tad Williams 2 Stars

Orlando Gardiner, a virtual reality caretaker of a V.R. universe, must solve a mystery while dealing with the unique problems of his occupation. A nice sci fi/fantasy genre blender will some good moments, but it just

felt a little flat to me.

Beyond Death by Anne McCaffrey 4 stars

An emotional *Pern* story filled with love, grief, and peace after death. The quasi-religious overtones might bother some, but they aren't specific to any particular religion, merely of a spiritual nature. Be that as it may, I have to admit Anne McCaffrey really tugged on my personal heartstrings with this one, causing me to nearly tear up a few times.

The Messenger by Raymond E. Feist 5 stars

This simple story of a young messenger doing his duty no matter the cost during wartime is probably my favorite of the whole collection. Definitely, the action and drama of whether our youth will survive gripped me, but even more so, the character's simple heroism, dogged determination, and unswerving dedication was what made me love his story so much.

Threshold by Elizabeth Haydon 5 Stars

A great cataclysm is about to destroy the kingdom. The majority of the inhabitants of the land have taken to the seas to escape. Left behind is a group of dedicated individuals determined to find and aid any stragglers, hoping against hope the cataclysm never comes. This emotional tale of self-sacrifice, dignity, and the true beauty of the human spirit an amazing read, filled with deep emotions.

The Monarch of the Glen by Neil Gaiman 4 stars

American Gods continues here with Shadow traveling the world and being sucked into an ancient ritual. Gaiman delivers a mysterious, compelling narrative which will satisfy old fans and encourage others to give *American Gods* a try.

Indomitable by Terry Brooks 4 stars

A nice, light *Shannara* tale which picks up a few years after the conclusion of *The Wishsong of Shannara*. Brooks doesn't change his style any here or subvert any classic fantasy tropes, but he does deliver a self-contained journey which is filled with likable characters engaged in an entertaining, fast-paced adventure. Honestly, it is probably the best thing I've read by Brooks in many years.

If you were keeping count I thoroughly enjoyed most of these stories. I even discovered a few series that I definitely intend to try (Gaiman's *American Gods*) and a couple I intend to revisit in the near future (Feist's *Riftwar*). Certainly, there were a few which I didn't love (*Outlander*), but overall, this was a great anthology, one which I would encourage others to give a try.

Lora Rivera says

Realm of the Elderlings: "Homecoming" by Robin Hobb - 2.5 stars

A Song of Ice and Fire: "The Sworn Sword" by George R.R. Martin - 3 stars

The Tales of Alvin Maker: "The Yazoo Queen" by Orson Scott Card - 3 stars

Outlander: "Lord John and the Succubus" by Diana Gabaldon - 4 stars

Majipoor: "The Book of Changes" by Robert Silverberg - 2 stars

Otherland: "The Happiest Dead Boy in the World" by Tad Williams - 4 stars

Pern: "Beyond Between" by Anne McCaffrey - 2 stars

The Riftwar: "The Messenger" by Raymond E. Feist - 1 star

The Symphony of Ages: "Threshold" by Elizabeth Haydon - 4 stars

American Gods: "The Monarch of the Glen" by Neil Gaiman - 4 stars

Shannara: "Indomitable" by Terry Brooks - 2 stars

Lauren says

In some ways I thought this collection was even better than Legends I. There were several authors in this anthology whom I had never heard of and whose stories I enjoyed immensely: Diana Gabaldon and Elizabeth Haydon particularly, although Robin Hobb's "Homecoming" and Neil Gaiman's "The Monarch of the Glen" were also good. Orson Scott Card's Alvin Maker story was just as good as the one in Legends I, as was Raymond Feist's Riftwar story. Feist's descriptions of military campaigns are clear and interesting to read. In some ways his two Riftwar stories remind me of the battles between the Seanchan and Rand's forces in The Wheel of Time series, although without all of the kooky side plots. Once again, Robert Silverberg's story stood out as the least interesting, and I was disappointed in the uninspired offerings by Tad Williams and Terry Brooks, two writers whose books I have loved in the past. Finally, Anne McCaffrey's Pern story was moving and, I thought, much better than the one in Legends I. Overall a great book--now I have to read some of these new authors before I pick up another anthology.

C.M. Skiera says

A fantastic collection of short stories--Legends, indeed!

Christopher says

3.5 stars overall.

Fantastic story by Robin Hobb called Homecoming (4 stars).

