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# The Paper Menagerie And Other Stories



## Synopsis

A publishing event: Best-selling author Ken Liu selects his award-winning science fiction and fantasy tales for a groundbreaking collection - including a brand-new piece exclusive to this volume. With his debut novel, *The Grace of Kings*, taking the literary world by storm, Ken Liu now shares his finest short fiction in *The Paper Menagerie and Other Stories*. This mesmerizing collection features all of Ken's award-winning and award-finalist stories, including: "The Man Who Ended History: A Documentary" (finalist for the Hugo, Nebula, and Theodore Sturgeon Awards); "Mono No Aware" (Hugo Award winner); "The Waves" (Nebula Award finalist); "The Bookmaking Habits of Select Species" (Nebula and Sturgeon Award finalist); "All the Flavors" (Nebula award finalist); "The Litigation Master and the Monkey King" (Nebula Award finalist); and the most awarded story in the genre's history, "The Paper Menagerie" (the only story to win the Hugo, Nebula, and World Fantasy Awards). A must-have for every science fiction and fantasy fan, this beautiful book is an anthology to savor.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This author is obviously intelligent and expects his readers to use their noggins, too. I had run into the author only through reading his translation of Cixin Liu's *The Three-Body Problem*. That book was amazing which required Ken Liu to write at a level that moved not only the words but also the feeling of the book from Chinese to English. I am not normally a reader of short stories because the stories are often (too-often for me) widely varying in both

quality and interest. And, I do not read books of short fiction from cover to cover over a few days like novels. They make great reading when I'm between novels. Well, I started this with all that in mind. That plan didn't last long. The pages turned themselves making me (making me!) read and read and read. (This book made me do it!) The quality of the writing is far beyond what I was expecting. The variety is amazing. There is a special skill needed to write short fiction. Each word must be carefully chosen. Each paragraph must move the story forward. Ken Liu knows how to do those things. There is fantasy, there is science fiction, there is even some mystery thrown in, plus there are some that I won't try to slot into any genre or hyphenated-sub-sub-genre. What was impressive was the consistency of the internal logic of each story. I had volume one of his *Grace of Kings* series on my Wish List since it came out. At about page 20 of this book I went ahead and bought it. It will join my TBR pile that already has a couple of hundred books in it but really close to the top. This is a writer to watch as he heads for the top of his profession, and he will stay there.

Ken Liu's collection of speculative fiction mixes science fiction, fantasy, and commentary on social relationships, most prominently between parents and children. Lots of stories in this collection have characters wondering about chances they could have taken or looking back on the pivotal choices they make. Liu does a decent job of bringing together characters from different worlds, whether he's introducing alien species, mythical creatures, or a combination of both. Some of the shorts don't quite stick their narrative landings or leave me feeling like Liu's trying to be too on-the-nose about technology. A Google/Apple like conglomerate named Centillion, for example, was featured in a story that I thought was being a bit too tongue-in-cheek and didn't really go anywhere. Nonetheless, his writing prominently features characters of Asian descent/cultural backgrounds, which was something that I was looking for when purchasing this book.

Anthologies are difficult to "rate" as you are almost never going to like ALL of the stories they contain but I do feel like the majority of these stories were pretty "Meh" for me. There weren't any stories that I didn't like and there were some that I greatly enjoyed and some that I felt like had a lot more to say and could be developed into a more complete, novel length work. It's not a book I'd read again or want to have on my shelf but its good for a little light reading when you don't have the time or desired to invest in a full-length novel.

This book draws one in gently, but soon travels to dark places. The first two stories introduce the

reader to the delicacy, originality and beauty of Liu's imagination, expressed in science fiction and in fantasy. The more pervasive themes of this collection include the historical (and alt-historical) interactions between Americans, Chinese, and Japanese, in various combinations; the internal conflicts of those whose heritage or history includes two or more of these; and, more generally, the mystery of how human beings can commit and justify atrocities. When stories with such a focus introduce SF or magical elements, those elements are sometimes well integrated, but sometimes oddly incidental. Liu is so compelling a storyteller that he pulled me into and through the horrific details some of these stories include. I hope this warning does not discourage many readers from taking the same journey.

The author is clearly well-versed in physics, biology, and history, resulting in easily believable sci-fi futures and alternative historical scenarios. It's clear that these stories are often not entirely fictional. I've never read a fiction book that had so many - or any - Asian-inspired references, so this was unique and exotic and mindblowingly different. Some stories are delightful, others might make you cry all over your kindle. The entirety of the book is utterly astounding in creativity! A must read.

I loved this book, all the short stories are very enjoyable, and I felt like I've learnt something from each of them. These are stories you just have to think about even after you finished reading them. The genre of the stories varies wildly from sci-fi to steampunk, historical and even fairy tales, but all of them will give you something. The ideas in the sci-fi ones were great, while some other had a very unique perspective, which comes partly from the fact that the writer grew up on the border of 2 very different cultures. I can only recommend it, this was the best book I've read recently.

I haven't finished just yet, but I really like the short stories. The author writes some of them as a reflection of his life from what I gathered in his preface. Each story is unique. I like the way the author writes as well.

A fresh and sharp perspective on early modern Asian History. A humanitarian masterpiece disguised as fantasy/sci-fi. The Three Body Problem might be a more prestigious win for Ken Liu but this book show what this author (and don't forget, poet, lawyer, and computer programmer) is truly capable of!

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