



## A Dreamer's Tales

*Lord Dunsany*

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## A Dreamer's Tales Lord Dunsany

A Dreamer's Tales: Large print by Lord Dunsany (Edward J. M. D. Plunkett) "If thou wilt go up Poltarnees and come back, as none have come, and report to us what lure or magic is in the Sea, we will pardon thy blasphemy, and thou shalt have the Princess to wife and sit among the Council of Kings." We are delighted to publish this classic book as part of our extensive Classic Library collection. Many of the books in our collection have been out of print for decades, and therefore have not been accessible to the general public. The aim of our publishing program is to facilitate rapid access to this vast reservoir of literature, and our view is that this is a significant literary work, which deserves to be brought back into print after many decades. The contents of the vast majority of titles in the Classic Library have been scanned from the original works. To ensure a high quality product, each title has been meticulously hand curated by our staff. Our philosophy has been guided by a desire to provide the reader with a book that is as close as possible to ownership of the original work. We hope that you will enjoy this wonderful classic work, and that for you it becomes an enriching experience.

## A Dreamer's Tales Details

Date : Published November 3rd 2006 by Hard Press (first published April 13th 1910)

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Author : Lord Dunsany

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## From Reader Review A Dreamer's Tales for online ebook

### Florin Pitea says

Read it. Liked it a lot. Can hardly wait to go through the next volume in the omnibus edition.

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### Nick says

Not as good as Lovecraft's dream-stories in my opinion, but nevertheless LOTS of really awesome ideas and concepts. This book exudes creativity.

If you are tired of modern fantasy, aka Tolkien derivatives, read this. It is in line with the arabian tales/poe/lovecraft type of fantasy which we see very little of today.

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### Isidore says

My rating reflects my opinion of the Wildside Press edition, not of Dunsany's wonderful tales!

Wildside Press does much good by resurrecting rare old books, but this edition of Dunsany's classic has some of the worst typos I have ever seen. For example:

Page 34: Instead of "Never since then have I seen my city alive," Wildside has: "Now since then have I seen my city alive," disastrously reversing the meaning of the sentence, at the very climax of "The Madness of Andelsprutz".

Page 111: Instead of "But the folk of the Weald arose and went back well-fed to their byres," Wildside has: "But the talk of the Weald arose and went back well-fed to byres" (two errors in one line!).

Page 113: A line has dropped out! Instead of ". . . and beat the roses against cottagers' panes, and whispered news of the befriending night," Wildside has: ". . . and beat the roses of the befriending night"--ruining one of Dunsany's more evocative passages.

And most ridiculous of all, at the climax of "Blagdaross", instead of "Saladin is in this desert with all his paynims", we get "Saladin is in this desert with all his pyjamas"!

And so on. These errors might be a minor annoyance encountered in, say, "War and Peace", but Dunsany's tales are very short, very carefully crafted, every word selected with care and precision. They are more nearly poetry than prose. Errors of this kind GLARE at the reader.

Wildside boasts that this edition is "authorized" by the Dunsany estate, but Dunsany would have been infuriated by it. Wildside needs to issue a corrected version, and maybe an apology.

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### Sanja\_Sanjalica says

Knjiga koju sam otvorila u krivo vrijeme, nije me povukla na ?itanje..možda jednom....

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## Omaira says

### 3.9

"Soñé que había hecho algo horrible, tan horrible, que se me negó sepultura en tierra y en mar, y ni siquiera había infierno para mí"

Poltramees 5/5  
Blagdaross 3/5  
Día de elecciones 3/5  
La locura de Andelsprutz 4/5  
En donde suben y bajan las mareas 5/5  
Bethmoora 4/5  
Días de ocio en el país del Yann 4/5  
La espada y el idolo 4(5  
El hombre del hachís 3/5  
En Zaccarath 3/5  
La ciudad ociosa 4/5  
El campo 5/5  
El pobre Bill 3/5  
Carcasona 5/5  
Los mendigos 3/5  
El cuerpo infeliz 5/5

En mi afán de probar a Lord Dunsany en papel, hallé esta maravillosa antología y no pude resistirme a leerla. Ya había probado antes al autor, pero fue una experiencia tan nefasta que prefiero hacer borrón y cuenta nueva antes que recordarla.

