

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

Easy. Janzen.

416p. Dell, paper, \$6.99
 (4691).

Ramos has just returned to Den-
 tour of duty in Afghanistan, and
 e'll be asked to join an elite Penta-
 , the Special Defense Force. He is
 when he recognizes an old acquaint-
 high 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 fever-
 tricate her gambler father from his
 cle. In one night, she needs to re-
 nting 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
 icially not for Johnny Ramos, who
 t of the blue and insists on follow-
 on helping. One night, though,
 time to revive powerful memories
 a new relationship. Janzen's latest
 nd sexy yarn filled with nonstop
 starring an irresistible bad boy.
Dutton

fantasy

nt Sealey Head. ia A. McKillip.

288p. Ace, \$23.95 (9780441016303).

's latest is an elegantly written
 worlds tale set in Sealey Head,
 cean-side town that exists in two
 both of which a bell peals as the sun
 magnificent Aislinn House is the fo-
 a 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
 ma, housemaid at Aislinn House,
 finds herself peering into the other
 comes to know Ysabo, but neither
 into the other's world. Meanwhile,
 s haunted Gwyneth as long as she
 mber, 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
 ome appealing romance and humor.
es

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

★ Crusade. By Taylor Anderson.

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

The second adventure of Lieutenant Commander Mat-
 thew 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
 keeps them from doing much to help themselves. The only good news comes from
 finding the other U.S. destroyer that crossed over, the *Mahan*, and the support of
 a Lemurian warrior queen, who, with her magnificent coat of black fur, is a notable
 addition to sf's gallery of her profession. Not so good is the Grik's ace in the hole:
 the Japanese battle cruiser *Amagi*, which also crossed over, and whose captain is
 bent on vengeance. Damaged though she is, the *Amagi* is the most powerful weapon
 now in this strange alternate world, so when the Grik move, the action becomes
 bloodier and more intense. What will happen in the forthcoming *Maelstrom* is any-
 body's guess, though there will surely be more of the best felinoids since Andre
 Norton at her best, more intelligent action, more skillful handling of a very large
 cast, and an obstinately maintained refusal to slow the pace. —*Roland Green*

YA/M: Plenty of appeal for fantasy and military-fiction readers. CO.



The Best of Michael Swanwick. By Michael Swanwick.

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

Swanwick's satisfyingly hefty and varied best-
 of 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. Swan-
 wick'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 Darg-
 er and Surplus in all their roguish, Victorian
 glory. A bit farther back in alt-hist, such pa-
 leontological 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 superhe-
 roes 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 venge-
 ful 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 in-
 teresting 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*

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 strug-
 gling 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 increas-
 ing danger. For neither Chase nor Reis—nor
 Casey, as she learns with growing astonish-
 ment—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 super-
 natural menace in one of his most inventive
 novels to date. —*Carl Hays*