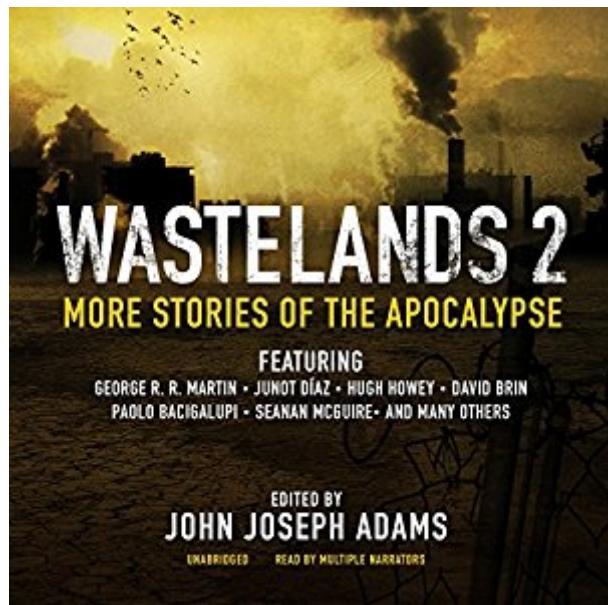


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Wastelands 2: More Stories Of The Apocalypse



Synopsis

Famine, Death, War, and Pestilence - the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the harbingers of Armageddon. These are our guides through the Wastelands. *Wastelands 2: More Stories of the Apocalypse* is a new anthology of postapocalyptic literature from some of the most renowned authors in the science fiction, fantasy, and horror genres today, including George R. R. Martin, Hugh Howey, Junot Díaz, David Brin, and many more. This eclectic mix of tales explores famine, death, war, pestilence, and harbingers of the biblical apocalypse. Like its predecessor, *Wastelands 2* delves into a bleak landscape to uncover the raw human emotion and heart-pounding thrills at the genre's core.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The first edition of *Wastelands* was a collection of 22 tales premised thinly on hope. The second instalment is arguably about new beginnings because let's face it, the apocalypse changes everything. This one holds 30 tales and, as before, they explore every manner of plague, natural disaster, military mess, terrorist threat and more. I found the Introduction a good read because it explores why so many of us are near-obsessed with such monumental catastrophe. One only has to look at the sub genre of zombies to admit that there is something bizarre going on here. In the book this is equated to "our taste for adventure, the thrill of discovery, the desire for a new frontier." I am not sure I buy that theory. I believe we all wonder how we would do if events and our lives so dramatically changed. The front half of the collection shone brighter than the back. It kicked off with

Bacigalupi's "The Tamarisk Hunter". This well written tale captured the atmosphere and setting beautifully. The premise will hook you too. "Animal Husbandry" was a creepy tale from McGuire that could have been a Stephen King entry. R.R. Martin's "...For a Single Yesterday" was a standout in plot and character development. How is this for a line, "You'd be surprised how much the smell of spleen will permeate a room." It comes from Beukes' "Chislehurst Messiah" that to me was an awesome satire. McDevitt's "Ellie" is a haunting tale that had a gothic tone that stuck with me long after completion. Doctorow's "Beat Me Daddy (Eight to the Bar)" was another favourite especially the idea of planes circling overhead pilotless for years. Hope and survival are explored in bizarre and intriguing ways by Ramsey Shehadeh, Orson Scott Card and Maureen F. McHugh. This is a stronger collection than the first volume partly because there are eight more tales but also because of the range of ideas explored.

This book is exhausting. I mean that in a good way. It's crammed with stories of apocalypses. It has 30 stories, some as short as six to ten pages. That's how you pack an anthology. If the story stinks, you aren't committed to it for very long. The author list is five-star worthy: George R.R. Martin, Orson Scott Card, Cory Doctorow, David Brin, Robert Silverberg, Joe R. Lansdale. And about two dozen other folks. David Brin's "The Postman" is here, for fans of the Kevin Costner movie (and everyone else). Another good thing: The stories are different. It's not all Mad Max or The Day After. My favorite is Megan Arkenberg's "Final Exam," which tells a whole end-times story in a funny questionnaire format. Rachel Swirsky's "How The World Became Quiet: A Post-Human Creation Myth" is vivid and imaginative. Jake Kerr's "Biographical Fragments of the Life of Julian Prince" is a story in the form of a Wikipedia entry. The only negative here is the topic. Yes. I know. You'll know what you're in for from the title "Wastelands: More Stories from the Apocalypse." But after the first ten or so, you will need a break. Watch a sunset. Play with a puppy. The stories of misery and things being crappy will still be there when you get back.

I am a fan of end of the world novels. And a fan of short stories. Now, it is hard for anyone, regardless of how good an author they may be, to write a gripping story in a dozen pages or so, so take this as you may. The collection was okay. Not great, not mind-shattering, but, also, it wasn't bad. I've read far worse. It was entertaining, heartbreakingly, and, at times, triumphant. I think some of the big-name authors, (like Hugh Howey and David Brin), were thrown in there just for star-quality. Some of my favorite stories were Jimmy's Roadside Cafe, by Ramsey Shehadeh, about a fellow who set up the last friendly cafe in the world along side a highway full of dead cars,

dispensing as much food as comfort to the straggling survivors who came his way. When We Went to See the End of the World, by Robert Silverberg was the most fun story I've read in a long while. I loved the style - such a throwback to the 70's. And Final Exam, by Megan Arkenberg, which was done in such an unusual and unexpected format, you couldn't help but laugh. The drawback there is that that story doesn't work as good in the Kindle version as it would in a real paper book. For that reason alone, I would urge you to get the dead-tree edition of this book, if you are planning to buy. Be warned though: the stories get weirder and weirder the further into the book you go, till, nearly at the end, you get such fantastical fantasy you might as well just go pick up a H.P. Lovecraft novel instead.

I didn't expect this to be as good as part 1 but it was actually really good! If you enjoy sci fi and post apocalyptic fiction you will like this. It is also really nice that you can read one or two short stories in one sitting and come back to it later. If you are looking for a book and are undecided about what to read this is great because of the variety it has.

Most of the short stories are very good, a few suck. None are long enough. All make you think. The author did a little preamble before each story in the first Wastelands collection but not this one; I missed them. I would probably buy a third collection.

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