*Poltramees* me ha parecido un relato precioso. Lord Dunsany sabe como transportar al lector a siglos que parecen ya olvidados por la humanidad y hacerte sentir, ciertamente, especial. Exploradores ,los cuales van en busca del mar, desaparecen y no retornan más, por este hecho todo el mundo en la ciudad odia el mar.

*De donde suben y bajan las mareas* es seguramente de los relatos de este señor que más se acercan al terror. Como la primera vez que lo leí, me ha parecido maravilloso. En él, un hombre está maldito y su maldición consiste en que aunque esté muerto, jamás podrá descansar. Es decir, los eones pasan por delante de él y él lo único que puede hacer es observar como Londres y otras ciudades caen en decadencia y finalmente desaparecen.

*"Y tanto hastío sentí al mirar aquellas cosas abandonadas, que quise llorar, mas no pude porque estaba muerto"*

*El campo* me ha parecido una obra maestra del autor. El final es totalmente rompedor y me ha recordado, en

cierta manera, a ese in crescendo que utiliza siempre Lovecraft en sus relatos para dejar al lector anonadado. En el relato el protagonista comienza a sentirse incomodo cuando visita un trozo de tierra (el campo) y llama a su amigo poeta para que le explique el por qué.

En *Carcasona* no hace falta ni presentaciones. Me ha recordado totalmente al ciclo onírico de Lovecraft, sobre todo a *Celephais* y *The White Ship*, es decir, la perfección. En el relato una serie de personas buscan la ciudad de *Carcasona*.

***"Los años van pasando por nosotros como grandes pájaros ahuyentados de alguna antigua ciénaga gris por la fatalidad, el Destino y los designios de Dios. Y puede muy bien ser que contra éstos no haya guerrero que sirva, y que el Hado nos haya vencido, y que nuestro afán haya fracasado"***

Los demás relatos me han parecido buenos y entretenidos. Destacar *Bethmoora*, *Días de ocio en el país del Yann*, *El cuerpo infeliz*, *La locura de Andelsprutz* y *Blagdaross* como obras que me han encantado de principio a fin pero no me he sentido capaz de darles el cinco redondo.

Otros relatos como *El hombre del hachís*, *En Zaccarath*, *Los mendigos* o *El pobre Bill* son entretenidos pero bastante simplones y sin chicha.

Y es que Lord Dunsany no es un autor que se pueda leer rápido y sin saborear su prosa. Tiene una prosa única y la domina como solo él sabe hacerlo y en ciertos momentos me ha recordado a Tolkien (que por cierto, recibió influencias de Lord Dunsany... yo no digo nada [debéis leerlo]). Y si habéis leído a Tolkien habréis comprobado que, precisamente eso con Tolkien, no se hace.

Esta segunda catada ha sido todo un éxito y espero leer pronto *La hija del Rey del País de los Elfos* (que espero que sea una novela más amena que algunos relatos que he leído en esta antología).

???????? ??????

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## **Amy Prosser says**

This is an interesting collection of short stories famed for inspiring famous writers such as Tolkien, Lovecraft, and Ursula Le Guin. The stories are fantasy, but they are sometimes set in the real world, like London. I wasn't a huge fan of the style of writing. The stories aren't really about the action (there is very little actually happening in the stories). Instead, the focus seems to be on the mood created by the author. Sometimes I thought it worked quite well, while some stories just ended up being thoroughly dull. My favorites from the collection were: "Where the Tides Ebb and Flow" (horror story), "The Sword and the Idol" (religious story), "The Field," and "The Day of the Poll" (political story). Since he is a key figure in the development of fantasy writing, I think it's worth reading at least one of his stories.

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## **Kara says**

An odd little book, but an absolute must read for anyone who enjoys fables or myths or Victorian authors.

Fans of Algernon Blackwood, W.B. Yeats, or Ella Young will adore Lord Dunsany's magnificent prose and vivid imagination.

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## **Karl says**

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The stories are all rather short, but damn well written. Highly enjoyable stuff.

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## **Foe says**

Más que un libro, es un aleph: sus ciento cuarenta páginas contienen toda la fantasía del siglo XX. De una forma u otra, Dunsany es precursor de algunos de los nombres más destacados de la literatura fantástica posterior.

