



Anthontology

Piers Anthony

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The Toaster;
Quinquipedalian;
Encounter;
Phog;
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Within the Cloud;
The Life of the Stripe;
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Beak by Beak;
Getting Through University;
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Small Mouth, Bad Taste;
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Anthology Details

Date : Published April 15th 1986 by Tor Books (first published 1985)

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Author : Piers Anthony

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N says

I was really, really impressed by these short stories - and lest you think I lack perspective, I'm halfway through a collection of Ray Bradbury stories right now and recently read Cortazar's Blow-Up and other Stories.

I've been a fan of Piers Anthony's Xanth novels for some time now, but as I've begun to read his other works, I'm more and more convinced that Anthony is one of the best American fiction writers of his generation. I experienced a similar change in my opinion of Stephen King after reading the Dark Tower series. The ability to produce vast numbers of popular paperbacks does not indicate a lack of talent in all cases.

Anthony and King are chefs who have shown themselves able to satisfy the gourmet, the gourmand and the glutton alike.

Chris Mccoy says

"On the uses of torture" is one of the most creative and horrifying uses of sci-fi ever. It will stretch your brain just like the protagonists.

Andrew says

This is a collection of Piers Anthony's short stories, but there is more to it than that. Anthony intentionally chose these stories to showcase the scope and range of his work. Unfortunately he is a victim of his own success in the fact that he is primarily known for his fantasy books, namely the Xanth series more than anything else. However he has tried his hand at just about every form and genre and this book is his way of showing that. As such the stories vary greatly - so not only are the fascinating in that way but also in the fact you never quite know what you in for next - could be horror, could be fantasy could be comic parody or some mix of them all.

Shawn says

Young adult 10-15

Hazel says

This book is a collection of short stories. Hence the punned title Anthontology. I've actually read some of these before. 4 of the short stories later became novels. 2 belonging to Prostho Plus and 2 to Hard Sell. Other stories I'm not sure where i've read them.

The stories are a good mix of humor, horror, and interestingness. They're mostly Science Fiction with just a twinge of fantasy being present. Most of the stories are at least decent, with a few being quite good, and some being completely uninteresting. I really liked the beginning section. There were a lot of good stories there. After that it was a bit hit and miss though.

One of the truly interesting aspects of this book, is a look into the publishing industry. Piers talks about how his stories were rejected, accepted, how much he was paid, and even talks about how editors would change things.

It was a good read, and I'll certainly have to revisit some of these stories.

Marina says

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Graham says

It's always interesting to read authors talking about their work, and more so when an author with a shed of books to his name discusses the trials and tribulations of being a short story writer in the 50s and 60s. His bad- and good-mouthing of his fellow writers, some of whom were editors on various SciFi magazines, is quite amusing and salutary.

The stories themselves range from basic SciFi to daft to flights of fancy to scatological. Most are goodies, some are creepy. Not a book for under 16s: the 'on the uses of torture' story requires a strong stomach as an envoy tries to get a contract signed...

sj says

I was just talking about Piers Anthony with Kate earlier tonight, and was reminded of this book. I think my mom bought it for me at a yard sale or something when I was in junior high, because she knew I loved the Xanth books (cut me some slack, I was 12).

Yeah, there wasn't much appropriate for me at that age in this book - which was probably why I read it so many damn times.

The stick out stories for me were, um, the one with the tiny alien doll who has to collect the normal sized mans seed? SO NOT APPROPRIATE.

Up Schist Crick, even though I probably didn't get just how disturbing it was at the time.

Oh, On the Uses of Torture. That one was...pretty scary, actually.

Getting Through University made me laugh.

Ummmm...I'm pretty sure if I picked it up again, I'd remember every detail about each story as soon as I started it, but I don't think I'm willing to put myself through that at my current age.

Jeni Clark says

Exceptionally well-written and unforgettable. Also pretty f***ed up, but in short-story format, somehow it works. If nothiung else, read "On the Uses of Torture" -- you will never see him the same way again.

Peter Greenwell says

I bought the Grafton (now Harper Collins) version of this book on the basis of its intriguing cover art - three men, obviously astronauts, on a weird alien world. This scenario is played out in the tale Quinquipedalian, one of the better efforts in this anthology.

As with most collections, this is a grab bag. We have everything from space alien dentists to full-blown pornography here, with quite a bit of blah material in between. It's never a boring read, that's for sure, but the lesser lights certainly counterpoint the greater ones.

Mark says

On the Uses of Torture. The best and scariest short story I've ever read. It had me creeping with disgust. So good. The rest of the stories are pretty good, but that one requires a strong stomach and will possibly show the author in a different light :)

Bri Fidelity says

An absolutely-inappropriate-for-children book that I read from cover to cover, again and again, as a boy in the mid-1990s. (In fairness to my parents, this really does represent the absolute nadir of what they let me get away with.)

There are one or two stories I remember being rather harmless and wonderful - an alien comes to Earth in the form of a red parakeet, falls in love with a fellow parakeet, and is heartbroken when it dies; a cloud shaped like a human head mouths the words 'help, I am being held prisoner' when bickering holidaymakers replay their beach tapes to a deaf-mute translator - but even *they're* probably full of Anthony's creepy priapic paedo misogyny, too. (Even the *cute story about toasters* has its moments. Ugh.)

Julie S. says

A good mixture of stories. A few were boring or annoying, but I enjoyed some of them. I particularly liked "Possible to Rue," "The Toaster," "Quinquepedalian," "Getting Through University," "Within the Cloud," and "Small Mouth, Bad Taste."

Samuel says

It's been years since I read this book, but it stands out as one of the most enjoyable books I've read. From human cows, to tortur-loving aliens, to little tiny fairy nymph sluts...he's crazy. He's just fucking crazy!

Liya Ma says

The stories range from deeply profound and disturbing to boring and pointless. You won't have the same perspective about any of the subjects after reading his stories. Overall a good read and a must if you are a sci-fi lover.