The Sworn Sword (the reason I bought this anthology) was another fantastic Dunk and Egg tale (5 stars). "A sworn sword owes his lord the truth." We get some insight into Bloodraven that I can't help but think will be important later...

Enjoyed The Book of Changes by Robert Silverberg (3 stars).

The Pern story (Beyond Between) was okay (2.5 stars). I think I might have appreciated it more if I followed the books.

I really liked "The Messenger" by Feist (3.5 stars). It was a very good military-focused story about the struggles of a messenger who pushed on with his duties despite the dangers. Seemed very gritty and realistic to me.

Also liked "The Symphony of the Ages" by Elizabeth Haydon (3.5 stars).

"Monarch of the Glen" by Neil Gaiman and "Indomitable" by Terry Brooks were both solid stories for me (3 stars). In both case, this was my first time reading them.

Rafal Jasinski says

Bardzo nierówna antologia, w której teksty bardzo dobre, czy wręcz wybitne sąsiadują z miarką, pozbawioną polotu i ciekawej fabuły, kanoniczną do bólu fantasy. "Legends II" doskonale sprawdzają się jednak, jako "próbny" dla tych, którzy zainteresowani są pewnymi sztandarowymi dla gatunku cyklami fantasy, jakkolwiek wcześniej chcieliby się przekonać, czym dana seria się charakteryzuje, tudzież jakim stylem operują jej znani autorzy.

Po lekturze drugiego tomu "Legend", nabrałem solidnego apetytu na więcej Robin Hobb, Orsona Scotta Carda i Elizabeth Haydon, z którymi zapoznanie się - do tej pory - z różnych przyczyn odkładałem. Ponadto swoim, w zasadzie pozbawionym elementów nadprzyrodzonych, opowiadaniem, zaintrygowała mnie Diana Gabaldon, o której - wstyd przyznać - wcześniej nie słyszałem. Jej cykl "Outlander" to dla mnie murowana pozycja do przeczytania w najbliższej przyszłości.

Z pisarzy już znanych, jak zwykle nie zawodzi George R. R. Martin - opowiadanie mniej smakowite, niż pierwsze z mini-cyklu o przygodach Duncana i Jaja, ale i tak dopracowane fabularnie i na wysokim, warsztatowym poziomie. Natomiast nowela z "Innego świata" Tada Williamsa jest pozycją przeznaczoną tylko i wyłącznie dla tych, którzy mają już tetralogię za sobą, bowiem zarówno wprowadzenie do niego, jak i ono samo roi się od szczegółów zdradzających rozwinięcia kluczowych wątków fabularnych i zakończenia tego cyklu, oraz stanowi niejako jego rozszerzony epilog. Miło byłoby również powrócić do "wiata" "Amerykańskich bogów" Neila Gaimana - ten pan również nie rozczarowuje.

Bardzo sąbo wypadają opowiadania pozostałych pisarzy. Silverberg, McCaffrey, Feist i Brooks promują swoje najsłynniejsze cykle nowelkami z pola klasycznego fantasy, pełnymi nużącymi opisów, nieciekawymi fabularnie i pełnymi patosu najgorszego rodzaju. I chyba raczej skierowanymi do młodszej, dopiero co zaczynającej przygodę z fantasy czytelnika.

Antologii - tak czy inaczej - nie tylko dlatego, że znajdzie się tu w większości opowiadania bardzo dobre, ale również z uwagi na możliwość zapoznania się z tymi słabszymi może uchronić czytelnika przed zmarnowaniem czasu, tudzież pieniędzy w przyszłości.

Bill says

I've read three of the stories in this book so far, all of which were excellent. I am going to come back and

read the rest in-between other books I think. The ones I have read thus far:

The Sworn Sword - George R.R. Martin: This is a continuation of the Hedge Knight, which is set in the Song of Ice and Fire world. I love these two characters (Dunk and Egg), and both this and its predecessor are excellent stories. They read like they could be seamlessly integrated as a few chapters (each) somewhere in the Ice and Fire novels. Except that the time frame is earlier.

The Monarch of the Glen - Neil Gaiman: Related to American Gods, and take place after the action of that book. I won't mention much here for fear of giving away any of Am. Gods. Suffice it to say, if you liked the novel, this short story will also be interesting.

Homecoming - Robin Hobb: This one came as a surprise. I hadn't read anything from Robin Hobb before, and was not expecting to like this after a few pages. But it turned out to be an excellent story. It follows a woman's personal journal entries, written about her experience on a ship sailing to some destination that she and her family have been banished to. When the people on this ship end up *off* the ship and living in a strange swamp area awaiting rescue, and some rather unnatural things begin happening, the story really takes off.

