



## Skin Folk: Stories

*Nalo Hopkinson*

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## Skin Folk: Stories Nalo Hopkinson

Award-winning author Nalo Hopkinson's first collection is *Skin Folk*, and its 15 stories are as strong and beautiful as her novels.

"The Glass Bottle Trick" retells the Bluebeard legend in a Caribbean setting and rhythms, for a sharp, chilling examination of love, gender, race, and class. In the myth-tinged "Money Tree," a Canadian immigrant's greed sends him back to Jamaica in pursuit of an accursed pirate treasure. In "Slow Cold Chick," a woman must confront the deadly cockatrice that embodies her suppressed desires. In the postapocalyptic science fantasy "Under Glass," events in one world affect those in another, and a child's carelessness may doom them both. The lightest of fantastic imagery touches "Fisherman," a tropically hot tale of sexual awakening, and one of the five original stories in *Skin Folk*. --Cynthia Ward

## Skin Folk: Stories Details

Date : Published January 27th 2015 by Open Road Media Sci-Fi & Fantasy (first published December 1st 2001)

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Author : Nalo Hopkinson

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Genre : Fantasy, Short Stories, Fiction, Science Fiction, Horror, Speculative Fiction, Gbt, Queer

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## From Reader Review Skin Folk: Stories for online ebook

### Lata says

While I didn't like all of the stories here, this collection gave me a good sense of Nalo Hopkinson's earlier writing style, and I can't believe it's taken me so long to read her work! Her work ranges from speculative fiction to almost regular fiction, with generous doses of Caribbean folklore, some Canadian flavour, and some somewhat explicit sex. A few of the stories made me uncomfortable, but these left me thinking:

- Snake
- The Glass Bottle Trick
- Slow Cold Chick
- A Habit of Waste
- Fisherman
- Tan-Tan and Dry Bone
- Greedy Choke Puppy
- Precious

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### Migdalia Jimenez says

I don't usually like short stories but I absolutely adored this collection by one of my favorite authors, Nalo Hopkinson. In the vein of Octavia Butler, Hopkinson is able to create wholly original science fiction/fantasy narratives that are rooted deeply in the lives of women of color. The tales in this book range from futuristic stories where racism persists in new forms, modern takes on fairy tales and disturbing narratives that are impossible to forget.

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### Andrea Blythe says

Hopkinson's eerie and haunting collection of short stories influenced by her life and roots, both her Caribbean cultural heritage and her experiences living in Canada. With powerful, vivid prose, Hopkinson unveils strange, unsettling worlds in which ordinary eggs give birth to strange, deformed monsters, glass storms cut up everything in their path, and trees take flight. Many of these stories explore darkness. "Snake" is an absolutely terrifying tale from the point of view of a child molester and killer, "Tan Tan and Dry Bone" tells the story of a girl weighed down and burdened by not only her own guilt, but by a horrible creature bent on sucking out the last of her happiness, while my favorite, "The Glass Bottle Trick" is a Caribbean spin on the bloody Bluebeard folktale. But no matter how unsettling or terrifying, the stories are bolstered by beautiful imagery and prose that slips between the surreal and the realistic. A fabulous collection.

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### Sierra says

Although this collection is a little uneven, its best stories are powerful and sexy and indelible. Nalo Hopkinson is wonderful, wonderful, wonderful; her stories and novels mix postcoloniality, fabulism and queer studies in consistently entertaining and thought-provoking ways. I hesitate to make comparisons, but

if you miss Octavia Butler dearly, and always sort of wish she was a little younger and Canadian/Jamaican and touchy-feely, Nalo Hopkinson's your woman. You should also read her most recent book, *The New Moon's Arms* (still in hardback) and *The Salt Roads* (out in pb).

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### **charlotte says**

Part of fantasy's appeal is that it takes you some place unfamiliar. Yet Ursula Le Guin has rightly criticized the bias of much fantasy literature to assume that characters ought to be white and the world ought to look like medieval Europe. Even contemporary fantasy reverts to the European fairy tale model so often that, while Hans Christian Andersen and the Grimms are awesome, I find myself craving something different. So browsing through my library's eBook collection, when the words "Caribbean folklore" caught my eye, I checked out Skin Folk and discovered a skilled & intelligent writer in Nalo Hopkinson.

Like most collections, there are high points and low points, but Hopkinson's writing and imagination are unique and do something I rarely expect from folk tales, with their tried-and-true tropes and near-universal patterns: these stories surprised me. Like, if the Snow Queen took place inside an Etch-a-Sketch. Or orgasm-heightening sex suits became sentient. Or a cockatrice grew out of a fertilized chicken egg and ate the sleazy guy next door. That's the kind of story Hopkinson thinks of and works out.

In some cases, yes, the stories are reworkings of European stories or concepts: Red Riding Hood, Bluebeard, the aforementioned Snow Queen and cockatrice. Awesome reworkings and thoroughly unique, though. I'd never, for one, thought about what Red Riding Hood was like for Grandma. In other stories, Caribbean and African figures dominate (fan favorite Anansi makes two appearances), and there are still other stories that are straight-up, near-future sci-fi, like those sentient sex suits. Themes of gender, race, and colonialism loom large here. Female characters are struggling to get along and assert themselves in a patriarchal world; dark-skinned characters deal both with the stereotypes others put on them and with internalized racism--not always successfully. A few of the tales are told in Caribbean dialect, which I know will annoy some readers, but they should probably get over themselves and deal.

