



Red Velvet and Absinthe

Mitzi Szereto (Editor), Kelley Armstrong (Foreword), Zander Vyne (Contributor), Charlotte Stein (contributor), Ashley Lister (Contributor), Sharon Bidwell (Contributor), Claire Buckingham (Contributor), Giselle Renarde (Contributor), more... Cary Williams (Contributor), Tahira Iqbal (Contributor), Bonnie Dee (Contributor), Rose de Fer (Contributor), Janine Ashbless (Contributor), Elizabeth Daniels (Contributor), Anna Meadows (Contributor), Even Mora (Contributor) ...less

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Red Velvet and Absinthe explores love and lust with otherworldly partners who, by their sheer fantastical nature, evoke passion and desire far beyond that which any normal human being can inspire. Although the greats such as Bram Stoker, Edgar Allan Poe, and Daphne du Maurier are long dead, these contemporary authors keep the Gothic spirit alive and well by interpreting it in new and exciting ways. *Red Velvet and Absinthe* offers readers a collection of unique and original stories that conjure up the atmospheric and romantic spirit of the Gothic masters (and mistresses) but take things a bit further by adding to the brew a generous dosage of eroticism. Lie back and listen to the wind howling outside your window as you read these stories in the flickering light of a candle, the absinthe you're sipping warming your body like the caressing touch of a lover's fingers . . .

Includes:

Snowlight Moonlight by Rose de Fer
Cover Him with Darkness by Janine Ashbless
A Rose in the Willow Garden by Elizabeth Daniels
The Blood Moon by Mitzi Szereto
Painted by Anna Meadows
Dolly by Charlotte Stein
La Belle Mort by Zander Vyne
The Persistence of Memory by Even Mora
Scratched by Ashley Lister
Bitter and Intoxicating by Sharon Bidwell
Tea for Two by Claire Buckingham
Milady's Bath by Giselle Renarde
The Way Home by Cary Williams
The Queen by Tahira Iqbal
Benediction by Bonnie Dee

Red Velvet and Absinthe Details

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From Reader Review Red Velvet and Absinthe for online ebook

Autumn says

I was very lucky to get an advance copy of this compilation and can tell you that it is a deliciously wicked read...

My favourites were Snowlight, Moonlight by Rose de Fer, La Belle Mort by Zander Vyne and The Persistence of Memory by Evan Mora.

Roxanne Rhoads says

One of the best paranormal erotica anthologies I've read.

So many I've read are weird, off, and the paranormal elements don't mesh well with the erotic elements- or there's not really enough sex to consider it erotica.

Most of these stories were spot on. Creepy, sexy, naughty, dark, dangerous...this collection had a little bit of everything. There were two stories that I found odd and questioned what exactly the paranormal element was- I mean it was clear there was something "Other" going on but no explanation to exactly what it was. One story I think it was the lake that was the creep factor. The other the woman had to have been a witch or sorceress or something. And those two stories were more story than erotica but still wonderfully written.

You'll find a bit of all the creatures in this collection- werewolves, vampires, ghosts...I especially loved the one with the serial killer and the ghost. Quite nicely done.

Definitely a haunting collection fans of gothic horror with sexual elements and erotic twists will adore.

Light a candle, grab a glass of wine and settle in to read this lush collection of spellbindingly sensual stories.

Sally says

Wow, what a month this has been for short story collections – first I had my chance to get my hands on Take Me There: Trans and Genderqueer Erotica (a 5 star read of transgender erotica), and now I've got Red Velvet and Absinthe (a 5 star read of gothic erotica). The fact that they're both courtesy of Cleis Press can't be a coincidence!

If I had to pick one word to define this collection, it would definitely be atmosphere. You can feel the condensation upon the cold, stone walls; you can smell the sulphur scent of recently snuffed candles in the air; and you can taste the coppery tang of blood upon the tip of your tongue. These are not just stories with a gothic touch, these are stories written in the true gothic tradition.