Skut L says

I had a longer review written then lost it.

I only read the stories penned by Raymond E. Feist and George RR Martin. 'The Messenger' by Feist is part of his Riftwar Saga and while a well-told tale it was certainly nothing to crow about. On the other hand, 'The Sworn Sword' by Martin made me want to read the other Dunk and Egg tales, as there was enough in there to fill out a novel.

I am a fan of both these authors so I was quite satisfied with their offerings here.

I would read more but have to read reserve-listed books from my library which I'm quite eager to read.

Daphne says

I can't help but give this 5 stars. Even though I'm not interested in a couple of the series/authors, they weren't bad. The best part was the extra stories for Pern and American Gods.

A. Dawes says

5*

Loved Legends 1 and this was a superb follow-up.

Silverberg was a legend of the field himself so it's no surprise that he's managed this feat. These are all novellas and they are all very satisfying at that.

5** "Homecoming" by Hobb. v. clever look at what's reality and memory.

5* "The Sworn Sword" by George RR Martin. Song of Fire and Ice World. The tale of Dunk the Hedge Knight. Only Martin can entertain readers like this!

5*"The Yazoo Queen"by Orson Scott Card. People rave on about Enders Game (which is very good), but the world of Alvin the Maker is richer and certainly better written. Forgot his conservative beliefs and enjoy his work. This is a fantastic alternative history on the Mississippi. A few historical characters are thrown in for fun too. Superb!

5*"Lord John and the Succubus" by Diane Gabaldon. A gay protagonist who seems to timetravel in this dark fantasy set in the Seven Year War. I've always avoided Gabaldon but that's about to change. Much stronger than I ever imagined

4* "The Book of Changes" by Robert Silverberg. Set in the past and future of his Majipoor world. Strong story again

3* "The Happiest Dead Boy in the World" By Tad Willians. I personally found The Otherland Saga hard to get into and that affected my reading here. A likable story but not as strong as those surrounding it.

4.5* 'Beyond Between by Anne McCaffrey. The world of Pern by the Queen of dragon stories. What's not to love?

4.5* "The Messenger." by Raynmond E Feist A soldier's story in the Riftwar World. I thought I'd outgrown this world or it may be that this is another top story. Worth the read - Riftwar fan or not.

3.5*"Threshold" by Elizabeth Haydon. Certainly enough in this for me to read more. An introduction into the world of her series. Enjoyed it.

5* 'The Monarch of the Glen by Neil Gaiman. A man is involved unwittingly in an age old battle between man and beast. The best story I've read by Gaiman and this is much better than American Gods (which is still strong). This novella has stayed with me. Remarkable build up and the atmosphere throughout compels. Marvellous!

4.5* "Indomitable," by Terry Brooks. Thought I was over the derivative world of Brooks too but this brought me back. You can't deny that Brooks is a first class story teller. I'll remember not to forget his work so easily next time around.

Caleris says

Homecoming - Robin Hobb (4-5 stars)

Very intriguing, didn't like characters at first but got totally sucked into the story, with lots of mystery and character development. Note to self: Robin Hobb is a WOMAN.

The Sworn Sword - George R.R. Martin (the guy from Song of Ice and Fire/Game of Thrones) (1 star)

Extremely boring. Tried to start reading it several times and eventually just gave up, never finished it. Knights and valor are just not for me.

The Yazoo Queen - Orson Scott Card (the guy from Ender's Game) (2 stars)

The magic system is interesting, but the story ends when I feel it's just beginning...not much happens. Also, the dialects are annoying and the historical setting/slave trade thing does not appeal to me. Perhaps try stuff from same writer but different universe.

Lord John and the Succubus - Diana Gabaldon (3 stars)

More of a whodunnit than a fantasy story, no fantastical aspects whatsoever. The story was interesting enough for me to read to the end (solve the mystery), but again the historical setting does not appeal to me.

The Book of Changes - Robert Silverberg (2 stars)

The writing style is so over the top, with way too many adjectives and fancy words. The writer also keeps repeating himself, in true Goodkind style, to get a point across. I liked the strange world he describes, but its history is much too war- and especially male-driven to my taste. The story itself is nothing very interesting.

The Happiest Dead Boy in the World - Tad Williams (4-5 stars)

Fun concept, interesting story, pleasant writing style. The only thing I can complain about is that this story is sort of an epilogue, and it seems as though a lot of the stuff that happens in the Otherland books is mentioned. So not recommended as a first introduction to the series, because of the massive spoilers.

