



100 Great Science Fiction Short Short Stories

Isaac Asimov (Editor) , Martin H. Greenberg (Editor) , Joseph D. Olander (Editor)

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100 Great Science Fiction Short Short Stories Details

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Ian says

Isaac Asimov wrote an entire introduction advancing the proposition that the effectiveness of short-short stories rests upon their "punch line." He then for some unfathomable reason decided to add pithy quips preceding each story, ranging from non sequiturs to facile jokes to **complete giveaways of stories' punch lines.** ("God damn it, Asimov," was a shamefully frequent thought of mine while reading this book.) Do your damnedest to ignore the blurbs — if you can manage it, you'll be much better off.

Michael Tildsley says

This is a collection that, for the most part, doesn't take itself too seriously. It seems that most of the time short-short stories only ever really have time to convey one emotion, and the easiest emotion to send out in a short amount of time is humor. I don't dislike that, and many of the funny stories in this collection are memorable, but so too are the ones that end in tragedy.

Here are the stories I thought were worthy of five stars in and of themselves:

"Zoo" by Edward D. Hoch

"The Destiny of Milton Gomrath" by Alexei Panshin

"The Deadly Mission of Phineas Snodgrass" by Frederik Pohl

"If at First You Don't Succeed, To Hell with It!" by Charles E. Fritch

"The Worlds of Monty Willson" by William F. Nolan

"Punch" by Frederik Pohl

"The Room" by Ray Russell

"Latest Feature" by Maggie Nadler

"Thang" by Martin Gardner

"Revival Meeting" by Dannie Plachta

"Kindergarten" by James E. Gunn

"A Cup of Hemlock" by Lee Killough

"Examination Day" by Henry Slesar

Fred Hughes says

An oddball collection of really really short science fiction stories. Some of the authors are well known and others I've never heard of. Most stories are from the 50's 60's and 70's with the occasional 1930's story.

Some show flashes of brilliance while others not so much.

Depending on how much you read the ending of some of them is obvious while others are more sophisticated. So if like your science fiction in small bites this is the book for you.

Light reading, nothing too heavy to absorb

Skye Cardoz says

I do not usually read science-fiction, but I thought I'd take a chance with this. Maybe because this isn't my genre, I didn't like this book so much. Some of the stories in here were really good and blew my mind. Some of the stories scored points for imagination. However, the rest were just boring. I didn't even understand it.

Helen Patrice says

I first read this book possibly 1982. Loved it to bits. Rereading it now, I find the many of the ideas limited, and relying on the set-up of a fairly crappy pun. A fair few dated attitudes, too.

A few treasures stand the test of time, but Asimov's wisecracks prefacing every story wear thin.

Michael says

Some of these extremely short stories were quite good, some were hilarious but overall, I found the collection to be disorientating and disappointing. There's something very frustrating about reading a sci-fi short story that lasts 3 pages and then starting another one that lasts 3 pages and on and on. As soon as you get your bearings in the story, it's over. In addition, a lot of the stories seemed just to be built around one punchline. Kind of a waste of time. Toward the end, I just skipped the ones that didn't have a good opening paragraph.

Gisele says

This book is reminiscent of Black Mirror, The Twilight Zone, and Phillip K. Dick's Electric Dreams.

Bad-at-reading says

If groan-worthy Twilight Zone twists and terrible, awful puns are your thing, this is an essential anthology. I love both of these things unashamedly.

Dan Sutton says

This compilation of post-Golden-Age and Golden Age science fiction is a requirement for anyone who takes the genre seriously. It contains stories by Asimov, Sheckley, Blish, Bester and many others, a large number of which are not available anywhere else. Thirty five years after its publication, this book represents a fascinating window into the history of science fiction in the '60s and '70s.

Toby says

100 Short short stories collected by one of the Grand Masters of golden age of science fiction. It can only go one way; stratospheric highs, combined with hellish lows and fair about of stories with their feet firmly on the ground. And that is exactly what I got.