It's hard to choose from a collection like this, but my favourites included:

Snowlight Moonlight by Rose de Fer – this read like an old-school, 19th century gothic tale . . . just a lot sexier (and with a lovely touch of bondage)!

Cover Him with Darkness by Janine Ashbless – a wonderful story of family pacts, inherited responsibilities, and the erotic allure of a fallen angel who wants only to be loved . . . and set free

The Blood Moon by Mitzi Szereto – one of my top 3 favourites in the collection, the kind of story that begs for more.

Dolly by Charlotte Stein – creepy and sexy at the same time, I thought I knew where it was going, and then she wowed me with a twist that is just perfect

La Belle Mort by Zander Vyne – a passionate and (at times) exhausting tale of witchcraft erotica, and one that made me squeal with delight at the twist ending

Milady's Bath by Giselle Renarde – what can I said, the lovely Ms Renarde can do no wrong by me . . . and her story of a wronged woman taking comfort in the arms of her her maidservant made me sigh with pleasure. Another of my top three.

The Queen by Tahira Iqbal – perhaps the most intensely sexual of all the reads (for me, at least) and the proud piece of pleasure to round out my top 3.

I started out by saying that, if I had to pick one word to define this collection, it would be atmosphere. That's true, but if I could pick a second, it would be consistency. This is a wonderfully written collection of stories, every one of which captures the spirit of the gothic, and every one of which captures your imagination. There were a few stories where the subject matter didn't quite enthrall me, but the writing still kept me reading.

Perhaps most appreciatively, this is a collection of gothic stories that are also erotic – not just an erotica collection with gothic elements tossed in. Altogether lovely, haunting, and deliciously decadent, you'll be snuffing out the candles long before you're done, if only to hide your own gothic touch under the cover of darkness!

Grace Troxel says

This review originally appeared on my blog, Books Without Any Pictures:
<http://bookswithoutanypictures.com/20...>

Red Velvet and Absinthe: Paranormal Erotic Romance is a collection of fifteen erotic short stories featuring ghosts, werewolves, vampires, and things that go bump (see what I did there?) in the night. The stories draw on the gothic literary tradition, which at its heart has always paired romanticism with apprehension of the unknown. This is one of those books that I'm not sure I'd have been drawn to in a store, but was gifted to me as the nice folks at Cleis Press were packing up their booth at Book Expo a couple years back. I'm so glad I got a chance to read it, and ended up enjoying it a lot!

Usually when I read short stories, I have a hard time transitioning from one to another. My immersion gets broken as one story ends and the next begins, and so I end up reading a collection over the course of several months, reading a story here and a story there, but not at the same pace that I'd read a novel. Red Velvet and Absinthe was completely different. While each of the stories was unique, they all shared a sense of mystery and sensuality that kept me reading even as one story ended and the next one began. I finished the book in

three sittings, which is so much faster than usual for me when reading short fiction.

Now let's look at the stories themselves.

Snowlight, Moonlight by Rose de Fer

This was one of my favorite stories in Red Velvet and Absinthe. A mad scientist tames a newly turned werewolf woman into submission. It reminded me of something that ought to be a Jonathan Coulton song.

Cover Him with Darkness by Janine Ashbless

A girl grows up in a tiny village, and her family has a secret. They've been guarding a man who is chained to a rock for thousands of years, and now it's Milja's turn to take over. Milja is attracted to him, but has been warned about the consequences of unleashing such a being. Weird and dark and wonderful, Cover Him with Darkness leaves you asking questions and begging for more.

A Rose in the Willow Garden by Elizabeth Daniels

A vampire falls in love with a woman whom he's about to turn, but maybe he's wrong about who is the predator and who is the prey.

The Bood Moon Kiss by Mitzi Szereto

A crew is filming a show about a vampire turning his human lover. The lead actor is actually a vampire, and is about to turn his leading lady. So meta.