Es posible trazar fácilmente influencias narrativas, como sobre la etapa onírica de Lovecraft, las ciudades invisibles de Calvino, o los dioses de Gaiman. Hay imágenes que reaparecen con otra forma en obras futuras: Bar-Wul-Yann me recordó a las Argonath, y la Ciudad Que No Puede Ser Tomada En Guerra al Nido de

Águilas. El lenguaje y el tono recuerdan a Borges y Gorodischer pero, sobre todo, sientan la base para todos los hacedores de mundos que dominarán la literatura fantástica en la segunda mitad del siglo XX. Todos ellos están en deuda con las técnicas y el enfoque de Dunsany: toda época pasada fue mejor, conflicto entre grandeza y decadencia, ambientación preindustrial.

Y con todo lo que inspira, es poco lo que alcanza en sí misma esta obra. Sirva una anécdota personal para explicar mi sensación: al retomar la lectura al día siguiente de haberla abandonado, abrí el libro por donde pensaba que iba y al empezar a leer el relato me di cuenta de que lo había leído y salté al siguiente. Pero al pasar las páginas y llegar al final noté que era distinto al que recordaba, y que en realidad no había leído ese relato. Ni el anterior. Mismo tema, mismo tono, misma estructura, misma falta de personajes, misma historia con otro nombre.

140 páginas, 16 relatos, ¿4? ¿5? personajes, ¿3? temas. Uno detrás de otro, tanta repetición aburre, cansa, agota. Una lástima, teniendo en cuenta que entre ellos está *Carcasona*, uno de mis relatos favoritos de siempre. Curiosamente, el relato con el que comparte temática (el destino), *En Zaccarath*, ha sido el que más me ha gustado de los que no conocía.

Finalmente, la edición de Alianza se mantiene fiel al nivel al que nos tiene acostumbrados la editorial. En *El cuerpo infeliz*, traducen "sensible" como "sensible" en vez de "sensato", y en *El hombre del hachís* malinterpreta "of an evening" por "todas las noches" en lugar de "muchas noches", que se contradice en la página siguiente cuando menciona que no lo hacía dos noches seguidas.

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## Terry says

2.5 – 3 stars

So, this took me forever to read. As I've said elsewhere I appreciate Dunsany's importance to the field of fantasy literature, and he certainly has a poetic way with words, but so many of his stories seem like little more than sketches, or rapidly painted pictures done in very broad strokes, that I usually don't find myself left with too much to really hold onto either in the realm of plot or character. One could easily argue that's not Dunsany's point and I would happily concede that...it just means I sometimes find it a bit laborious to work through a whole collection of his work.

The 'theme' of this collection, as the title indicates, is the realm of dream and its near-neighbour romance (or fantasy) and how they impact our lives. I found myself constantly thinking of Neil Gaiman as I read these stories and feeling "oh yeah, I could see that as a one-issue story in 'The Sandman'" and I wonder how big of an influence Dunsany was on his work...very great I would assume. All in all there's a lot of melancholy in these tales as Dunsany concentrates on not only the importance of dream/fantasy to our lives, but also its ephemerality. He also seems almost morbidly pre-occupied with looking back at the glory days, or trying to capture that moment of no return when the golden age of the past teeters into the banality of the present.

"Poltarnees, Beholder of Ocean": A very lyrical tale, like all of Dunsany's works, and one that, in its themes at least, heavily reminded me of Tolkien...something I definitely didn't expect to find given the vast differences between them and their work. It is ultimately a tale of longing and mystery and the need for there to always be a horizon beyond the sunset. In it Dunsany sets up a tiny secondary world made up of "the lands whose sentinels upon their borders do not behold the sea". The great mystery that the sea comes to represent for these people holds such an iconic place that it becomes a god they worship whose powers and expanse are bywords, but whose ways and even appearance are mysterious and utterly unknown to them. For the most part these small, happy kingdoms are content to live their lives of peace and comfort and in their kindly

inwardness they reminded me much of Tolkien's Shire for they are truly an insulated and protected realm that has

...no enemy but age, for thirst and fever lie sunning themselves out in the mid-desert, and never prowl into the Inner Lands. And the ghouls and ghosts, whose highway is the night, are kept in the south by the boundary of magic...and all men are known to one another therein, and bless one another by name as they meet in the streets.

