



THE
WORLD OF MYTH
ANTHOLOGY

ONE NIGHT STAND

By Adhemar de Fey

A review of "The World of Myth Anthology"

When my people banished me from the Seelie Court, as a Dark Fey I had no place to go but Earth. The portal to your dismal planet was opened behind me, my judgment about to be pronounced.

"How was I supposed to know that getting involved with mortal women was illegal?" I stood before them, my head high and chest out.

"I hate to read, remember?"

"Your disdain for literature is well-known, Adhemar le Fey." Queen Shal-la-Bal spoke in

a bitter voice. "But you didn't need to study; had you simply read our books of law concerning relationships between Fey and mortals, you would have known what was expected. Unfortunately, even our poetry was beyond your grasp."

Perhaps I shouldn't have told the queen that she was jealous of my earthly conquests and wanted one of my coveted one-night-stands herself. Regardless, she became exceedingly angry.

"You are hereby sentenced to Earth." The Seelie Court cheered. "And you are cursed to do that which you hate for the remainder of your life: consume books."

"And if I refuse to read these books?"

“I didn’t say you would read them,” she said. “You will consume them. Literally. You shall have no need for food or wine; the written word shall be your sustenance.”

“Sustenance? That’s a big word, milady. What’s it mean?”

“Oh, Adhemar, you foolish Dark Fey. You’ll find out soon enough.”

The armored Elvin guards threw me through the portal and, true to her word, they closed it forever.

I was sealed off from the Dreaming, the world of the Fey. The Seelie Court had the last laugh.

I immediately tried to seduce mortal women but my Glamour had been stripped away, my Faerie Magic. I couldn’t make women do my bidding anymore. I was on my own.

I became thirsty traveling this world. I hungered. When I ate, I vomited the food—not that I wouldn’t have anyway; it tastes horrible.

After a week I knew I would be dead soon if I didn’t find what Queen Shal-la-Bal meant by *sustenance*. Weak and dying, my clothes were threadbare and I looked like one of your vagrants.

Well, at that point I really was a vagrant. Lost and desolate, I found myself dying in an alley behind a bookstore. I lay in a dirty puddle praying for death.

“Oh, you poor dear,” I heard a voice. Soft hands touched my cold body, helped me to the bookstore’s backdoor. “I’ll call for help after I get you inside.”

“No,” I yelled. “Please... just let me sit in the warmth of your shop.”

She helped me behind a desk in her backroom, and there I rested my head on a book. The thirst I’d felt for seven of your earth days abated somewhat, and I lifted my head and looked at my headrest:

The World of Myth Anthology.

I felt... good. *Sustenance*, Queen Shal-la-bal had called it. I held the book to my chest and closed my eyes.

“Is everything alright?” The woman asked, a beautiful mortal I would have easily seduced before being banished from the Dreaming, my homeland, and thus my Glamour. “I can still call help.”

“Everything is fine,” I said. I held the book closer, like a lover in a one-night-stand, and let out a contented sigh. “I’ve found just what I’ve been looking for.”

Heebie Jeepies by Kevin Adams flowed into my mind, trickled down my thirsty throat, and quenched my thirst. I felt the fear of mortals, tantalizingly sweet, sweeping into my Elvin system. My heart beat faster as I heard the sound of a mortal’s vehicle, “Thump-screee, thump-screee, thump-screee.” I felt—really felt!—the fear of the character as his car begins making strange sounds on an isolated road at night.

“I always thought that story began like *Jeepers Creepers*,” the bookstore merchant said. Somehow I had the anthology open, my hands upon one page and my eyes on the other—by the Queen, I was reading! “But it certainly doesn’t end like that movie.”

I didn’t know what she was talking about. All I cared about was following this mortal until he pulls over... the unexpected twist at the ending made my breath catch. Hundreds of them. What am I talking about? To find out, you’ll have to read the story that introduced me to mortal fear, the unexpected, and to *The World of Myth*.

In the next story, again by the mortal author Kevin Adams, I found Krystal to be VERY much like one of my own, almost a Dark Fey. My mind was sucked under the currents of human emotion, but this time it was disturbing, like watching for survivors after an ancient building collapsed—I just can’t help but stare. Another twist at the end, and I gasped with tantalizing surprise.

“You’re smiling,” the bookstore merchant said. “You must be feeling better.”

“What is your name?” I asked.

“Mary. *Mary’s Bookstore*, that’s the name of my shop.”

“Mary, I think we’re going to be friends for a long, long time.”

She smiled. She was pretty, someone I would want to seduce normally... but I had to hit the next story.

What can I say about *Catatonia* by Steve Bolin? I have never felt suspense before, not like this. As a scientist working at the Indianapolis Brain Science Foundation (IBSF), the main character works with her mentor, a Dr. Valken, attempting to map the memories of the brain. Oh, by the Queen!! What mastery is woven into a tale of surprise and the sweet surrender of life, truly one of the best stories contained within this collection of authors' best works.

The next story, *The Horse Course*, by the same author had me laughing until tears ran from my eyes. I had felt human fear and suspense, trepidation and uncertainty, ambition and loss up to this point. I was surprised to find real laughter rising from my deepest parts, true belly laughs that got Mary giggling next to me as she sat upon the desk.

"Please don't end," I whispered, as I turned the page. "Don't let me down."

"It won't, my friend." Mary's touch was warm, her eyes kind. "It's one of my favorite books."

Le Sangre by Saranna DeWylde was prose in the literary sense, and it swept me along at a fast pace. The story contained Haiti and slavery and a master of a plantation. Ghislaine, a priestess, followed the Rainbow Serpent, and her master had such terrible fields to plow. It ended with stunning bluntness.

I couldn't stop reading. The book was THAT good.