Painted by Anna Meadows

This is the story of a mysterious painting and the woman who lives within it.

Dolly by Charlotte Stein

Delightfully bizarre. A woman creates a golem and begins a relationship with it, while feeling a sense of guilt about sleeping with her creation.

La Belle Mort by Zander Vyne

This one is weird. Through a series of encounters with a visiting stranger, a condemned woman learns how to (sexually) welcome Death.

The Persistence of Memory by Evan Mora

One common idea you see in vampire literature is whether or not a supernatural creature should become involved with mortals, or whether they cause more harm than good. A vampire struggles with this as he has several encounters with one woman, but each time causes her to forget. Meanwhile, she feels that there is something missing in her life that she can't quite put her finger on.

Scratched by Ashley Lister

More sexy werewolves! The protagonist's boyfriend thinks he's been turned into a werewolf, so he secludes himself in the woods. Of course, his girlfriend doesn't believe him and comes to him right as his transition begins.

Bitter and Intoxicating by Sharon Midwell

An artist is inspired by his muse.

Tea for Two by Claire Buckingham

Another strange one. After reading some books about the occult, a professor tried to sacrifice his unborn child to give his wife immortality. Now she's a lonely ghost.

Milady's Bath by Giselle Renarde

This was one of my favorite stories in Red Velvet and Absinthe. Each month, a woman sneaks out of her home for a violent sexual rendezvous with what is presumably a werewolf. After each encounter, her maid/lover prepares her a bath and nurses her wounds while wondering what compels her mistress to deliberately seek that pain. Quite lovely.

The Way Home by Carrie Williams

A motorcyclist stops at a bar and ends up banging the bartender, who happens to be a vampire. While the story had a strong start, the ending was weak and left far too many unanswered questions.

The Queen by Tahira Ibqal

Can this one please be a full-length novel? Pretty please? Amelia is one of the vampire King's mistresses. One day, the King and other mistresses are murdered, and Amelia sets off on a journey to take her place as the vampire Queen.

Benediction by Bonnie Dee

Set in the afterlife, a man learns to let go and to forgive himself for his sins.

Laurie Garrison says

3 1/2

This book is full of short stories of wild monkey sex, each story around maybe 10 -15 pages long and each book filled with up to maybe 20 authors. Each book can have M/M, F/F, M/F, BDSM, cheaters etc.. because anything goes in these short stories. This is not a romance book, it's a book full of erotica fun. I myself don't too much connect with these type of books, basically I don't like just sex I want a story and a romance connection between a couple but a few of these books leaves me very surprised at times. Plus, this is a good way to get to know an author before you buy a full length book by them and that's why I read them.

Red Velvet and Absinthe is a paranormal themed book with 15 short stories. These are not your normal vampire or werewolf stories we read, this one is filled with different gothic like creatures that stalks the streets. I found two stories I fully enjoyed, Snowlight, Moonlight and The Persistence of Memory. These two grabbed me because I could feel more of a romantic connection between these characters and the stories were really different.

Again these types of books are just for fun monkey sex. If this is your kind of thing please add this to your reading list.

Kat Black says

Intriguing, otherworldly, atmospheric and sensual. Quality storytelling from the talented likes of Janine Ashbless, Charlotte Stein, Ashley Lister (worthy of 5* each) and a host of others. Lots of great writing and lyrical prose - nothing in this prettily packaged anthology edited by Mitzi Szereto gets less than a 3* rating from me.

OpenBookSociety.com says

Brought to you by OBS member Autumn

I had forgotten how much I love compilations and this one was no exception. Each short erotic tale will take you by the hand and lead you dreamily down the primrose path and the beauty of the journey is never knowing if you will come back alive.

I highly recommend this book to readers that revel in the lush prose of gothic and erotic romance and to those adventurous souls that enjoy a bittersweet story that doesn't always end the way you would expect.

