



The Empire of Ice Cream

By Jeffrey Ford

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The Empire of Ice Cream By Jeffrey Ford

Mixing the mundane with the metaphysical, the pairings of the everyday and the extraordinary in this collection of short fiction yield supernatural results—a young musician perceives another world while drinking coffee, a fairy chronicles his busy life in a sandcastle during the changing tide, a demonic 16th-century chess set shows up in a New Jersey bar, and Charon, the boatman of hell, takes a few days vacation. Storylines both conventional and outlandish reveal humdrum routines as menacing, or imaginary worlds as perfectly familiar. Allusions to authors such as Edgar Allan Poe and Jules Verne reinforce the fantasy tradition in these tales, while understated humor and moments of sadness add a quirky unpredictability. Also included is the previously unpublished novella, "Botch Town," a coming-of-age story about a boy on Long Island whose family and friends live ordinary lives under threats both real and imagined. Each story is followed by a brief afterword that details its genesis.

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The Empire of Ice Cream By Jeffrey Ford Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In "Coffins on the River," one of several autobiographical stories in Ford's outstanding second collection of fantastic fiction (after 2002's *The Fantasy Writer's Assistant*), the narrator remarks: "[T]he ideas would fly like bats at sundown, like phone calls from our creditors." Whether drawing on his past as a schoolboy (in the previously unpublished "Botch Town"), a clam digger ("The Trentino Kid") or an adult returning to his childhood home ("A Night in the Tropics"), Ford uses such incongruously lyrical phrases to infuse the everyday with a nebulous magic that erases the line between reality and belief. Sorrow is always quietly present, even in pieces of pure whimsy such as "The Annals of Eelin-Ok," "The Green Word" and "Summer Afternoon," and it becomes more prominent in three tales of people created by others' imaginations: the surreal "A Man of Light," the bittersweet "Boatman's Holiday" and the Nebula-winning title story. Brief afterwords provide both real-world context and a welcome pause between the intensely engaging stories. Both new and returning fans will be entranced and delighted. (Apr.)

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From [Booklist](#)

A book that opens with a story about creatures who live their entire existences in sand castles, from when youthful builders abandon them to when the tide destroys them, demands readers possessing a healthy sense of wonder and the willingness to embrace the bizarre and fantastic. The title story beautifully twists the experience and senses of a synesthetic musician to answer the question, what would happen if synesthetic experiences took on physical forms? "The Weight of Words" takes the phrase seriously to explore the sinister potential of print. "Boatman's Holiday" depicts what Charon, the boatman of Hades, does on vacation. Giants and unidentifiable alien creatures, fairy tales, the intertwining of wonder and terror, and fantastic views of both the strange and the ordinary all appear in this marvelous collection, with Ford's comments on his inspiration and motivations appended to each story. Ford is nothing if not versatile, as this collection confirms to great effect. *Regina Schroeder*

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About the Author

Jeffrey Ford is the author of *The Beyond*, *The Girl in the Glass*, *Memoranda*, *The Physiognomy*, *Portrait of Mrs. Charbuque*, and The Well-Built City trilogy. His award-winning short fiction has appeared in many science fiction and fantasy magazines and has been widely anthologized. He lives in Medford Lakes, New Jersey.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Della Bailey:

Have you spare time for a day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Sure, you can choose the suitable activity intended for spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a wander, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or maybe read a book called The Empire of Ice Cream? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You already know beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have other opinion?

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Jesse Hooker:

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