



War with the Robots (Science Fiction)

Harry Harrison

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It's a man's world - but a robot's future...

One day the tough, dangerous, dirty jobs will be done by robots:

- superhumanly strong and invulnerable soldiers, with a built-in killer instinct
- miners and sandhogs who can work on distant planets too deadly for man
- incorruptible judges, fearing neither political pressure nor criminal vengeance
- librarians with *total* knowledge instantly available...

Harry Harrison has painted a chilling yet piercingly prophetic picture of the Robot Age: a time when man's 'slave' machines have learned their own strength - and the weaknesses of their masters!

War with the Robots (Science Fiction) Details

Date : Published by Grafton Books (first published 1962)

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Author : Harry Harrison

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Genre : Science Fiction, Fiction, Science Fiction Fantasy



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From Reader Review War with the Robots (Science Fiction) for online ebook

Lew says

This is a classic collection of 1950s science fiction stories by Harry Harrison. I enjoy all of them.

Joe Santoro says

Extra star for the cover for this one... it's fantastic! I don't think i really related to any particular story, but what a great piece!

The book itself is rather interesting, it's feels like Harry Harrison sat down with his publisher and said 'hey, Asimov isn't the only guy that writes about robots!' Each story has a one page, I guess essay, that talks about a particular aspect of robots and their social implications that the story following is discussing, which is kinda fun, if a bit pretentious.

Of the stories themselves:

'Simulated Trainer' must surely have been on Orson Scott Card's list as a boy.. it's a now-familiar theme. 'Velvet Glove' is an interesting one on what makes a human, though not nearly in depth as others. My favorite is one I've read in other collections 'Arm of the Law' . It features a small frontier town (on Mars, but that's not really important) that gets an mysterious package.. a test robotic cop.

A close second was 'the repairman', who featured one of the men that keep the hyperspaceways running by making sure the beacons are active. This one was an ancient one, that a local lizard people had broken.. they had used the radioactive runoff to mutate and improve the species, and had made it into a holy temple. It's not really a robot story (though the main character does use a couple), it's a really fun one.

A couple of the others were pretty pedestrian.. the last one, the 'title' story, was an interesting twist on the 'robots gone amok' them. Well worth checking out if you a fan of early sci fi.

Luca Cresta says

Sempre divertente la prosa di HH. Testi molto vari in questa raccolta ma sempre un livello molto elevato.

Annise says

Books of short stories are always a hit-and-miss affair, with the shorter form perhaps allowing authors to try out ideas that might or might not work, and there are generally a few good stories and a few duffers. War with the Robots had a flat level of 'pretty good', which is a little disappointing given how much I enjoyed novels I've read by the same author. There were no real surprises, no stand-out favourite, though no really

awful ones either. The main problem I had was that most of the stories felt a bit plodding. I don't expect all short stories to have an epic twist, but for an author who generally writes ripping yarn adventure stories, these all felt a little on the tame side, and there were no real memorable characters or plots. Still, there were no complete switch-off stories either, so it's a solid collection. Worth a look, but don't expect anything too Earth shattering.

Andy says

ANTHOLGY OF SF STORIES BY HARRY HARRISON.

Cheryl says

Intelligent and witty pulp fiction. Surprisingly not too dated, mostly. Harrison did believe that we'd send an unmanned mission to the Moon before we sent people, but honestly, we probably should have. Several of the stories could have been the first chapters to wonderful novels... which certainly adds to the Sense of Wonder I got from reading these.

Not all robots in here are android, but most have some free will. And most seem to be governed by a variation of Asimov's Three Laws. Most stories are about how robot's motivations conflict with human motivations, and the consequences thereof... and they're usually pretty significant consequences.

If I owned this, rather than fortunately finding it at the university library, I would keep it for a reread. I will consider more by the author, even though the very title 'Stainless Steel Rat' is a turn-off for me.

Anyway, recommended for fans of old-school (1950s mostly) SF short stories. I will make sure the titles are in the blurb because maybe you can find them more readily individually.

William Powell says

While all of the stories in this collection are good, there is one that for me is a standout story of the robot SF genre, namely *The Velvet Glove*, published in 1956. Set in context, that's just a couple of years after Asimov's "The Caves of Steel". Harrison takes the next step, writing the story from the point of view of its robot protagonist (Jon Venex), but his target is surely the racism of the time, and his question is clearly "What is a man?".

It's not only a political statement, but a (short) crime thriller in its own right, and one in which the robotic nature of the protagonist is central to the plot. For many years, for me at least, this was the story against which all other robot stories were judged.

To be fair, the other stories are very good as well (though the robots are mostly more robotic, or more computer-like). It's just that none of them has stayed with me quite as enduringly as Jon Venex.

Jakk Makk says

Short stories are the Milk Duds of novels. It's often leftovers the producer wants to turn into money. Maybe they made sense back in the chain smoking astronauts on Mars with Robots who read the Want-ads days, but they try my patience. I'm clearing my shelves of this stuff, so here comes the DNF purge of 2017.

Bob says

This was a very interesting book about the robot age. I found it very compelling and a real page turner. I only found a couple of the stories a little dry. If it were not for them I would have given this book five stars. My favorite story was the first one. I love any story that has to do with conspiracy and mars. Anyways, I think any body looking for a good book about robots this is the one to get. I know this is controversial but I could almost say it is right up there with I robot in terms of robot stories. I think a lot of the stories were even similar to i robot. I know that pyramid books also published books by Isaac Asimov(author of I robot). By the way, pyramid books is who published this book. So, all in all this is a great classic science fiction book from the sixty's.