A few of my very favorites include Snowlight, Moonlight by Rose de Fer, La Belle Mort by Zander Vyne and The Persistence of Memory by Evan Mora. Erotic, chilling and heartbreaking. How can you resist?

Jennifer says

DNF @ 30%

Red Velvet and Absinthe is an anthology of short-stories that fall in the genre of paranormal erotic romance. In my opinion, erotica is the foremost genre though ... which is OK but it was just too much for my personal taste. I'm sure fans of erotica with paranormal themes will have fun with this collection though.

Varian Rose says

One common problem with anthologies is that the stories often seem the same, especially if they are all of the same genre. In *Red Velvet and Absinthe* all the stories were from the same genre: paranormal romance.

What I liked the most about this anthology is that none of the stories seemed like clones of each other. I was interested in each story, and never skimmed.

Cecile says

This product was provided to me free of charge by Eden Fantasys in exchange for an unbiased review. This review is in compliance with the FTC guidelines

For those of you that know me... and those that don't this is my little statement about short books.... I do not judge short stories on the rush of their relationships, because they are just that - short stories. So, yes the relationships always could have been drawn out more, yea it seems like they fall in love to fast and of course the story could have been made longer... but it is a short story. So with that said.... here is my review...

I was given this book for an honest review and my honest thoughts, so here goes...

This book is complied of some great stories! I have to say that the stories may be short, but there is definitely something to sink your teeth into... There is some substance to claw your nails into... And there are other stories that will leave you mystified. This anthology is to be considered a part of the erotic books collection.

Some stories left me feeling like love struck a cord and stayed there... Some were so sweet and loving that it made me feel it was my first time... Some stories were dark and mysterious..

The stories that I loved reached inside and made me take notice of the characters. Made me see beyond what the writer wanted me to see and what the characters really wanted me to see. The characters wanted me to feel their pain, embrace their love... Taste the bitter sweet darkness that hangs beyond their reach. The passion you discover is worth sneaking off into the bedroom with your other and discovering your own passion. Just beware of what lurks in those corners...

Now while the book as a whole was really good... But you know me, I am here to tell you the truth. Some stories left me feeling a bit off. Like I was left out of a joke or something. But even though I felt like I was missing something... the stories were worth reading. If you are looking for something with a hint of the dark side... a dash of some passion... Then you need to pick this book up!

Christine says

“The supernatural: Think vampires, werewolves, ghosts ... eerie sounds in the night, impassioned whispers teasing at the depths of sleep ... Think red velvet, flickering candles, love and lust with otherworldly partners who unleash passion and desire far beyond that inspired by simple mortals.” – excerpted from the back cover blurb

Let me just start off by saying that this anthology most definitely lives up to the above blurb. Next to Fairy Tale Lust, this has to be one of my fave anthologies from Cleis Press. I don't believe I passed over one story in here (which I normally do in anthologies if one fails to grab my attention), but of course, I did have my favorites...

In Zander Vyne's "La Belle Mort," Lady Elizabeth Jane Morton—a woman wrongly accused and imprisoned for witchcraft—is visited by a cleric who shows her how not to fear death by freeing her body. Thanks to all the hot men I've seen in priest garb over the years (Jared Padalecki, Ewan McGregor, Stellan Skarsgård, pre-crazy Mel Gibson, Colin O'Donoghue...), it seems may have developed a little thing for men of the cloth

and so I really enjoyed this story. It's hard to tell if this man is really a cleric or something disguised as some, but either way I found it strongly and beautifully written.

In Janine Ashbless's "Cover Him With Darkness," a young girl learns that her family is the guardians of Azazel, fallen angel and tempter of mortal women. Yet as she grows up and aids in watching over him, she finds herself attracted to him and the things he makes her feel. Fallen angels, 'nuff said. Well written and sexy ... loved it!

These two stories are just the cream of this surprisingly dark and sensual crop. I urge all lovers of paranormal erotic romance to pick up this anthology! Perfect reading for those cold, autumn nights.

