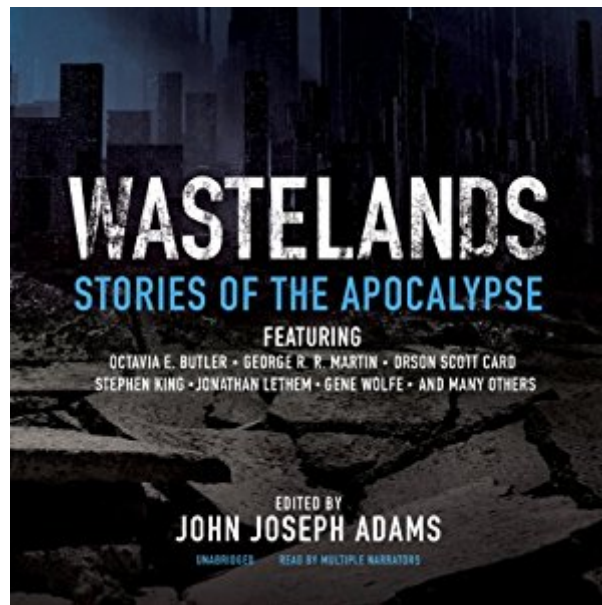


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Wastelands: Stories Of The Apocalypse



Synopsis

Famine, Death, War, and Pestilence - the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the harbingers of Armageddon - these are our guides through the Wastelands. From the Book of Revelation to *The Road Warrior*, from *A Canticle for Leibowitz* to *The Road*, storytellers have long imagined the end of the world, weaving eschatological tales of catastrophe, chaos, and calamity. In doing so, these visionary authors have addressed one of the most challenging and enduring themes of imaginative fiction: The nature of life in the aftermath of total societal collapse. Gathering together the best post-apocalyptic literature of the last two decades from many of today's most renowned authors of speculative fiction - including George R. R. Martin, Gene Wolfe, Orson Scott Card, Carol Emshwiller, Jonathan Lethem, Octavia E. Butler, and Stephen King - *Wastelands* explores the scientific, psychological, and philosophical questions of what it means to remain human in the wake of Armageddon. Whether the end of the world comes through nuclear war, ecological disaster, or cosmological cataclysm, these are tales of survivors, in some cases struggling to rebuild the society that was, in others, merely surviving, scrounging for food in depopulated ruins and defending themselves against monsters, mutants, and marauders. *Wastelands* delves into this bleak landscape, uncovering the raw human emotion and heart-pounding thrills at the genre's core.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

What is in a name? A title? *Wastelands: Stories of the Apocalypse* suggests that the anthology will cover stories directly dealing with various versions of the apocalypse, the end of the world. That is not quite what this *Wastelands* anthology is about, though. The original title *Wastelands: Stories of*

Life After Apocalypse was a bit more apt in describing the content of this anthology. The stories collected here by editor John Joseph Adams are not about the apocalypse, but rather about life after apocalypse. The wastelands made of our world is not the primary point of any individual story, but rather the survival of the species told in small human stories. In that sense the majority of the stories here are filled with beauty and not just the desolation of the landscape. What is most remarkable about *Wastelands* is just how varied stories about living after the destruction of civilization is. Take Octavia E. Butler's Hugo Award winning "Speech Sounds", a story where humanity has lost the power of speech and must find other ways to communicate and society has broken down. Telling the story from the perspective of a woman named Rye, Octavia Butler is able to really give the reader a sense of the terror a woman may feel in such a situation and the emptiness of that life, of the snap anger and body language required to get by, and the barest hint of hope. "Speech Sounds" has been anthologized before, but is a truly outstanding story. The range of stories collected in *Wastelands* runs the gamut from "Bread and Bombs" by M. Rickert, a post 9/11 story with kids feeling the fear of their parents, to the future history of "Dark, Dark Are the Tunnels" by George R. R.

A collection of apocalyptic stories this is not, rather it is a collection of post-apocalyptic stories during a time when this is all the rage among readers of fiction, (thank you very much Cormac McCarthy). As a science fiction reader, I have read a number of post-apocalyptic novels in my time (Ballard's *The Drought*, Stewart's *Earth Abides*, Wyndham's *Day of the Triffids*, Frank's *Alas Babylon* and hearty handful of others). So, the material is nothing new to me but I haven't been exposed to the short story side of the sub-genre. Much like all other collections about plot specific stories, the stories are hit and miss. If the reader is looking for entertaining ways in which humans will perish from the planet, this really isn't it. If the reader is looking for ways in which humans cope with the aftermath of mass tragedy, this book really isn't all that either. But like a good collection of stories, it DOES have the entertaining bits, the humanistic bits and also the humor of human folly. *The End of the Whole Mess* (Stephen King) - 5/5 - Elder brother to a genius writes his parting words before he succumbs to the disease unknowingly beset by his brother with only the best intention at heart: to save the world. 19 pages *Salvage* (Orson Scott Card) - 3/5 - Mormons assist a salvager in probing the temple for the legendary promise of golden riches, as the salvager was told by other reliable truckers along the highway stretch. 15 pages *The People of Sand and Slag* (Paola Bacigalupi) - 5/5 - Heavily modified truly omnivorous humans in an animal-less world discover a dog amidst their chemical wasteland and adopt it as their own after debating on whether or not to just

eat the nuisance. 15 pages Bread and Bombs (M.

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