Indeed the only apparent discontent to be found is that which sometimes surfaces in the hearts and minds of certain young men who hunger for more than their circumscribed world can give them and they begin to heed the longing for the unknown sea. The sea-longing is a theme often used by Tolkien, esp. in *The Silmarillion* where it is a malady that commonly inflicts the Elves and leads them to long for the Undying Lands far beyond the shores of Middle Earth. Likewise in Dunsany's tales those youths that heed the sea's siren song and pass over the sentinel mountains of the Inner Lands are never heard from again. And thus the sea maintains its mystery and its power. The three kings of the Inner Lands decide that they must learn this mystery of the sea and devise a plan: one of them has the fairest daughter ever to have been born to mortals and this, surely, will prove to be a lure that even the mighty sea's call cannot break. They will promise the hand of this princess to the man who will go beyond the mountains to the sea and return to them with its mystery, for surely no one could abandon so beautiful a wife. It remains to be seen whose call is more powerful and to what promise the hero will be faithful.

"Blagdaross": A fanciful fable in which the cast-off items in a village rubbish heap each relate their history and powers ultimately ending with their inevitable defeats. Those things which served only a practical purpose prove to be the most ephemeral, regardless of their undisputed utility, and the seemingly most useless of them becomes imbued with new purpose through the power of imagination.

"The Madness of Andelsprutz": As noted above many of Dunsany's tales have features that heavily remind me of Neil Gaiman...or I suppose I should more correctly say that Gaiman is obviously heavily inspired by Dunsany...and this is one tale that I could easily see having been written by the latter author, perhaps in a modified form as a one-off in the Sandman series. It involves the psychology of cities, their souls, and the distinctive characteristics that they display and also can lose. As is usual with Dunsany it is a tale of loss and the passing away of an age.

"Where the Tides Ebb and Flow": Dream is usually the gateway to the realms of the fantastic for Dunsany, but this is rarely a trip without at least a hint of peril. In this case the trip is one of unalloyed terror as the narrator experiences a lonely eternity in hell for an unspecified crime as he is sunk amidst the muck and mire of the Thames after death. He awakens in relief to find himself back in his old life. I found the tale more tiresome than terrifying.

"Bethmoora": Another elegiac and melancholy tale from Dunsany. As is often the case for him the contemporary world of London is combined with the fantastical and given the set-up we are not quite sure whether this is real or simply a dream being experienced by the narrator. In short: a happy city on the edge of the desert is mysteriously abandoned and left to slowly decay into the waste. The narrator recalls the city fondly in the same breath as he describes the semi-dreaming state of both the place and people of London and we are left to wonder not only at the mystery of Bethmoora's fall, but the concrete reality of the narrator's entire account. I could see this as a one-off issue in Gaiman's old Sandman series as well.

"Idle Days on the Yann": a sort of travelogue of through the land of dream as a man makes a voyage upon the mythical river Yann and observes the many strange places, peoples, and customs that gather upon its legendary borders. As is the case with most of Dunsany's stories, in my not-so-humble opinion anyway, there's not a lot of plot or character to grab onto, but lots of sumptuous prose that often makes up for it such as this description of a mountain river falling to the sea:

Louder and louder came the Irillion's song, and the sound of her dancing down from the fields of snow. And soon we saw her white and full of mists, and wreathed with rainbows delicate and small that she had plucked up near the mountain's summit from some celestial garden of the Sun.

“The Sword and the Idol”: Something of an allegory of the prehistoric battle between the sword as emblematic of all weapons and religion as personified in idols, both of which are the fruits of man’s ingenuity and lend power to those who control them.

“The Idle City”: A far away city charges stories as an entry tax and the reader is given a sampling of some of them. I wasn’t really blown away by any of them and they seemed mostly like fantastical fluff to me.

“The Hashish Man”: A fun bit of meta play from Dunsany as he tells us a tale from the POV of the titular ‘hashish man’, apparently someone Dunsany meets at a dinner party who takes it upon himself to fill in the blanks for some of the questions the author left open in his previous tale “Bethmoora”. It turns out that since sampling hashish allows the man to travel in the realms of imagination he has actually been to Bethmoora thank-you-very-much and he enlightens Dunsany on who exactly was behind the fall of that fabled city...right before jumping out a window when the police show up. A weird but kinda neat tale.