Beyond Between - Anne McCaffrey (3 stars)

A lot more supernatural than the usual sci-fi, with ghosts and all. Brings some closure to Moreta's story, but still sad.

The Messenger - Raymond E. Feist (4 stars)

I don't care much about war stories, but this one is very well written and kept me on the edge of my seat the whole time. Now I remember why I used to like the Riftwar chronicles so much.

Threshold - Elizabeth Haydon (2 stars)

Came across as pretentious to me, mostly because of the writing style. I was rather frustrated with the characters because they all seemed to be doing a stupid thing in the name of honor and duty and so on. Would have given it 1 star if not for the plot twist at the end, at least that was mildly interesting.

The Monarch of the Glen - Neil Gaiman (4 stars)

Intriguing story, I wanted to keep reading to find out what was going on. Although in the end, I'm not sure I understood it all. Interesting mythos though, maybe one day I'll read American Gods (if I can overcome my instinctive aversion at the title :P).

Indomitable - Terry Brooks (2 stars)

It came off sort of pompous to me, I guess it was the writing style. The story was nothing special, and the 'man doing his duty' thing is really getting old.

Dan says

I originally bought Legends II because it contained a short story set in the Shannara world by Terry Brooks who has long been one of my favorite authors. In the intervening time that it's taken me to get around to reading it, I discovered and enjoyed The Tales of Alvin Maker series by Orson Scott Card and was pleased to see a short story by him from that world in the book. I'm only vaguely familiar with a couple of the other authors who contributed, but upon reading their contributions, I'm glad I discovered most of them through his anthology. What follows is a review of each short story.

Homecoming by Robin Hobb is a tale of suffering, loss, betrayal, hatred, greed, ingenuity, resourcefulness, and perseverance told through the journal of an outcast noble woman. It is also a tribute to the goodness, love, forgiveness, compassion, and hope that is at the heart of human existence. A fascinating tale which makes me interested in Ms. Hobb's other work.

The Sworn Sword by George R. R. Martin recounts an adventure of a knight errant and his squire who is more than he seems. I think this short story would make an excellent movie. Hardship, danger, honor, deceit, love, fighting, and comedy are all present in balance. I have A Game of Thrones and am excited to begin the

series after being introduced to the world through such an energizing tale.

The Yazoo Queen by Orson Scott Card fills in the details as a sort of prologue to The Crystal City. The most important events are alluded to in the full novel, but it's by no means necessary to read the short story in order to understand their consequences. It's just a nice bonus to loyal fans of the series who've been waiting decades for Mr. Card to finally finish it. Mr. Card creates some very interesting characters, but it seems like the most interesting characters are not given the "screen time" I think they deserve.

Lord John and the Succubus by Diana Gabaldon I did not finish because of the rampant and explicit homoeroticism throughout the narrative. There could have been a good story there, well written with drama and danger, but it was spoiled by being blatantly pornographic.

The Book of Changes by Robert Silverberg is a drama taking place mostly through the thoughts of a frivolous poet who finds himself in a strange position, an unwilling "guest" and host to the greatest epic poem the world of Majipoor has ever seen. I'm not familiar with Majipoor other than through this story, but I wonder where the modern technology went and I find it very hard to believe that advanced humans capable of interstellar travel haven't yet completely colonized a new world in 14,000 years, even if it is 10 times the diameter of Earth.

The Happiest Dead Boy in the World by Tad Williams is a story that integrates fantasy and science fiction in a believable and compelling way. More so than any of the other stories in Legends II, I'm interested in reading the series from which this story derives. Orlando Gardiner, semi-virtual caretaker of a virtual universe finds himself struggling with both the unique problems of his occupation, and those derived from his past as a corporeal human when a new mystery suddenly crops up which he must tackle.

Beyond Between by Anne McCaffrey tells about loss, grief, reunion, love, and peace found after death. I've never read anything from Ms. McCaffrey's Pern before, probably because the cover art never attracted me, even though my Dad had recommended them to me years ago. This, my first introduction convinces me that it would be well worth my while to explore a little bit more into Pern.

The Messenger by Raymond E. Feist should be subtitled "Nothing to speak of" because that seems to be the chorus of the short novel. The story is one of heroism, dedication, honor, duty, and true grit. It is my favorite in the whole book. The action and drama of this story gripped me stronger than any story has in some time. The suspense strung me out and made me hang on until the end of the amazing ride.