<http://www.read-all-over.net/31-days-...>

Misty says

You never really know what to expect when you go into a collection like this. Well, I mean you know *one thing* to expect, but as for the quality of the actual storytelling, it's a gamble. Fortunately this was a gamble that paid off, because I found myself consistently surprised with the quality of the stories. Yes, each one revolves around some sort of otherworldly/supernatural (smutty) relationship, but for the most part, it seems like all of the authors chose to focus on layering their stories and injecting as much depth and interestingness to the stories and characters.

A lot of people are put off by short stories, I think (and this used to be true of me) because they don't connect - there's just not enough time, not enough text, and so things end up falling a little flat for them emotionally. Many times a reader will say of a short story, 'It was good but I wish it was full-length' or 'There just wasn't enough' ... they are left unsatisfied, feeling as if they've just begun when it ends. But there are a good number of stories in here that I actually found myself connecting to, sometimes rather quickly, and I have to praise that. One in particular, "Cover him with Darkness" by Janine Ashbless, I found very intriguing and perfectly complete as a short story - I didn't want anything else from it. I just thought it was really well done, well-suited to the format, and intriguing. The same is true of "Painted" by Anna Meadows and "Dolly" by Charlotte Stein. All 3 of these stories are completely different with a different feel, but they all had a completeness to them, and a story I loved following.

One other thing I found interesting and a little unexpected was that the stories that most appealed to me and felt the most interesting and complete (and the least cheesy) were the ones that *didn't* have to do with vampires or weres. It's not necessarily that the vamp/were stories were bad, necessarily, but with few exceptions, I found myself caring about them less. I did really enjoy editor Mitzi Szereto's "The Blood Moon Kiss" which is one of the vamp stories, and is a fun, somewhat tongue in cheek take on vampire culture and a certain popular television show. But the standouts for me were the unexpected ones: artworks come to life, little wax voodoo dolls that could have been very creepy but were somehow sweet, fallen angels or gods or god-knows-what - there was a nice spread of creativity and world-building throughout the collection that I really appreciated.

The only real drawbacks for me were just things that aren't to my taste. Romances and dynamics that just don't appeal to me. (I'm sorry, but I am just not a fan of complete submission, of anyone, to anyone. Collars and cages - *aaaand* I'm out.) But this I think was actually probably a good thing in its own way because it shows that there really is a little something for everyone.

I think the foreward from Kelley Armstrong (yes, *that* Kelley Armstrong) was a nice surprise that really seemed to get at the heart of the collection and the somewhat gothic feel of the whole thing. These stories are about atmosphere and Otherness, and amping up the latent sexual tension of the gothic classics into something more palpable. Really well done.

[Side note: If you're wondering if you want to venture to read a book labeled 'paranormal erotica romance', I would employ the cock-test I used in my review of *Falling, Fly* sometime back: how do you feel about the word 'cock'? If you just cringed, skip this. If you sat up straighter and said 'where?' go out and grab a copy.]

Avry15 says

originally appeared on: Bookshelf Confessions

Gothic Literature have never been this good!

Red Velvet and Anthology is a collection of supernatural, paranormal, gothic stories from awesome authors..Presented in celebration with Gothic Literature.

First and foremost the cover is stunning, it really pique my attention and urges me to request a review copy for it..well, I was not wrong, I was definitely engrossed with the book...

Plus a foreword by Kelly Armstrong, New York Times bestselling author of *Bitten*.

From its stunning cover...I enjoyed reading the different stories offered, each of it with its own remarkable plot and characters...of page by page ghosts, vampires, werewolves, demons, alive paintings...everything a reader's mind hasn't yet discovered.

It is a well-written and well-edited book...). Each story giving the reader a crescendo of anticipation as to what kind of creatures would be offered next..

A fast-read..actually I read this book in one sitting, not missing a single word of it...I am transported into each world of magic and the unknown..and it feels like I was there with them, feeling the torture and the ecstasy....that's how good authors could stir a readers imagination by just words...and admittedly I found myself included in those readers.

