to search for her missing power herself falling for James, a move mean her gift will never return. ollows tales of Amy's sisters (*Make Ph*, 2006; *Sexiest Man Alive*, 2007) ticing feel-good romance with lovadary characters and fascinating ut the dynamics of an upscale gourant. —*Diana Tixier Herald*

Easy. anzen.

116p. Dell, paper, \$6.99 4691).

Ramos has just returned to Dentour of duty in Afghanistan, and e'll be asked to join an elite Penta-, the Special Defense Force. He is hen he recognizes an old acquainhigh school, Esme Alden, the class an who spent a memorable few the backseat of his car, dressed as So he decides to follow her. Esme is private investigator, working fevertricate her gambler father from his cle. In one night, she needs to renting stolen by the Nazis, return it er for a finder's fee, and take that fee er's bookie. She doesn't have time to cially not for Johnny Ramos, who t of the blue and insists on followen on helping. One night, though, time to revive powerful memories a new relationship. Janzen's latest nd sexy yarn filled with nonstop l starring an irresistible bad boy. *latton*

ıtasy

t Sealey Head. a A. McKillip.

288p.Ace, \$23.95 (9780441016303).
Solatest is an elegantly written

vorlds tale set in Sealey Head, cean-side town that exists in two both of which a bell peals as the sun nagnificent Aislinn House is the foa domicile whose doors sometimes oms in a castle in which the young abo is among the females sworn to rigid, unexplainable rituals to keep from coming to an end. This-world having a devastating effect on the ey Head. While carrying out her ıma, housemaid at Aislinn House, finds herself peering into the other comes to know Ysabo, but neither nto the other's world. Meanwhile, s haunted Gwyneth as long as she nber, and she writes stories that ssible explanations for the mystery , which no one can see. McKillip's vividly portrayed characters and mbience is evident in a story that me appealing romance and humor.

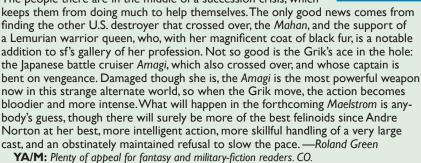
ng main characters and an g story line will reel teens in. SE.

🖈 Crusade.

By Taylor Anderson.

Oct. 2008. Roc, \$26.50 (9780451462305).

he second adventure of Lieutenant Commander Matthew Reddy and the good crew of Asiatic Fleet destroyer Walker—swept from World War II into an alternate world as violent as the one they left—is even better than the excellent Into the Storm (2008). They and their catlike Lemurian allies sail to rescue a nearby kingdom threatened by the lizardlike Grik. The people there are in the middle of a succession crisis, which



The Best of Michael Swanwick. By Michael Swanwick.

Oct. 2008. 464p. Subterranean, \$38 (9781596061781).

Swanwick's satisfyingly hefty and varied bestof includes a number of award winners and plenty of imagination, extending over time from "The Feast of Saint Janis," vintage 1980, in which a Joplin impersonator is worshipped, to "From Babel's Fall'n Glory We Fled," from 2007, in which an alien city is destroyed and the economics of trust play a major role. Swanwick's work constitutes a varied tapestry of genres ranging from space opera to fantasy to ghost stories to the alternate history of "The Dog Said Bow-Wow," one of his tales of Darger and Surplus in all their roguish, Victorian glory. A bit farther back in alt-hist, such paleontological fancies as "Triceratops Summer" and "Scherzo with Tyrannosaur" are here for rereading. And indeed, one of the best things about Swanwick's storytelling is that it is always worth another read. This volume is the perfect package for assuring that his most rereadable fiction is always at hand. —Regina Schroeder

The Darker Mask: Heroes from the Shadows.

Ed. by Gary Phillips and Christopher Chambers.

Sept. 2008. 384p. Tor, \$24.95 (9780765318503); paper, \$14.95 (9780765318510).

When most of us think "superhero," we tend to think of world savers, people in costumes with special powers. But what about superheroes for today's world, people who are "plain old us" (to quote the editors' introduction)—not world savers but "flawed and scared" people who live in the real world . . . and occasionally outside it? This mostly excellent collection of 18 short stories features contributions by such notables as Lorenzo Carcaterra (about a vengeful healer), Walter Mosley (a cursed crook), and Peter Spiegelman (a crime fighter whose

secret elixir is wine). These aren't stories about cartoon heroes, although some of them, like Spiegelman's, feature some of the trappings of comic-book superhero tales. They are, instead, stories about recognizably human characters whose lives have a dark and scary side: in L. A. Banks' "Dream Knights," for example, the heroine works for a paper-supply company, but when she is asleep, she battles evil in the dream-scape. Not all of the stories here are gems, but none of them are duds, either. A solid and interesting collection that should appeal to fans of the superhero genre, especially those willing to explore the subject from a new and darker perspective. —David Pitt

CRUSADE

An Evil Guest. By Gene Wolfe.

Sept. 2008. 304p. Tor, \$25.95 (9780765321336).

On the heels of his recent induction into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame, Wolfe offers a refreshing departure from his usual large-scale fantasies in this fast-paced blend of detective and horror fiction. Cassie Casey is a struggling theater actress whose star appeal goes through the roof when she crosses paths with charismatic scholar-turned-PI Gideon Chase. Internationally renowned for his mysterious psychic gifts, Chase promises to make Casey a star if she'll ingratiate herself with crooked billionaire William Reis and lure him into Chase's trap. Although Chase makes good on his promise, catapulting Casey to wealth and celebrity, she quickly finds herself caught in a confusing love triangle between the two adversaries that also puts her life in increasing danger. For neither Chase nor Reis-nor Casey, as she learns with growing astonishment—is quite who he or she appears to be. Wolfe spices up a tantalizingly twisting story line with crackling dialogue, vividly drawn characters, and more than a hint of supernatural menace in one of his most inventive novels to date. —Carl Hays