

Fantasy & Science Fiction

By Tom Mula

Editor: Gordon Van Gelder

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Address: <http://www.sfsite.com/fsf/>

Publishes: Fiction, Poetry, Book Reviews

Submission Guidelines: Standard guidelines, no simultaneous or electronic submissions. Reviews are done in-house; one fiction submission at a time, up to 25,000 words. “*We prefer character-oriented stories. We receive lots of fantasy fiction, but never enough sci-fi or humor.*”

Fantasy & Science Fiction; PO Box 3447; Hoboken, NJ 07030

Description of Publication: FSF is the top of the line, slick, very well-written, and very entertaining.

Percentage of Prose: 11 issues per year; approx. 80% fiction; roughly 120 stories per year

Prose Reviews:

Helen Remembers the Stork Club, by Esther M. Friesner. Humorous, contemporary, third-person fantasy, told from the perspective of Helen of Troy. Helen (Zeus’ daughter, after all) has survived all these years, and although her body is just fine, her face has aged a bit. She spends her days shopping at Saks, and her nights with rented dates. One of them rips her off, and she gets a goddess’ revenge.

A raucous and delicate meditation on fading beauty, and its cost. Helen is a super bee-otch, but who wouldn’t be if they’d been the most beautiful woman in the world, and now no longer? She reminisces of faded glamour, regaling her bored rent-a-boy with tales of the Stork Club in the thirties, now, like her beauty, long gone. Friesner’s story is very cagey—at first, we’re entertained by Helen’s bitchy voice and her opinions of the modern world; but by the end, we care about her, seeing in her our own fragile mortality.

Two Hearts by Peter S. Beagle. Plain-spoken, first-person fantasy; a sequel to Beagle’s classic *The Last Unicorn*. A griffin is living in the Midwood, and eating the children of the village. One knight, then several knights, then a battalion, go into the woods to kill him and don’t return. Nine-year-old Sooz sets out on her own to tell the king. On her way she is befriended by Schmendrick and Molly Grue. They convince the aged King to fight the griffin himself; he does, and dies killing it.

Beagle is a master. All of the characters are human and real, with bravery and humor and failings and surprises. Told in Sooz’s voice, the story feels like the first-hand version of a tale passed down for centuries. It’s humbling to read a story like this. Beagle writes of real heroism, and real magic, and makes you realize how rare they are. I’m always sad when his stories are over; finishing one is like losing a friend.

Rating: 4 out of 10. FSF is filled with the heavyweights—Beagle, Gene Wolfe—and the writing is slick, and professional. But they had two stories by newcomers. If you think you’re ready, send your stuff here.