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The End Is Nigh: The Apocalypse Triptych



Synopsis

Famine. Death. War. Pestilence. These are the harbingers of the biblical apocalypse, of the End of the World. In science fiction, the end is triggered by less figurative means: nuclear holocaust, biological warfare/pandemic, ecological disaster, or cosmological cataclysm. But before any catastrophe, there are people who see it coming. During, there are heroes who fight against it. And after, there are the survivors who persevere and try to rebuild. THE APOCALYPSE TRIPTYCH will tell their stories. Edited by acclaimed anthologist John Joseph Adams and bestselling author Hugh Howey, THE APOCALYPSE TRIPTYCH is a series of three anthologies of apocalyptic fiction. THE END IS NIGH focuses on life before the apocalypse. THE END IS NOW turns its attention to life during the apocalypse. And THE END HAS COME focuses on life after the apocalypse.

Post-apocalyptic fiction is about worlds that have already burned. Apocalyptic fiction is about worlds that are burning. THE END IS NIGH is about the match. TABLE OF CONTENTS: Introduction by John Joseph Adams | The Balm and the Wound by Robin Wasserman | Heaven is a Place on Planet X by Desirina Boskovich | Break! Break! Break! by Charlie Jane Anders | The Gods Will Not Be Chained by Ken Liu | Wedding Day by Jake Kerr | Removal Order by Tananarive Due | System Reset by Tobias S. Buckell | This Unkempt World is Falling to Pieces by Jamie Ford | BRING HER TO ME by Ben H. Winters | In the Air by Hugh Howey | Goodnight Moon by Annie Bellet | Dancing with Death in the Land of Nod by Will McIntosh | Houses Without Air by Megan Arkenberg | The Fifth Day of Deer Camp by Scott Sigler | Enjoy the Moment by Jack McDevitt | Pretty Soon the Four Horsemen are Going to Come Riding Through by Nancy Kress | Spores by Seanan McGuire | She's Got a Ticket to Ride by Jonathan Maberry | Agent Unknown by David Wellington | Enlightenment by Matthew Mather | Shooting the Apocalypse by Paolo Bacigalupi | Love Perverts by Sarah Langan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This collection of stories is one of the best anthologies that I've ever read and the idea of stringing three books together into a triptych is brilliant. This book is the first in a set of three books dealing with the apocalypse, this one containing stories specifically leading up to the end and the next two with stories taking place during and after. Every story in this collection brought me to a new view of the upcoming end to the world. Even though a few of the stories have a similar method of ending the world, every story was pleasantly unique. The real greatness of every story in this collection comes from the people in the stories and how they react to their unique situation. Every story left me wanting to know what happened next. Fortunately, many of the authors are doing continuations of their stories in the subsequent books. I'm hesitant to share anything specific about the stories for fear of spoiling anything. The joy of reading this book is, starting a story knowing the world is going to end for the people you are reading about, but not knowing how it will happen or what they will do.

Each story is fantastic, with well-thought out variations on TEOTWAWKI. You get prions, GMO, nanotechnology, asteroids, and even mutations -a little something for everyone. I read the entire collection in about two hours because I simply couldn't put it down. My only complaint is the agonizing wait for the next part of the triptych!

As far as collections go, the End is Nigh is one of the better non-best-of-year ones that I've read. The stories are consistently good, with no outright fails, and many that stand out as exceptional. Conceptually, the Apocalypse Triptych, of which the End is Nigh is volume one, is ingenious. I especially liked the promise that several of the authors would have stories in the other two volumes, detailing the "during" and "after" timelines. However, this backfired somewhat although not abysmally so, but at times I was indeed bothered. I haven't read the others in the triptych yet (and I do plan to) but several of the stories here have such a clear lack of resolution that they feel incomplete. I have no problem with a good Flash Gordon-esque cliffhanger, and some go that route, but others just kind of stop, as if a longer story had been divided into three volumes. I feel nitpicky pointing this out, but I think

it's important to acknowledge. In the long run, I may double back and decide that, in fact, judging the triptych as a whole, this turned out to be very effective, but as a single volume, some of the stories are simply incomplete. To end on a positive note, I wanted to highlight some of the stories I enjoyed the most. "Shooting the Apocalypse" by Paolo Bacigalupi has an impressive style, creepy but tangible, and a setting simultaneously unique and familiar. "Love Perverts" is definitely perverted, and I hope Sarah Langan has another story in the next volume, she must! "The Fifth Day of Deer Camp" by Scott Sigler is absolutely a day time read, unless you plan on waiting out the night armed by a boarded up window. And "BRING HER TO ME" by Ben H. Winters covers territory I haven't ever read before, and I hope and expect to see more of him later in the triptych as well. All said and done, this is a good solid start to a great idea. John Joseph Adams and Hugh Howey did not let me down.

PROS:- About a dozen short stories all about life right before an apocalypse.- A couple of good stories.
CONS:- I didn't find most of the stories that engaging.- There was no story I would want to re-read.- Only a couple of stories would I recommend to a friend to read.
CONCLUSION: It's not that the stories are bad, it's just that they're not that great. Most are just OK, which is why I give the book 3 stars. I was surprised because there are several heavy hitters (star authors) hope the future 2 volumes are better, because I like the genre.

Like almost all John Adams anthologies, this volume has higher quality writing than most and at least a few, if not more, undiscovered authors whose short format stories make you want to go out and explore their other writings. The other best thing about the anthology is that there is no repetitive cookie-cutter 'writing to the book' themes in the entire work. All stories set up different points of view, e.g. a struggling mother of two who feels there is something decidedly different in one of her children and his peers, all born after a Kracatoa-type volcanic eruption. The author conveys a sense of foreboding that reflects a fear of all parents, that their child is 'different'. A powerful short story that sticks in your consciousness. Not all the stories are to every taste, which is actually another reason for the rave review. Too many "Wolfman Zombie in space" collections are boring when the same setting generates the same story over and over so that by the time you get to later stories you are numb and your imagination has been starved into submission. No way is this anthology like that, the last story read is as fresh as the first and different enough to keep your interest riveted. Good read!

This is Volume 1 of a three volume trilogy of Apocalyptic Science Fiction Stories. The introduction indicates that most of the authors have signed up to do follow-up stories in Volumes 2 and 3. Volume 1 stories take you up to the apocalypse while Volume 2 and 3 stories will take place during and after the apocalypse. Because of the nature of the trilogy, Volume 1 stories, although they can be read stand-alone, generally left me wanting more. Because most of the authors are returning for Volume 2 and 3, some of the stories in Volume 1 seemed somewhat incomplete (as if a longer story was written but cut off to be placed in the subsequent volumes of the trilogy). Therefore, the criteria I personally used for rating this book was whether the stories were interesting enough for me to purchase Volume 2. The answer was yes as I really liked 12 of the 22 stories and wanted to know what comes next. Even the other 10 stories were not bad (only a couple I didn't care for at all).

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