There are some truly enjoyable stories in this collection, real imaginative works of art from the medium and format. Of course the short short story lends itself quite readily to the creation of truly awful puns or three pages of setup for a punchline that is so bad your eyes become the wheels on the (appropriately futuristic) Dodge Tomahawk.

But the majority of them are forgettable fluff, enjoyable as brief entertainment but as my brain will attest to almost immediately forgotten.

I can now say that I have read stories from several well known/great names that I had yet to come across in my exploration of the novels of the genre, Larry Niven, Frederik Pohl, Roger Zelazny, Fritz Leiber and especially Jerome Bixby.

But also there are names that I would never have thought to associate with science fiction, Anthony Boucher, Bill Pronzini and Donald E. Westlake, making this a more important collection than I give it credit for with my 3 star rating.

It's a curio, a museum piece, something that says "we were here, without us you could not be" and it's an entertaining one at that.

Cheri Arbuckle says

I love good flash fiction. I also love classic SF/F. This book is a great combination of both. In here are 100 stories from the biggest names in SF prior to 1980. Some stories are better than others, as to be expected with any short story collection, but particularly one this size.

Keep in mind the age of these stories while reading them. They were all first published between 1937 and 1976 and they show the customs and mores of their times. There are only a small number of female voices here, but that again is a product of the time.

Inside you'll find stories from all the greats: Asimov, Bova, Niven, Zelazny, Lieber, Kornbluth, Poul, Blish, Russ, Boucher, and more. And if you don't know those names, get thyself to the library and start reading.

Andrew says

This is a tricky book to categorise - like the title says it consists of 100 short stories which vary in length but none are longer than a few pages.

So why the challenge - well as you can imagine they vary greatly in quality or readability or just appeal I guess that part is subjective to the reader and for me - well it was easy to rip through the book as well you can do but there were whole groups of stories you could easily just forget.

Then again why not just right the book off- yes there there was the fair share of good stories both from famous and no so famous authors but did that out weight the mediocre ones or the ones I just didn't get, well that's the point I didn't notice.

What I did notice was Asimov's fascination with short stories and what they represented. You see (and he made a very compelling argument) that with a short story you are limited to the amount of time (and more importantly the number of words) you can use, not only to set the story up but also to complete it.

You see Asimov's argument was that with such constraints you had to be short, sharp and concise and it was only the true masters of their profession would could pull this off. Hence this book, good or bad, love or hate consisted of the work of authors who knew short stories and how to write them.

Suddenly it makes you see the whole book in a totally new light and I for one was made to appreciate things I had not stopped to think about. I know I often say this but sometimes a books is made by its introduction (or end notes) more than its contents and this is a perfect example. If you picked it up just for a collection of short stories, but if you read a little further you would realise this is something more.

Murray says

This is my favorite collection of stories! "The Sign at the End of the Universe" always makes me laugh.

Darin says

The title is a bit misleading. The 100 included short stories are "short short" in length, but few are actually great. Coming from a host of major and minor science fiction and fantasy writers there are many themes exercised throughout the work and co-editor Isaac Asimov himself includes four of his short stories.

100 Great Science Fiction Short Short Stories does offer a few surprises. For one, George R. R. Martin's "FTA," a short involving interstellar travel, is surprisingly good considering that he is known for his fantasy work "A Song of Ice and Fire." Mathematician Martin Gardner has two of his stories included in this collection as well. Although a prolific mathematician and science writer, his stories, like most of the shorts in this work of 100, are dull.

For each story, Azimov includes a one phrase introduction to the story in attempt to provide a comedic summary of the upcoming story. Sadly, these quips are more distracting then they are helpful and coupled with the large amount of disposable short stories, this work largely disappoints. Only short stories from George R. R. Martin, F. Pohl, W. Nolan, R Sheckley, H. Slesar, I. Azimov ("Eyes Do More Than See"), and D. Plachta save this collection from complete failure.

lauren says

There aren't enough compilations like this. Seeing into the future, as science fiction writers (i.e. editors) are destined to do, they saw a world filled with instant conveniences...including reading.

I've owned this book since my father gave it to me as a child, and though I haven't picked it up in years, some of the stories within remain my favorites.
