FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

Bard, Blade, and the Prince of Purse
978-1-58338-379-7

This is an eclectic anthology of the macabre, the surreal, witchcraft and just plain magic short stories. The characters range from schoolboys and housewives to practiced, Merlin type magicians. The characters in each story practice magic of all sorts from back-to-life-spells to demon banishing. An interesting note is that all but a few of the main characters are really good guys (or gals) even if they are wizards or witches. Many of them use the magic without realizing how powerful their spells really are. Such innocence is portrayed in “Brotherly Curse” where two young men fashion a necklace supposedly with a spell to protect its wearer, but the spell becomes something they never expected.

When a bad character, however, is introduced, he or she is extremely evil. Novices and experts, they all wield their magic in sometimes terrifying, sometimes humorous ways. The story settings and plots are as varied as the characters, ranging from modern cities to fictional medieval lands, other dimensions and some include time travel.

Fesmire introduces an exciting concept which he calls “duals.” A dual is a shape-changer with more than one personality. Somehow, these duals have two separate bodies and identities, yet they share the same body. This shared body completely changes shape, size, and even gender depending upon which personality is in control. This is truly a distinct twist and may or may not have its foundation in the theory of Multiple Personality Disorder taken to the extreme.

One of the most humorous stories is about a timid young man who is suddenly faced with a dragon egg appearing in his living room in modern America. When the dragon hatches, he is in a real quandary because his landlady doesn’t allow pets, and he doesn’t know how to explain a dragon in the twentieth century even if she did.

In this book, the reader will discover statues brought to life with magic spells cast by star crossed lovers, a psychotic teenager with the need to kill, demonic possession, sword and sorcery and more. This collection’s only weakness is that some of the stories end hanging a bit as if not quite finished; although Hitchcock did that as well.

S. Joan Popek