“Poor Old Bill”: A slightly macabre tale about an old sailor who tells a tale about ‘poor old Bill’ and his trials dealing with a captain who has a knack for cursing his men.

“The Beggars”: Dunsany (or his stand-in) bemoans the mundanity of our world from which all of the romance and wonder seems to have been sapped only to be made aware of the fantastic that hides behind the commonplace when a group of beggars come to town and point out the wonder that is all around us.

“Carcassonne”: A king at the zenith of his powers leaves his kingdom and glory behind and goes on a quest with all of his fabled warriors to conquer the unconquerable city of Carcassonne. They are driven by the power of song and prophecy, for it is “...the splendour of the rumours of Carcassonne and Fate’s decree that they should never come there, and the inspiration of Arleon and his harp...” that urge them to this deed which, in the end, decimates their numbers and steals their youth until only one remains: the broken king who has lost all in pursuit of a dream.

“In Zaccarath”: Shows Dunsany's preoccupation with decadence as an aspect of fantasy as well as depicting the point at which a society's zenith becomes the edge over which it topples into ruin and oblivion. This exemplifies his fascination with both "the great days that are never to come again" and the ultimate futility that such glory holds for even the greatest works of the mightiest kings are but chaff before the winds of time.

“The Field”: Once again the modern world of man with its industry and petty concerns comes into contention with the things of lasting worth. In this case the countryside is the last bastion of true beauty and is the city dweller's final refuge that yet retains the tinge of faery. The city is a man-made hell, the fields a natural heaven...though even this heaven is stained with an evil that tarnishes its purity, though it is uncertain whether it lies in its future or its past. There is no unalloyed good in Dunsany and every present happiness is marked by the sadness that is to overtake it in the end.

“The Day of the Poll”: Another meditation on the emptiness and ephemerality of modern life when compared to the things that truly matter. A poet tries to recuperate a citizen from the disease of politics of which Dunsany appears to have had a dim view, all sides being the same in the end and uncaring of the more

lasting and beautiful elements of life. The everyday bustle of human activity is a distraction from those things that truly matter and give meaning and beauty to the world. It is only when this bustle dies down and we allow ourselves to listen that we can know and are able to hear wonders:

...the tide, finding the noise abated and being at the flow, told an old tale that he had heard in his youth about the deeps of the sea, the same which he had told to coastwise ships that brought it to Babylon by the way of Euphrates before the doom of Troy.

“The Unhappy Body”: Perhaps a glimpse into Dunsany's own life as a writer in which his tired body is forced by his dreaming soul to record the vistas and visions it sees in the night. The soul is an unrelenting task master and the body will find rest only at the end.

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## Diana says

### Valoración final: 3.5

Relatos que forman parte de «Cuentos de un soñador»:

1. Poltarness, la que mira al mar 3/5
2. Blagdaross 4/5
3. Día de elecciones 3/5
4. La locura de Andelsprutz 4/5
5. En donde suben y bajan las mareas 5/5
6. Bethmoora 3/5
7. Días de ocio en el país del Yann 3/5
8. La espada y el ídolo 3/5
9. El hombre del hachís 3/5
10. En Zaccarath 3/5
11. La ciudad ociosa 3/5
12. El campo 5/5
13. El pobre Bill 3/5
14. Carcasona 3/5
15. Los mendigos 3/5
16. El cuerpo feliz 5/5

**Relatos favoritos :** en donde suben y bajan las mareas, el campo y el cuerpo feliz.

La prosa de este autor es inigualable. Sus pequeñas historias me permitieron viajar hacia mundos olvidados —¡incluso recordé el campo de mi infancia!—; sus descripciones me sensibilizaron; sus cuentos me hicieron soñar. Poco más podría desear. Este libro tiene un fin distinto, diría.

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## Rex Bradshaw says

Most of these stories are excellent, with some among Dunsany's best work. They are diverse in tone and

setting, but the usual themes of death, desire, divinity, and doom abound.

As an aside, the recent edition annotated by Portnow has serious deficiencies. I detailed these in my Amazon review, but my main complaint is the intrusiveness and extraneousness of the annotations.