In *Reunion* by L.M. Mercer I was surprised how one lone woman could lock many people in a room and murder them all... but the story wasn't about the past, it was about the present. Where is she? What is all that blood? I watched her drink her champagne in my mind's eyes, a crystal clear image perfected by Mercer, and I shuddered with delight at the dark theme.

Sleepy Hollow was one story I thought I knew, but David K. Montoya took it and made it his own. What mortal would have the audacity to do such a thing? The original classic is known even to us Fey. But the mortal took the story and shortened it, created it anew; I like his version much better than the original. It almost had a Sherlock Holmes feel to it, as Ichabod Crane investigates the headless horseman. But who is the monster in this story? Oh, I beg you to read and tell me the answer to that question.

Reaper Rick Schwartz gave us *The Room of Voices*, and I must say the reader enters the world of insanity... and once there recognizes that he was sane all along. The character in the story is solid if seemingly unstable, and there are some similarities between *Catatonia* by Steve Bolin and this story. In both stories, experts are researching and psychoanalyzing their way into the supernatural without even knowing it. The avenue is science, the destination is darkness.

Dead and Ferried by Terry Scheerer is one story that will have you thinking from beginning to end. What happens in death? Once there, can you talk your way out of it and, if not, can you talk your way *around* it? David McNab does exactly this on the River Styx, and I have known some Fey like this character—those who are charming enough to befriend Death himself.

Mam by Carol Shenold has another one of those tantalizing and unexpected endings, and I learned that *The World of Myth* is known for such endings. Mary sat on the edge of the desk and read with me, as if we were lovers—such a beautiful one-night-stand. She informed me that I was correct; that *The World of Myth* often has wonderful stories ending unexpectedly for the excitement of its readers. "How can you read this and not dance in glee?"

"Oh, Adhemar," she said. When had I told her my name? "You lose yourself in these stories, don't you? I do, too."

Gallery of the Midnight Heart was beautiful prose, with artistic sweeps like that of the painter's brush, the canvas the dark heart of the vampiric soul. Oh, the tragedy interwoven in such a tale;

how can darkness exist in such beautiful writing? But it does exist, as it exists in your mortal world. Life isn't fair, is it? And neither is what happens in this story.

"Oh, Selena," I said, as I finished the story, "you certainly do get the danger you so desperately desire."

"Do you want to take a break?" Mary asked.

"Hell, no!"

How can Sarah Wilson go from one style of writing to another? But she does easily, I learned, as I read *Cabin Painting*. Who paints in a cabin in the woods? Don't ask, but I can tell you the color is always red, and the implements of this craft are not the bristles of brushes. Savagely beautiful, there was a brutal twist as I met the antagonist's brother.

I do not usually enjoy high fantasy tales because they remind me too much of home, but L. Craig Woods does a wonderful job in *The Empire Chronicles, Irayan of Stanyshaul*.

"I never dreamed it could be like this."

"Like what?" Mary patted my hand. "It's just a book."

"Are all books this good?"

"No. Like I said, it's one of my favorites." She looked at my threadbare clothes. "You've had a hard time, haven't you?"

"After what I just read, it no longer matters."

"Why?"

I leapt up and grabbed her hands. She let out a frightened yelp as I twirled her, and when she saw me dancing a gig she laughed and joined in. We danced upon the emotional turmoil and broiling story-twists of the book I'd just read.

"Are all books like the one I just read?"

"Sadly, no." We became breathless, and we rested against her desk. "Tell me how it makes you feel... how any reader would feel reading it."

"Oh, Mary. Each story builds the plot toward a specific outcome, but the story twist at each ending is so savagely severe it leaves your head spinning, yet it is done in a realistic manner. Some stories strike the heart of fantasy with a hammer, and some drive stakes into the heart of horror. There is the one humorous story that had me crying from laughter.

"The stories actually bridge the world between mortal reality and the world of myth itself, and like life, it is realistic with its sharp twists and turns. It isn't simply fantasy or horror that makes this book breathe until it comes alive; it is the collection of myriad human emotions, characters and places: fear and terror; fantastic kingdoms and betrayal; espionage and traditional vampiric monsters; serial killers and eerie cabins in isolated woods.

"Like the story *Catatonnia*, readers enter the minds of the writers, which always lead to the unexpected. Sometimes the readers find horror and terror, but along the way the readers are surprised to find themselves caring for many of the likeable characters, hating others, but with one thought in conclusion: we all live in varying stages of *catatonnia*, and it sometimes it takes stories like these to wake us up... or to help us live life to the fullest."

"That is exactly how I felt when I read the book," Mary said. "I have never been able to put it into words... not like you did."

"I was in *catatonnia* while in the Dreaming and the Seelie Court." I smiled at her frown. "I've woken up from my *catatonnia*, Mary. For the first time in hundreds of years."

"Whatever are you talking about, Adhemar?"

"My name is Adhemar le Fey." I stood and gestured at her shop. "Are there other books as fantastic as this one?"

“A few are better.” she said. “Not many, but there are some.”

She yelped and leapt back, pointing at my clothes. I saw they were clean and appeared brand new.

“What are you?” Her voice was a whisper. “Who are you really?”

“I am Adhemar de Fey, a Dark Fey,” I told her. “And I want you to show me more books like the one we just read. And I’ll tell you everything, but first... ”

“First?”

“I want to read *The World of Myth Anthology* again.” I took her trembling hand. “Will you read it with me?”

She sat in the chair, and this time I sat upon her desk. We opened the book and started at the beginning... again. I experienced the same emotions all over. The same beautiful plot twists and surprise endings. And you will, too. This book will take you out of your realistic world of *catatonia* and allow access into the world of myth, into realms of possibilities and danger, to places of terror and fantasy. But most of all, you will read until you finish the final page... and then you will read it again.