Threshold by Elizabeth Haydon is the story of one sure cataclysm and one near cataclysm. There is something entrancing about life during and after destruction and devastation. The story is a true human drama, of suffering and loss, of love and the human will to live and survive, of self-sacrifice so others can do what must be done and have a chance to live and enjoy life. Ms. Haydon masterfully encapsulates all this in Threshold.

The Monarch of the Glen by Neil Gaiman is about a reluctant savior-figure in a world where all the old myths and legends are real and still around us. I have respect for Mr. Gaiman. He had several opportunities to portray graphic sex in this story, but he steered it away from that. Still there were a couple of uncomfortable spots he could have avoided all together. The Monarch of the Glen is a sort of re-telling of Beowulf where the monsters are humanized and the humans are monsterized.

Indomitable by Terry Brooks is the reason I picked up this book at all. I've since lost measure of my love for the world of Shannara and was a little jaded when I began reading Indomitable, but taking it by itself, the novella is very good. Indomitable is a sort of extended epilogue of The Wishsong of Shannara. The characters are true to their natures established in the full novel, but are older and a little more grown up. Jair is still the stereotypical Shannara hero, a very relatable sort, but they all seem to be pretty much the same. It's

surprising to me that Mr. Brooks pulled off a short story so well. He tends to be quite wordy and drawn out in his novels, but there didn't seem to be a lot of excess material and he told the story quickly and well.

Germancho says

(Dunk & Egg #2 Review) Man, I really needed this after A dance with dragons! It's beautiful in its simplicity, yet as well written as the early ASOIAF books. As a bonus, it also has a lot of back-story within about a certain raveny character who becomes pretty interesting in ADWD.

Milo? Dumbraci says

Realm of the Elderlings: Homecoming / Robin Hobb - 2/5. I find Robb an Ok writer (rather lame, but not really bad).

A Song of Ice and Fire: The Sworn Sword / George R.R. Martin 5+/5. Amazing. I read Martin in my language and thought he cannot be surpassed, but I was wrong: he can, by himself - he is much better in English. And this is a great story.

The Tales of Alvin Maker: The Yazoo Queen / Orson Scott Card. 3/5. I love the Alvin universe and its humour, but this story was much weaker (and shorter) then the one in Legends 1.

Outlander: Lord John and the Succubus / Diana Gabaldon. 5/5. I expected to give this 1/5, because Gabaldon is famous for her time-travel threesome and I have a very strong opinion about romantic fantasy, but I was amazed: it was a great story, a paranormal whodunnit with only a hint of (gay) romance, and the main character is a British (male) officer.

Majipoor: The Book of Changes / Robert Silverberg. 2/5. The Majipoor universe seems a captivating one, but if the story in legends 1 was rather weak, this is even worse - just an endless text about a poet in search of his inspiration.

Otherland: The Happiest Dead Boy in the World / Tad Williams. 2/5. I find Tad Williams an Ok writer (not good, not bad), but this was just too YA and too unoriginal.

Pern: Beyond Between / Anne McCaffrey. 0/5. No, no, no.

The Riftwar: The Messenger / Raymond E. Feist. 5/5. I love the Riftwar universe and the way mr. Feist understands correctly both the military psychology and the grim of war (also tactics and strategy). Also, I love the antagonists (the Tsurani).

The Symphony of Ages: Threshold / Elizabeth Haydon. 1/5. Overburden with everything. Definitely not to my taste.

American gods: The Monarch of the Glen / Neil Gaiman. 3/5. I still think that the novel (American Gods) is one the best books I have ever read (and I used it to convert mainstreamers to fantasy), but, just like "Anansi Boys", this story was a disappointment. I did love the end, but the path to that was way too long, slow and boring. If I did not know it was Gaiman, I would have given it up several times.

Shannara: Indomitable / Terry Brooks. 3/5. Seems well-written, but it obviously expects the reader to be familiar with the previous works (the trilogy). I was not and gave it up after a while - I felt lost in (too) unknown territory.

Overall, a weaker book than the first Legends.

Jeremy Preacher says

Sadly, Legends II lacks the consistency of its predecessor. Some of the stories are excellent - the Otherland

story, the Gaiman - and some of them seem forced - in particular the Pern story and the Shannara, which, even though I have not read the novel its related to, feels like a tacked-on retread of an otherwise completed work. Overall it's worthwhile, and it's a nice range of worlds and authors, but it feels too much like a runners-up volume.
