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Year's Best SF (Year's Best Science Fiction Book 1)



Synopsis

WORLD-ALTERING SCIENCE FICTION Tales of wonder and adventure, set on distant planets or in the future of our own Stories that go beyond the limits of Space and Time David G. Hartwell has brought together only the best of this year's new SF from established pros and audacious newcomers, selecting only those that share the universal quality of great science fiction. Our familiar world will look a little less familiar after you read one. Includes stories by: Joe Haldeman Ursula K. Le Guin Robert Silverberg Roper Zelazny

Book Information

File Size: 484 KB

Print Length: 496 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins e-books; 1- edition (October 13, 2009)

Publication Date: October 13, 2009

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B000FC28Y4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #192,671 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #220

in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Short Stories #358 in Kindle Store >

Kindle eBooks > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Anthologies & Short Stories #532

in Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > Anthologies

Customer Reviews

This is the first volume of David Hartwell's annual anthology of science fiction stories. It contains fourteen stories, each with an introduction to the story's author and the author's other works. It is a fair beginning of a great series. My four favorite stories are: James Patrick Kelly's "Think Like a Dinosaur" has become a classic. Comparisons to Tom Goodwin's "The Cold Equations" are appropriate. I find Kelly's story more chilling. Being able to think--and act--like an alien is a matter of empathy. Stephen Baxter's "Gossamer" combines two science fiction problem-solving stories into one. Lvov and Cobh are stranded on Pluto. One tries to figure out whether regularly-shaped

splotches in the ice may be a new form of life. The other tries to get them home. They don't seem to be working against each other. Joe Haldeman's "For White Hill" seems like just another love story on the home planet Earth. Two lovers are attracted by their different approaches to life. Nancy Kress' "Evolution" is a post-apocalyptic story in which medical treatment and personal relationships both play important roles. Why do we always hurt the ones we love? The introductions in this book and in Year's Best SF 2 are briefer than those found in later volumes. I am glad that this early form changed into the more extended treatment as the series progressed. Hartwell's longer introductions add a great deal to the reader's enjoyment. This collection is recommended for its several very good stories. They are worth reading through some so-so stories that also appear.

When David Hartwell started his own annual series of the year's best SF with this volume in the mid nineties, the doorstopper series edited by Gardner Dozois had been running for over a decade. Hartwell made some passing references to other anthologies being unfocused but otherwise he avoided the issue and that begged the question of why this series started and should you buy it instead of or as well as the Dozois book? On the strength of this, the first volume, I am happy to recommend Hartwell's choice to anyone who is into SF in the traditional sense. That does not mean that the contents are old fashioned just that the contents are certainly Science Fiction and not some related genre. The fourteen stories here, all of which were written in 1995, include works by a selection of the best of contemporary SF authors. Writers like Silverberg, Baxter, Benford, Kress, Haldeman, Woolfe, Zelazny and Sheckley rarely disappoint though the last of those is represented here by one of his weaker recent works. The highlights for me were Joe Haldeman's "For White Hill" and Robert Silverberg's "Hot Times in Magma City". The first is a tale of war, art, love and sacrifice set on a ruined Earth in the far future and the second is set in a near future LA beset by volcanic eruptions. The producers of "Volcano" and "Dante's Peak", a pair of similarly themed disaster movies should have studied Silverberg's tale to see how to inject some real humanity into the subject. Like the Silverberg story, William Spencer's "Downloading Midnight", Gene Wolfe's "The Ziggurat" and "Evolution" by Nancy Kress are all set on a contemporary or near future Earth and all three are compelling and rewarding stories.

Hartwell opens his introduction thus: "SCIENCE FICTION IS ALIVE AND WELL" This is the first volume of an annual year's best science fiction anthology, to be published each spring in a widely available mass market edition. In each volume the best science fiction of that year will be represented. Not fantasy. Not science fantasy. Science fiction: This anthology will contain only

stories that a chronic reader would recognize as SF....Furthermore, the existence of more than one year's best anthology in the SF genre has been good for the field..."Given the 12th volume has just come out this year, looks like he was right.He also mentions that he thought it was a great year for novellas, so there are only 14 stories in this book because of several of the longer variety.The stories begin with the best, James Patrick Kelly's Think Like A Dinosaur.There are a couple here I don't like, and usually in an average number of story anthologies would expect one, but there are no stories that are only ordinary to balance that. Still, only a 3.68 average. A little down for a Year's Best. Close enough though to make it a 4.5, rounding up a little.Year's Best SF 01 : Think Like a Dinosaur - James Patrick KellyYear's Best SF 01 : Wonders of the Invisible World - Patricia A.

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