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After The Apocalypse: Stories



Synopsis

In her new collection, Story Prize finalist Maureen F. McHugh delves into the dark heart of contemporary life and life five minutes from now and how easy it is to mix up one with the other. Her stories are post-bird flu, in the middle of medical trials, wondering if our computers are smarter than us, wondering when our jobs are going to be outsourced overseas, wondering if we are who we say we are, and not sure what we'd do to survive the coming zombie plague.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I found this book to be neither wonderful, definitely not deserving of the accolades listed on the product page, nor terrible. It's just ok. I would certainly never go so far as to say it has "Gorgeously crafted stories," or that it is "Hauntingly beautiful." It's just a collection of inoffensive short stories that all deal, in some way or another, with the decline of humanity. I usually enjoy short story collections; I enjoy allowing my imagination to complete the story. However, McHugh failed, in my opinion, to really provide much to fuel the reader's imagination. With the exception of the titular story, the last in the collection, I finished each story and said to myself, "OK, well no one can ever say that I didn't read that story." Even now, a few days after finishing the collection, I can only remember 2 of the stories; the rest are just forgettable little vignettes. The characters didn't make any kind of impression on me, nor did the stories ever really make me stop and ask myself any challenging questions. If you're looking for something that's easy to read in little snippets, on the toilet for example, you have my blessing. If you're looking for a collection of stories that really examine the

human condition after the apocalypse, look elsewhere.

I bought this Kindle edition after reading a rave review by Michael Dirda of the Washington Post. Maureen F. McHugh really knows how to set up a story and hook the reader. Tremendous turns of phrase as well. I did miss solid endings in most of the stories though. In many of them, the action just...stopped. I understand why she does that, I think. It's as if she's saying, "There are no neat endings. Life, especially after the apocalypse, is not linear with a beginning, middle, and ending. I'll set up the story for you, create some interesting characters, but you, dear reader, must do the rest. Like you yourself would have to do if *you* found yourself alive After the Apocalypse." And that's legitimate. But not for every story. If some of these stories had a solid conclusion, even one you didn't like, this collection would easily gain my fifth star. Fans of modern science fiction and elegant writing will like this book a lot. This Kindle edition is definitely worth the price. A couple of typos but nothing serious. The stories, and the book, are short. But they all grab you and stick with you. It's where and how they leave you off that I think needs improvement.

McHugh's stories are short, intense, gripping, interesting, and unexpected. They're profoundly disturbing, if only because their post-apocalyptic landscapes are so hauntingly familiar, so close to our own. In the best of the them, character, plot, and idea all come together in a way that leaves the reader breathless, frightened, and wanting more. In the worst of them (and these are still pretty darn good), they fall just a little short of being emotionally or cognitively complete... a frustration akin to a mental splinter. Having never read McHugh before, these stories were a pleasant surprise that I read voraciously; I fully expect to read her other works because of them.

This collection of short fiction explores several ways a world could end, from the Zombie Apocalypse to massive economic collapse. What sounds like a potential downer of a collection is -- surprisingly -- a real joy to read. McHugh's prose is clean and clear, and her characters are brave, sympathetic, and contradictory. And the questions! What happens to liberal values when every day is a life or death struggle? When a computer program shows signs of conscious thought, is it murder to turn it off? How ethical is it, really, to ask people to volunteer for drug trials when there's a risk of terrible consequences? This is quiet brilliance, dressed up in a shambling, stinking zombie's clothes. Recommended.

I enjoyed reading this book very much. The stories were all rather unusual and thought-provoking.

It's scary that some of these are pretty much right on target in terms of what will happen when we DO have some sort of apocalypse - and with the way things are going, nothing is getting worked on and our climate will change drastically. The only thing I didn't like was one description of my hometown, Albuquerque, as not attractive even before the climate change. While it sounds like the author knows New Mexico, she clearly needs a lesson in the better aspects of ABQ before the climate change happens. Other than that, I very much liked that story and all the other ones.

So if you're looking to read something and start to get really interested then turn the page and try to start another story then this is for you. Just be aware every chapter is a new story in the same world. Each chapter is very interesting but I would love to read more about them. It seems like every chapter is actually like the 4th chapter of different book. Very little character development and not much of a conclusion. Yet each one was fairly interesting.

A collection of literary short stories, all taking place after an apocalyptic event of one type or another (epidemic, dirty bomb attack, zombie outbreak), the focus here is on the characters more than story. Definitely more "The Road" than "The Stand," the stories are mostly gems with my favorites being the first one which has zombies and the last one, from which the book gets its name. But the writing is magnificent throughout with an emphasis more on creating people who are real than characters who are likable or heroic.

I read great reviews about this book, but quite frankly, I was a bit bored. The book features different stories about different zombie encounters. Unfortunately, the stories don't go into a lot of detail and they're very short, and often quite boring. It wasn't an awful read, but I wouldn't necessarily recommend it either.

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