Books

Review: *Get in Trouble*

By Kelly Link '91CC (Atria Books)

By
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Something ominous lurks in Kelly Link's latest collection of short stories, *Get in Trouble*. Sure, the book begins with the ordinary — a small town, a theme park, a

crowded bar — but it quickly veers into the bizarre — demon lovers, superheroes, and double shadows — making the familiar unfamiliar and often unsettling. In Link's world, the line between fantasy and reality is always fluid.

"The Summer People" finds Fran, a working-class teenager from a small Appalachian town, forced to care for eerie, fairy-like creatures who mysteriously live in a nearby mountain house: "Overhead were the fantastic shapes of the dirigibles, and the dragons that were hung on string and swam perpetually through the air above your head." In "The Lesson," a couple's visit to the portentous, possibly supernatural "Bad Claw Island" turns into an all too plausible horror story when they learn that their surrogate has gone into labor at just twenty-four weeks (this tale is drawn from Link's own experience). Just as a bad dream can seem real, so too can life seem nightmarish and surreal.

Link '91CC is well known for her young-adult collection *Pretty Monsters*, and she ventures into adolescence again in "Secret Identity" and "The New Boyfriend." Both stories explore relatable feelings of inadequacy, jealousy, and the longing for acceptance — all while their characters cope with evil villains and ghost boyfriend dolls. With elements of magical realism, science fiction, and romance, all of these tales — like adolescence — hover on the border between half-known worlds.

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