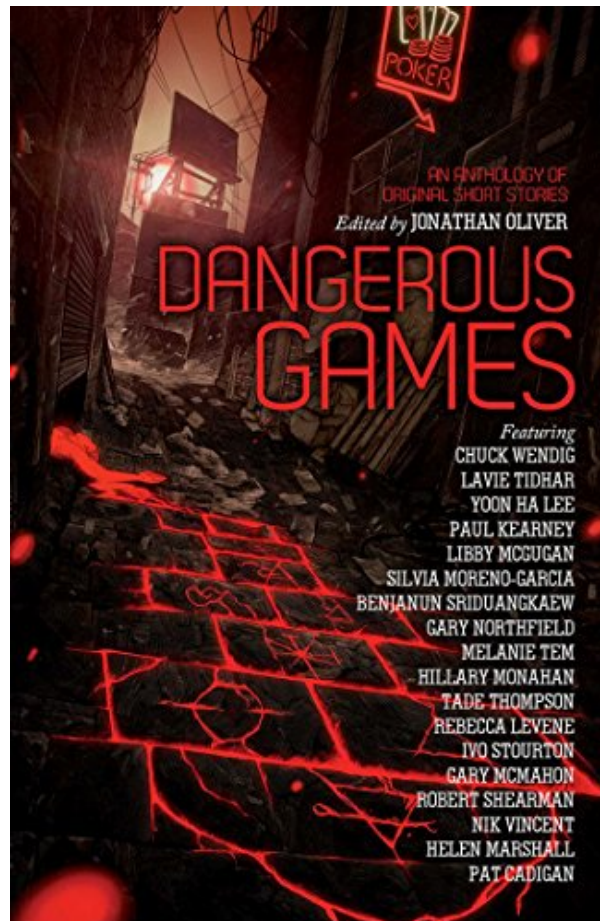
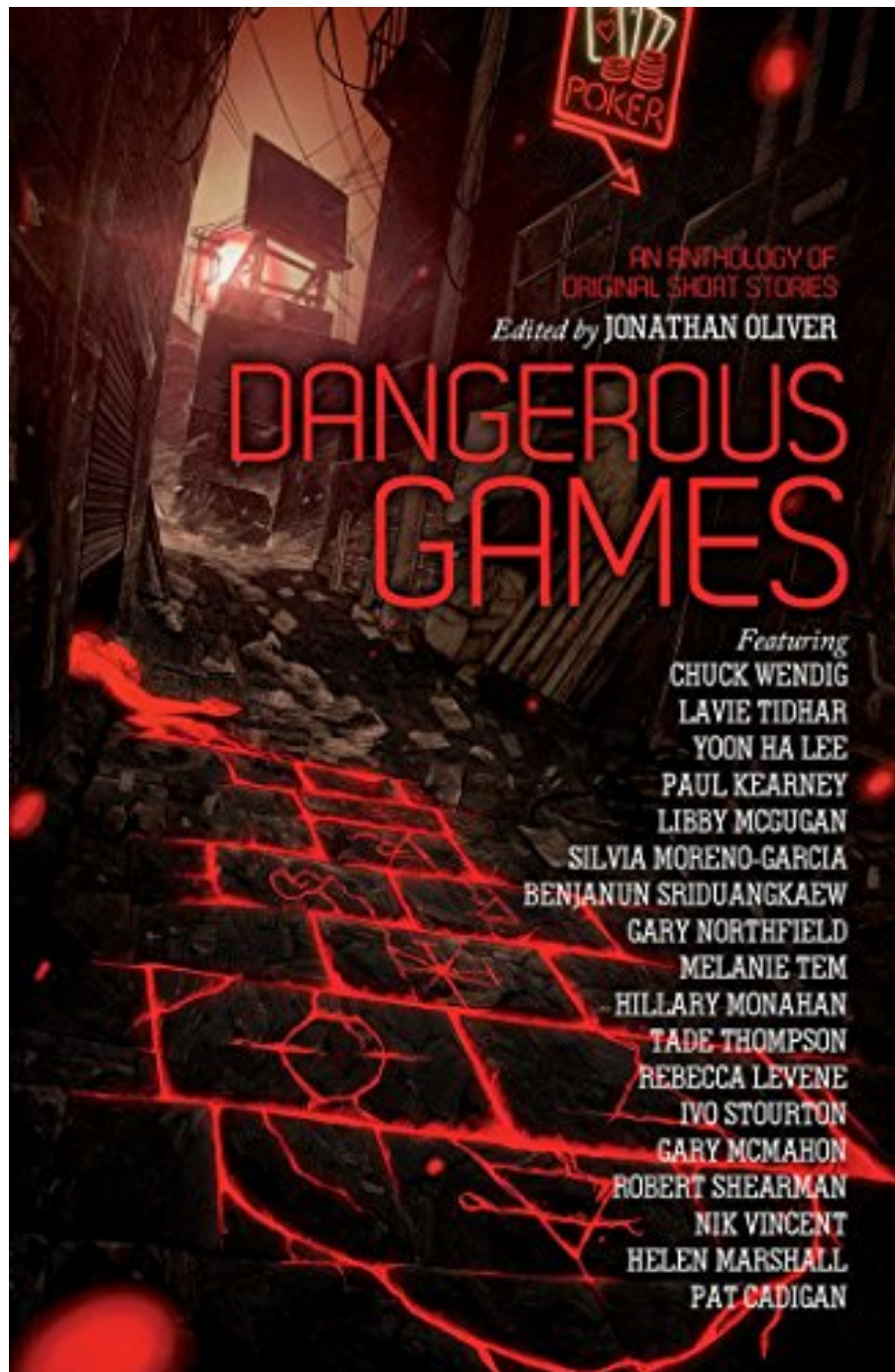


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About the Author

Jonathan Oliver is the multi-award winning editor of the anthologies *The End of the Line*, *Magic*, *House of Fear*, *End of the Road* and *Dangerous Games*. He is the editor in chief at Rebellion publishing.