Off course it came to the fact..that there are my favourite ones like *Cover him with Darkness* and *The Blood Moon Kiss*...I really really loved this two....some of the stories are not so appealing to me..but all in all it's a great packaged of literature and the supernatural...

It's a book pack of romance, supernatural beings, suspense, mysteries, and erotica...

Now I know that fear coupled with love and anticipation makes a good couple.. Maybe that's the reason why a lot of girls around in the world never stop dreaming of a vampire to bit them and bring them to his mysterious yet romantic world..a world of forever...

To every girl out there....or any young adults who want to enjoy a good,romantic, goose-bump-read..you should grab this one!

Romancing the Book says

Reviewed by Stephanie O
Ebook provided by publisher

Haunting, Intriguing, Sensual, Curious, Lustful, Spellbinding, Hot. All words I could use to describe this collection of short stories.

Ok, so I didn't get the chance to sit and read this one by candle light, with glass of wine. More or less, I was privileged to read it sitting in my car in the parent pick up line waiting for school to let out. A few times I wondered if I was blushing. At times I even had to set the Nook down, so I could let the short story I just read sink in. As with any multi story book, you run the risk of some being out of the park home run hits, while others seem to be a foul ball. With this grouping, each story made its way to a base . . . some made it only to first base, while others were out of the park home runs.

The two stories that just completely rocked my world were: The Blood Moon Kiss and La Belle Mort. The Blood Moon Kiss finds us on the set of a popular "Vampire" show. The amount of heat that oozed off the pages of this story should have melted my Nook, I'm so glad it didn't. However, La Belle Mort, a story that finds us in a cell with a young lady awaiting punishment (hanging) for something she didn't do . . . well, this story was one that I had to set my Nook down after reading. I needed a moment to just let the story sink in.

There is something here for everyone. With 15 different short stories, how could you not find something that tickles your "fancy".

L.E.Olteano says

Super awesome read!!

Originally posted at Butterfly-o-Meter Books on May 18 2012:

Wow! Just, freaking wow!! As you guys can see, this is my first time awarding the Bomy Award of Excellence – the bunch of butterflies that appears as a second rating under the 5 butterflies. If you guys haven't had the chance to, take a looksie at my newly set rating system here. It's like a 5++ sort of rating, the official fangirlism at large basically.

I debated with myself whether to award it or not, it's a new rating so I'm still getting used to it. In the end, I felt like it had to be awarded here, because above all other delights, this anthology gave me a dose of my ultimate delight: diversity. Beauty, emotion, delight, and diversity. To put it in clear terms, this is my reading experience jackpot.

Reviewing anthologies is at times hard, especially when we're talking about various authors. Sometimes that kind of diversity can become confusing, but this one was the rare case of everything fitting together utterly amazing. Though we're talking about various writing styles, points of view, themes, endings, heat levels, this is quite possibly one of the best anthologies I have read, it was one of the best reading experiences I've had in a while. True, given the paranormal erotic romance tone it has overall, it would seem easy to seduce me I guess, but this just blew me away, honestly. This book was waiting for me for like a year, patient and sweet,

until I managed to make my way to it. Guess what, I was literally biting my hands while reading thinking, wholly freaking gosh, I had this jewel collecting dust in a folder all this time???

I wanted to pick out a couple of titles that I liked best, but I just can't pick. Honestly, I loved them all. Some I was completely melting about, some I totally loved. I got sort of sniffing for some...they basically cover all kinds of awesomeness.

Plus, simplistic as it may be to view things this way, this anthology is sort of big. I mean, big, like 240 pages or more. Call me a sucker but I like short stories that aren't too short to make their point, you know what I mean? These stories make their points fabulously. If you like paranormal romance on the hotter side, but beautifully written and gorgeous, read this. If you haven't already, and you will, you'll surely love it, I simply can't imagine you not loving it.
