



## Outsiders: 22 All-New Stories From the Edge

*Nancy Holder (Editor), Nancy Kilpatrick, Elizabeth Engstrom (Contributor), Jack Ketchum (Contributor), Brian Hodge (Contributor), David J. Schow (Contributor), Bentley Little (Contributor), Joe R. Lansdale (Contributor), more... Melanie Tem (Contributor), Katherine Ramsland (Contributor), Yvonne Navarro (Contributor), Thomas S. Roche (Contributor), Michael Marano (Contributor), John Shirley (Contributor), Caitlín R. Kiernan (Contributor), Brett Alexander Savory (Contributor), Elizabeth Massie (Contributor), Léa Silhol (Contributor), Tanith Lee (Contributor), Neil Gaiman (Contributor), Steve Rasnic Tem (Contributor), Freda Warrington (Contributor), Kathe Koja (Contributor), Poppy Z. Brite (Contributor) ...less*

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In this knockout anthology, today's most important writers of speculative fiction cruise the abnormal elements of society and find a new wave of underground disorder, poignant horror, dirty kisses, and necessary anarchy.

Including never-before published stories by:

Neil Gaiman, Steve Rasnic Tem, Kathe Koja, David J. Schow, Bentley Little, Poppy Z. Brite, Joe R. Lansdale, Jack Ketchum, Melanie Tem, Tanith Lee, Caitlin R. Kiernan, Lea Silhol, Freda Warrington, Elizabeth Massie, Brett Alexander Savory, Katherine Ramsland, Yvonne Navarro, Thomas S. Roche, Michael Marano, John Shirley, Brian Hodge, and Elizabeth Engstrom

...all at their most brilliant and most outrageous.

Here are dangerous games between lovers, howls from the dark, voyeurs and their victims, disturbed wishes and bitter dreams. Unflinching, uncommon, and underground, these tales vibrate with new life.

### Outsiders: 22 All-New Stories From the Edge Details

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## From Reader Review Outsiders: 22 All-New Stories From the Edge for online ebook

### Annie Watkins says

I can say that I enjoyed maybe two stories in this entire book. The rest ranged from weird to just disgusting. "Pop Star in the Ugly Bar" by Bentley Little was just gross, a rape fantasy with no hint of a plot and I'm really surprised they added it. The story about the cigarette activists was just dumb. And yes there have been studies about the dangers of second-hand smoke.

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### Conal Cochran says

Meh. I hoped that this collection would shake me up a bit, but really, nothing in it works all that well. Most of the stories are competent, but there are a few high and low points:

Jack Ketchum's bit about smokers has a killer premise, but feels too tame, like an Alfred Hitchcock's Mystery Magazine story. Brite's story isn't a story, but a chapter from a novel. It doesn't really fit with the rest of the collection, and while it's certainly well-written, isn't my cup of tea. Which is too bad, because Brite started off writing the sort of provocative stuff that this anthology needed. Little's story is repellent, not for its content (which is just the literary version of a "Kill Britney Spears" flashgame from 2001), but the cheap glibness of its attitude. Schow has by far my favorite story of the piece, a nice bit of Twilight Zone-yness, but it doesn't really feel related to the book's theme. The best intersection of theme and writing is Koja's "Ruby Tuesday," which surprised me at how good it was.

On the whole, there are a few good stories to be mined from here, but there are other and better anthologies around.

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### A. E. S. says

The Empty Chambers by Neil Gaiman: The first piece in this collection is a poem, and it is a must. One of the five reasons I bought this book. A ghost story. 4/5

The Company You Keep by Steve Resnic Tem: This is a kind of a predictable episode of someone's insanity and gradual suicide. You can almost hear the violins as he remarks on his lack of a social life. 2/5

Under the Needle by Lea Silhol: This kind of story has been done before, but the writing is what gives it its staying power. Partner breaks up with you? Hit the demonic intervention hotline! 3/5

Expanding Your Capabilities Using Frame/Shift(TM) Mode by David J. Schow: An original plot, with a twist. What if with the touch of a button and the adjustment of a few settings, a person could see an actor on TV naked? What if you push the button again, and the actor's skin disappears? How far would you go? 3/5

Cat and the Cold Prince by Freda Warrington: This plot has been done before, but again, the writing stands out with a nice wrap-up ending. Lovers of science fiction and furies will enjoy this little story, although I'm really not into that community. 3/5

Faces in Revolving Souls by Caitlin R. Kiernan: The dark side of the science fiction and furies theory we just delved into last time. Great plot twist at the end that makes the reader think twice about the main character. 3/5

Lighten Up by Jack Ketchum: The second reason I bought this collection. Ketchum's writing is always as tight as clockwork, although this is far from my favorite. The point of this story is nicotine addiction: it will make you happy if you do smoke, and completely unnerved if you don't. 3/5