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In a world of chances, one decision can bring down the house, one roll of the dice could bring untold wealth, or the end of everything. In this anthology of all new short stories the players gather, their stories often dark, and always compelling.

The players and the played, this new anthology from Jonathan Oliver (Magic, End of The Road, House of Fear, The End of The Line, World War Cthulhu) brings together brand new stories from an international team of talented authors, each with their own deadly game. This collection is set to include a full house of top authors including Hugo award-winning American writer Pat Cadigan, Brit Gary McMahon, Mexican Silvia Moreno Garcia, plus Tade Thompson, Rebecca Levene and more!

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Most helpful customer reviews

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Okay, but one of the weaker collections recently read.

By Bacterialover

Among the short story collections that I've read recently, Dangerous Games was unfortunately one that I enjoyed less. While certainly not a poor showing, I personally found most of the stories going in styles or directions that simply weren't my favorite. This may be from the luck of the draw. I don't love everything and in the game of collection readings there are going to be some that just don't fit. It may also arise from the theme of the title, which limits the stories somewhat, where most fit into the description literally with characters in some dire scenario of competition. There is less here of internal struggle than one might find in a general collection or with another given theme.

"Big Man", by Chuck Wendig opens the book with a story that was a superb choice for lead-off hitter. It sets the tone with a bit of darkness to accompany that 'danger' and presents a present day horror without flowery adornment with a very readable voice. It also introduces a common theme of making circumstances of the horror/fantasy open to reader interpretation.

While I enjoyed this start well enough the next series of stories made it more difficult for me to get into

things. Lovecraftian stories (like Moreno-Garcia's) elude me, perhaps I really just need to take the time and read some of his classic works. Lavie Tidhar is an author who I find hit or miss, and here the miss arises from a similar sense of the story not packing enough of a punch or depth despite well handled language; similarly, Sriduandkaew at times connects, but I often get lost in her dense word spinning web. This one (or duo of tales) just confused me despite reading twice.

This trend of the stories being okay but not really resonating with me in terms of the plot, action, or underlying theme continued through the comic by Northfield and beyond. I cannot comment at all on "Captain Zzapp..." at all. An eReader is simply useless to me for being able to resolve a comic's panels or text.

Eventually I came to a pair of stories I really did adore, "Death Pool", by Melanie Tem and "The Bone Man's Bride", by Hillary Monahan. These each had a strong sinister factor mixed with underlying themes/character psychology that connected with me, mental health in the case of addiction in the case of the former, and sacrifice/servitude in the latter. "Loser" which follows soon after had a similar dark tone with strong characterization to deal with a troubling subject that I found impressive.

"Two Sit Down, One Stands Up", a spin on Russian Roulette, no pun intended :) was the one more literal take on a game that kept me fully interested in as a tale, mostly because I was eager to see how it turned out. And as I enjoyed her Gifts for the One Who Comes After, I loved the mystique and mood of Helen Marshall's story. However, while I loved the style and feel of the words on my brain, the plot left less of a mark as notable.

And that situation is somewhat emblematic of many of the other stories here, there may have been an elements that I enjoyed, but other aspects of the given work failed to engage me and that one aspect that hit just wasn't strong enough to carry everything. In the end your reaction to this, like many collections will come down to personal preference and is harder to predict. But if the theme of Dangerous Games sounds interesting to you and you know a large chunk of these authors as ones you've liked before then it's worth a try.

Disclaimer: I received a free copy of this from Solaris Books via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review that originally appeared at Reading1000Lives.com

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

Worth a gamble

By J. Hamby

Oliver edits a strong anthology that is solidly entertaining. Nothing brilliant here but there is a nice level of clever storytelling tying into the general theme of games and gaming. Oddly enough something I have never quite gotten into in the speculative aspect of entertainment. Yet that category is likely the motivating tie for the authors who manage to subvert some ideas on the matter quite nicely. And in a few cases, weirdly. Paul Kearney and Pat Cadigan had the strongest entries for me but I suspect some of the others that I found ran too dark have a wider audience.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Dangerous games

By Clare O'Beara

This collection of stories by various authors, is edited by Jonathan Oliver, who has edited horror anthologies. That may be why there are so many dark, weird and plain horror stories included. I don't read horror so my rating will not be the same as that of a horror fan.

The good stories for me in this volume are:

South Mountain by Northern Irish author Paul Kearney, who wrote *A Different Kingdom* and other fantasy novels. This short considers some keen American Civil War re-enactors who somehow take a wrong turning. Setting detail is excellent.

The Game Changer by Libby McGuigan. I wasn't familiar with her work, but really enjoyed this tale of a computer game, desperate parents and a terminally ill child who is determined to win his game.

I also liked a comic strip by Gary Northfield - when is a game not a game?

If you are just into SF&F like me, buy the book for the above stories. The rest are not pleasant. But if you like horror you'll be okay with that.

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