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## Oscar says

Las historias de Edward John Moreton Drax Plunkett, o Lord Dunsany, como ha trascendido literariamente, tienen la virtud de ser intemporales. Creó un universo propio, rico en lenguaje, cuyo germen es lo fantástico y onírico. Ciudades prodigiosas, nombres fabulosos, evocadores, y una prosa cercana a la poesía, así como una gran imaginación, hacen de Lord Dunsany un escritor único. Incluso hay un término para referirse a este tipo de literatura, *dunsaniana*. Lovecraft, Tolkien o Borges son algunos escritores influenciados por el escritor irlandés.

Estos son los dieciséis relatos incluidos en “Cuentos de un soñador” (A Dreamer’s Tales, 1910):

- Poltarness, la que mira al mar
- Blagdaross
- Día de elecciones
- La locura de Andelsprutz
- En donde suben y bajan las mareas
- Bethmoora
- Días de ocio en el país del Yann
- La espada y el ídolo
- El hombre del hachís
- En Zaccarath
- La ciudad ociosa
- El campo
- El pobre Bill
- Carcasona
- Los mendigos
- El cuerpo feliz

De entre estos, los que más me gustaron fueron “En donde suben y bajan las mareas”, fascinante cuento sobre una maldición que se alarga durante siglos, y “Días de ocio en el país del Yann”, un viaje fascinante por el País de los Sueños y sus magníficas ciudades.

Esta no es una fantasía de espada y brujería, con acción a raudales. Este es un libro para degustar sin prisas, y recrearse en sus descripciones.

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## Marina says

Ovo su dokone pri?e, ali prekrasne. Vrijedi pro?itati.

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## Nandakishore Varma says

There was a time, lost in the mists of antiquity, when the dreamer could wander his fantasy land at will and set down his/her experiences on paper at leisure, without worrying about deadlines and contracts: when he/she could pen his words without worrying whether his book will hit the bestseller charts or not: when writing was pure pleasure. Lord Dunsany was a product of those times.

*A Dreamer's Tales* is exactly that: a bunch of stories, fables and legends (and some pieces which defy any kind of description), varying in quality and length, bunched together in this slim volume. They share only one quality—the gossamer structure of dreams, captured in the early morning before they melt away totally in the harsh light of the day.

It is said that dreams last only seconds, and their apparent length is an illusion. Our mind supplies the sequence and pace for a distorted jumble of images which tumble helter-skelter into the brain during the period of sleep called Rapid Eye Movement (REM) sleep. However scientifically interesting that may be, subjectively we only know that we inhabit a totally different country when we dream: where aeons may pass, and light-years may pass rapidly beneath our dreaming selves as we fly over fantastic galaxies populated by exotic beings.

One of the stories, *Where the Tides Ebb and Flow*, is about such a dream where the dreamer dies and watches the city over passing centuries as a dead man. It has got one of the most fantastic opening lines that I have ever read ("I dreamt that I had done a horrible thing, so that burial was to be denied me either in soil or sea, neither could there be any hell for me"). Dunsany does this again and again, using the technique of the storytellers of yore, jumping right into the middle of a tale, engaging the listener and the teller with an easy intimacy. It is one of his main strengths as a writer.

There are tales of doomed cities here, where the place is the protagonist (*The Madness of Andelsprutz*, *Bethmoora*); of sea voyagers who visit fantastic places en route in true fairytale fashion (*Idle Days on the Yann*); and of forlorn quests doomed to failure (*Carcassone*). The first story, *Poltarnees*, *Beholder of the Ocean*, is a true fairy tale. There is more than a hint of menace in many of these dreams which take them to nightmare territory (*Poor Old Bill*, for example). There is also humour (*The Sword and the Idol*, *The Day of the Poll*).

The concluding piece, *The Unhappy Body*, can be taken as a sort of manifesto for Dunsany: the reason why he (or any writer, for that matter) writes these stories - the soul which will not let the body rest, until it is laid in the grave.

These stories may be too light for today's tastes, when fantasy has become a full-blown field with its own sets of rules and conventions. However, I found them refreshing and enjoyable. Because who does not enjoy a dream, (even "delicious nightmare", to quote Hitchcock), all the more so because one knows one can wake up from it any time? In Dunsany's own words:

"But I arose and opened the window wide, and, stretching my hands out over the little garden, I blessed the birds whose song had woken me up from the troubled and terrible centuries of my dream."