The author has lived in Jamaica, Trinidad, and Canada (and a slew of other places I can't recall), which may account for her ability to evoke very different settings and characters who more or less fit into them. Most of the protagonists are misfits and outsiders in some way. There is a lot of the bizarre, the violent, and some explicit sex here. Hopkinson also plays with story structure, switching POV, jumping forward and backward in time, and never quite ending the story where I'd expect the resolution. I'm sure I'll be picking up one of her novels in the future, to see how she handles a sustained narrative. I'll also check out the sci-fi anthology, *So Long Been Dreaming: Postcolonial Visions of the Future*, which she co-edited.

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### **Jaanaki says**

"Skin Folk",is an anthology of fifteen short stories based on Caribbean myth,culture ,tradition and folklore .Some of the stories are fabulist ,some have magical realism blended in ,some are based on folklore and some are pure science fiction.I will say that this is the best short story collection I have read this year and I am very happy to have discovered Nalo Hopkinson ?

The writing is vivid,intense ,rich and creative . The reader can literally breath these stories.There were actually one or two moments when I caught my breath and found it difficult to continue reading .Sample this

- "Beatrice watched the red lumps of flesh part under the knife .Crimson liquid leaked into the cutting board ".After reading , "Under the glass", I swear I can never look at glass the same way again and I actually felt glass spiking me all over.Her writing is that good.♥?♥?

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What I love most about her writing is that she discusses topics like race,bisexuality,queerness ,cruelty and love courageously with no holds barred in all her stories .All the stories are truly feminist and talks about women in particular. Our fear of growing old,our fear of never being loved properly,our fear of always being taken for granted,the unhealthy relationship most of us have with food (a little extra will make us put in weight?),our quality of always finding faults with how we look and the repressed sexuality and the danger it holds.All the women in her stories are set free at the end by their individual spirits and the desire to find their own happiness ..

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However,the tricky part is this. I will not recommend Nalo Hopkinson for everyone.If you are a feminist and you are really comfortable with open discussions on female sexuality and LGBTQ literature ,please do not MISS this wonderful writer.I ,for one have already included her "Salt Roads " ,on my TBR this year.

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### **Monica says**

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### **Jenni says**

What a wonderful short story collection. I loved the seamless jumps from realism to sci-fi to folklore. "Fisherman" came as a surprise, because it was very much erotica. Very well written, compelling erotica though.

I've been trying to branch out with the type of authors I read, and this was a wonderful change of pace. I picked it up because so many people compared Ms. Hopkinson to the late Octavia Butler, and I was not disappointed. I'll be reading more of Nalo Hopkinson in the future for sure.

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### **CaseyTheCanadianLesbrarian says**

What an amazing collection of speculative short stories!

I almost loved this as much as Octavia Butler's collection Bloodchild, which is the best sf/fantasy short story collection ever, in my opinion.

Full review to come on Casey the Canadian Lesbrarian.

Here's the review!

I've really been spoilt by fantastic short story collections this summer, and Skin Folk by Nalo Hopkinson is no exception. When I say fantastic, I mean it in more than one sense: these stories are remarkable, especially

wrapped as they are in Hopkinson's slim but lively prose, but they're also fantastical: some fairy tales, some fantasy, and some science fiction. If you enjoy language that's beautiful but gets to the point and surreal but sounds like real people ("crinkling her face like running a fork through molasses")—you need to pick up Skin Folk. In particular, this book's diverse settings and characters allow Hopkinson to show off her remarkable command of different dialects. Skin Folk is certainly one of the best collections of fantastic short fiction I've ever read, on par with Octavia Butler's Bloodchild and Other Stories (but happily, with more sex); in fact, I'd go so far as to say it's one of the best collections of short fiction period that I've ever read....

See the whole review here: <http://caseythecanadianlesbrarian.wor...>

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### **Courtney says**

Read "The Glass Bottle Trick" on the Fantasy Magazine website. It's a bluebeard re-telling - and it's *amazing* - 5/5 stars. The setting and the way the culture immerses the story... the way the folklore is brought in... and the twist at the end - wow. No fainting heroine in need of rescue **here**. Her future may be uncertain, and we don't see how it turns out, but she thinks fast and with any luck it'll work in her favor.

I **need** to read more of this author's work - definitely bumping her up to the priority list.

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### **Bogi Takács says**

My review is now online on Tor.com:  
<https://www.tor.com/2018/08/13/quiltb...>

Source of the book: Bought with my own money (Library book sale)

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### **Elena says**

I usually prefer novels to short fiction, but these are some of the best short stories I've ever read.

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### **Melanti says**

While there's a couple of stories that aren't re-tellings, the rest of the volume is nearly evenly split between Caribbean and European folklore. And even the European based tales had a heavy Caribbean flavor.

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### **Nadine Tomlinson says**

Synopsis: "Throughout the Caribbean, [there are] stories about people who aren't what they seem. Skin gives these folks their human shape. When the skin comes off, their true selves emerge. And whatever the burden their skin bears, once they remove it, skin folk can fly..."

My introduction to Nalo Hopkinson through this riveting short story collection was like an out-of-body experience.

Continue reading

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**Renee says**

Oh, the language! The stories are good but the stories are spectacular with the language she uses.

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