Pit Boy by Elizabeth Massie: Oh, my God. This is by far the stupidest, cruelest story in this collection. If it had some sense of style I might have understood the violence, but it only succeeds in finishing up completely disgusting. The birth flashback was the worst: I WAS BORRRRRRRRN ON THE BACKSIIIIIDE OF A SHITHEAP IN TEXAAAAAAS! 1/5

The Country of the Blind by Melanie Tem: Absolutely disgusting in some scenes, I don't understand why everyone has to have their eyes gouged out. If there were a few pages of strong reasoning and argument, then I would get the message. The scene with the dog really pisses me off. 1/5

Ruby Tuesday by Kathe Koja: Finally a story I can relate to, but why is this here? This is a YA story about a girl dealing with her mother dying of cancer. Unable to cope with reality, she creates a fantasy world of her own movie. 4/5

Running Beneath the Skin by Brett Alexander Savory: A well-thought out tragedy of science fiction. Two men with superhero-like powers believe they will live forever, despite social ostracizing. But is there a true death...? 4/5

Grim Peeper by Katherine Ramsland: Third reason I bought this collection. A story of whatever turns you on better be legal. The first gets off on voyeurism of corpses, the other gets off on watching the corpse-oglers unobserved, her sexual undercurrent to infiltrate and blow the lid off their little party. 4/5

Craving by Yvonne Navarro: Here we go again with turning people on. This time a couple gets off on witnessing horrific accidents and tragedies, but when that's not a strong enough thrill, they start creating them. 4/5

Violent Angel by Thomas S. Roche: An assassination attempt goes wrong. Although this has been done before, this keeps the reader interested and has a nice plot twist. Disgusting at times. 3/5

...And the Damage Done by Michael Marano: Fourth reason I bought this collection. A tragedy shaped by the habits we have and the choices we make, in the wake of the death of an artist. Very poetic and well-written, though vague in some parts and not my favorite. 3/5

Pop Star in the Ugly Bar by Bentley Little: Death by snu-snu, and just basically disgusting. 1/5

Miss Singularity by John Shirley: Oh, my God. It was so hard to get through the first half of this story. I cannot STAND depressed teenage bullshit. That aside, the ending scene was interesting. Thank God an LSD trip come to life basically saved the day. 1/5

The Working Slob's Prayer by Poppy Z. Brite: Fifth and final reason I decided to buy this collection. Why is this story here? Basically this is about people in the LGBT community, working to fulfill their dream of running a restaurant. All that really does happen is a false alarm of a food critics alert. 4/5 Very well written.

If I Should Wake Before I Die by Brian Hodge: Theories on whether or not fetuses have dream-memory or experience REM sleep are examined in this story. In a world where nearly all women are miscarrying, one

woman writes a letter to her soon-to-be-born. 4/5

Honing Sebastian by Elizabeth Engstrom: Mind-control and being a cog in the machine of a huge complex system are examined. What if the God you worship behind the curtain is nothing but a sham who's using you? Do you resist or comply? 4/5

The Shadows, Kith and Kin by Joe R. Lansdale: The Charles Whitman murders are reexamined and adapted, with a supernatural twist. I didn't see anything really special about this that made it stand out. 2/5

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### **Åsa says**

Awesome collection of short stories buy a bunch of really good authors about the weird people on the side of the rest of the world. Neil Gaiman's contribution "The Empty chambers" stayed with me for days. Creepy, charming and weird.

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### **erin says**

This book was only ok. I bought it because I like Neil Gaiman. Too bad his contribution was a short poem. The rest was a mix of boring, beyond gross, or wtf is going on. Blah.

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### **Heather Ingemar says**

I bought this book thinking I'd read some fun, gothic YA fiction (found it in the Teen spot in Hastings), and walked away feeling ill. This is NOT a teen/YA book. This is the creepy-beyond-creepy adult horror.

I will say this though: the writers included definitely know their craft, and for that, it was an educational read.

But don't look here unless you want to be sleeping with all the lights on for a week!

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### **Erin says**

Didn't read the whole book. Bought this for the Tanith Lee story, the Caitlin R. Kiernan and the Neil Gaimen.

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### **Michelle says**

I really liked this book as a whole. There were some tremendously good stories in it. There was one that just completely grossed me out on multiple levels, and some that I found boring. The same as you find in any short story collection. But it was worth the read!

### **Kathryn says**

I was in a very dark mood, so I picked a very dark book. On reflection, most of the stories weren't very good. Well, a few of them were okay. Tanith Lee's story was artfully decadent, and 'Expanding Your Capabilities Using Frame/Shift Mode' by David J. Schow was unsettling. The rest swing from subtly creepy to all-out gory and violent but like a lot of "theme" collections they have a hard time getting past simple wish-fulfillment. However, the book was exactly what I needed at the time, so I enjoyed it.

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### **Kayleen says**

Read: The empty chambers, Neil Gaiman.

A cool poem, this one actually really feels like Gaiman.

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### **Paulina says**

Some of the stuff in this book is sick, in a really good way. Perfect for those who like a bit of violence ;)

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### **Elysha Fisher says**

Very dark and twisted. Get ready to be approached with topics that really make you think about the darker side of human nature and our potential.

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### **Evans Light says**

Will add reviews of each story as I move through it, picking it up from time to time, not necessarily in order.

POP STAR IN THE UGLY BAR, by Bentley Little: Short and ferociously nasty, this story has no plot, instead heads straight to depravity. One of the sicker things I've read in a while. Can't recommend for the squeamish or offendable. I'm staying away from The Ugly Bar!

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### **Kimmyh says**

As with most Anthologies, this was a mixed bag of Good, Bad and 'Eh' stories. Thankfully, there were more good than bad and only a few I'd read before in other Anthologies.

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## **Midu Hadi says**

### **Inside the “Outsiders”’—?An Anthology with stories by Neil Gaiman, Tanith Lee, Joe Landsale, & Poppy Brite**

Below, I mention how I liked each story and include a favorite quote:

#### **The Empty Chambers by Neil Gaiman**

A poem. Very creepy but I’d rather have read a Gaiman story.

#### **The Company You Keep by Steve Resnic Tem**

Walking among us are the members of a secret company. I don’t know what I took away from this story if anything.

#### **Scarabesque: The Girl Who Broke Dracula by Tanith Lee**

This was actually an excerpt from one of Tanith Lee’s novels. It was also the first time I read anything by her. I liked the imagery that her words created. For instance:

#### **Under the Needle by Lea Silhol**

You’d appreciate this story more if you focused on how it was written rather than the plot. I did and I ended up liking it!

#### **Expanding Your Capabilities Using Frame/Shift(TM) Mode by David J. Schow**

A literally visceral story about a man who discovers his remote can do much more than change channels!

#### **Cat and the Cold Prince by Freda Warrington**

A story that brings to mind dictatorships and restrictive regimes, such as the Prohibition in the Cromwell era. Oh, and a girl falls in love with a tiger!

#### **Faces in Revolving Souls by Caitlin R. Kiernan**

This one was about a splinter group of people who left their human status behind by choice fighting for their rights.

#### **Lighten Up by Jack Ketchum**

Smoking is banned. Smokers decided to retaliate.

**Pit Boy by Elizabeth Massie**

The beginning of the story is set up to deceive the reader. The end is one of the saddest endings I have ever read!

**The Country of the Blind by Melanie Tem**

A blind girl will accept you into her family but she needs a sacrifice first.

**Ruby Tuesday by Kathe Koja**

A hidden cult in the midst of the society and a boy with a dying mother looking for a place to fit in.

**Running Beneath the Skin by Brett Alexander Savory**

Can you even said to be alive, if your insides have been replaced with metal? No, this isn't about Wolverine!

**Grim Peeper by Katherine Ramsland**

There's necrophilia and there are grim peepers. Read this story, if you love being grossed out.

**Craving by Yvonne Navarro**

This story is based on a certain type of "outsiders" who like to watch accidents.

**Violent Angel by Thomas S. Roche**

A planned hit where the hitman isn't on the complete plan.

**...And the Damage Done by Michael Marano**

Beautiful imagery is one of the characteristics of this story. The other is heartbreak!

**Pop Star in the Ugly Bar by Bentley Little**

Simply gross but a fitting addition to this collection. A wannabe pop star ends up in a gore-hardcore bar. She doesn't make it out.

**Miss Singularity by John Shirley**

A teenager's depression comes out to play!

**The Working Slob's Prayer by Poppy Z. Brite**

The going ons in a restaurant with some very interesting characters thrown in!

**If I Should Wake Before I Die by Brian Hodge**

Expectant mothers miscarry all around the world. No one knows why until we reach the end of the

story...\*shudder\*

### **Honing Sebastian by Elizabeth Engstrom**

A sad story about the dreams of those below being crushed by the powers that be. This line from the story says it all:

Another favorite quote:

### **The Shadows, Kith and Kin by Joe R. Landsale**

A broken man tired of being put down by the whole world makes friends...with shadows...who talk to him...

### ***My Favourites***

Lighten Up by Jack Ketchum

Pit Boy by Elizabeth Massie

Miss Singularity by John Shirley

The Working Slob's Prayer by Poppy Z. Brite

*Have you read this anthology? Which ones are your favorites?*

Image

### **Also reviewed at:**

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