



## Mindquakes: Stories To Shatter Your Brain

*Neal Shusterman*

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## **Mindquakes: Stories To Shatter Your Brain** Neal Shusterman

From award-winner Neal Shusterman-author of *The Dark Side of Nowhere* and *Scorpion Shards*-comes a spectacular collection of stories that are by turns terrifying, comic, darkly inventive, thought-provoking, and always just slightly off-center.

## **Mindquakes: Stories To Shatter Your Brain Details**

Date : Published May 15th 1996 by Tor Books (first published May 1996)

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# From Reader Review Mindquakes: Stories To Shatter Your Brain for online ebook

## Josiah says

"I still don't know much about art, but I do know that there are places inside of us?palaces of glorious light and caverns of unknowable darkness. Magical places filled with brilliant, unimaginable colors that we suffer to bring forth."

?*Mindquakes*, PP. 27-28

I have to say that this is one of the best collections of short stories I've ever read. Though my official rating of the book appears to be three stars, I really would give it three and a half if that option were available on Goodreads, and off the top of my head I can't think of another collection of stories that I've ever rated higher. Neal Shusterman clearly puts his all into every single book he writes, whether it be *Unwind* or *Mindquakes* or *The Schwa Was Here* or *Piggyback Ninja*, reveling in the different genres of juvenile literature and allowing the full light of his incredible creative energy to shine in everything he writes. The short stories in *Mindquakes* range from the humorous to the profound, the mind-bending to the unsettlingly eerie, the absurd to the heartwarming. In just one hundred fourteen pages of text, Neal Shusterman somehow manages to evoke every shade of emotion in the spectrum, taking us on journeys that are often only a few pages in length, but which will remain in one's mind for years to come. No one else writes like Neal Shusterman, and I doubt that anyone else ever will.

In *Yardwork*, the first of the eleven stories that make up this collection, a story with a stunning twist becomes much more of an emotionally touching experience than one would have guessed when the secrets of the plot are first revealed. Mixing the poignant with the bizarre has long been a specialty of Neal Shusterman's, and his abilities are in fine form in this surprising tale. The second story, *Caleb's Colors*, is to me the cornerstone of the entire book, probably the best short story by Neal Shusterman that I have ever read. The emotional charge is a powerful one, and no one who has ever felt lost, scared or misunderstood in this world will be left unaffected by the feeling within the story that a better world, safer for one's own needs and desires, can be created if we just have what it takes to make that world real enough for us to inhabit. Our deepest hopes and dreams, kept hidden from a populace that could never fully understand, can come to life there, and the happiness that has eluded us just might, possibly, be found through that door. *Caleb's Colors* speaks to the human heart on a visceral level, and its resonance will continue to echo after the story has been finished.

In *Ralph Sherman's Jacuzzi of Wonders*, an old favorite character from Neal Shusterman's writing resurfaces in the telling of a tale in which nothing is as it first appears to be. Of course, that description could really fit any of the stories in *Mindquakes*, but it seems particularly appropriate for this one. In *Number Two*, the shortest story in this collection, a strange sequence of disconcerting events moves toward a shocking conclusion as Neal Shusterman once again displays his keen ability to outsmart readers, all while making us laugh and thoughtfully engage on a deeper level. In *The Soul Exchange*, a story that likely would have been a two-dimensional cautionary tale if written by most authors takes on fascinating new levels of meaning as a girl preoccupied with the idea of perfection blunders into a horrifying situation. Amidst speedy action and unexpected twists, the message of the story is quite clear, even though it might finish up differently than most would guess. *Damien's Shadow* takes a straightforward idea for a horror story and adds wonderful depth and dimension to it, introducing thoughts and concepts that few other writers would have considered when creating such a story. Out-of-the-box thinking is Neal Shusterman's specialty, and that's why he's able to do so much with what on the surface might seem to be an ordinary idea.

We finally get to see Neal Shusterman take his turn at writing a Christmas story in *Terrible Tannenbaum*, and what an original, entertaining and surprising Christmas story we get. Of all eleven tales in the collection, *Terrible Tannenbaum* might be the one with the most satisfying ending, as the kids in a family come to see what they really mean to each other in the midst of some unsettling Yuletide happenings. Then in *Dead Letter*, another very short story, Neal Shusterman gives outlet to his dark sense of humor and clever feel for puns and double meanings, in the form of a letter to the editor written by a disgruntled member of the living dead. After all, everyone wants to be treated fairly, so why shouldn't the cemeterally challenged do the same? *Boy on a Stoop* gives us a whole new perspective on a life-and-death game that draws us in like the hunter with its prey, offering us what we think we see until suddenly we realize it's not at all what we thought it was. The final story in *Mindquakes, Retaining Walls*, is another mindblower in the vein of *Caleb's Colors* that leaves the reader with chills up his or her spine, pondering the depths and secret places of a world and universe that none of us will ever come close to fully understanding. Leave it to Neal Shusterman to craft such a fantastic capper for a marvelous book, a final story that pushes on the retaining walls that we've set up in our own lives and forces us to ask ourselves how safe we really are behind them.

I sit here with a copy of *Mindquakes* in my hands, but it's not any ordinary copy of the book. This one was signed to me by Neal Shusterman, himself: "To Josiah, shake rattle and roll! Neal Shusterman 2012". I'm so happy to have been able to get such a wonderful book signed by Neal Shusterman, a collection of stories that tops almost all others and shows, again, why Neal Shusterman is probably the best author of his time. All Neal Shusterman fans need to find a way to get their hands on a copy of this book. It has real life-changing potential, and one can't ask for much more from a book than that. I would recommend *Mindquakes* to anyone with a passion for great literature.

"I suppose there are three kinds of people in this world. Some people live their lives *around* the holes?never finding them, never even worrying about them. Their lives are full and happy. Then there are others who keep falling through those hidden gaps, into nightmares they never knew existed. I wouldn't want to be one of them.

And then there's a few...restless people who spend our lives plugging holes in the unfinished corners of creation and building walls to hold back all the things that must never be seen.

Perhaps there's more holes than can be patched in a lifetime. But I've got to live on the hope that maybe, just maybe, we'll get them all...and the abyss will never look into us again."

?*Mindquakes*, P. 114

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### **the (book) supplier says**

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### **Liz Gibbs says**

"Number Two" is the best story in this collection. You just have to read it to understand!

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## ? ?isty ?oonlit ?emories ? says

I loved Damien's Shadow and Ralphy Sherman's Jacuzzi or Wonders. The others tie for second, except the Retaining Wall.

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## Dylan says

"The task of the artist is the creation of worlds. Very few succeed. Many die trying."

"All the time he stared through that white canvas as if the work was already there behind it and he wasn't so much brushing on paint as he was brushing away the emptiness."

"I don't know much about art, but I do know that there are places inside of us-palaces of glorious light and caverns of unknowable darkness. Magical places filled with brilliant, unimaginable colors that we suffer to bring forth."

This was a really fun collection of short stories to read. My favorite was "Caleb's Colors," but I also enjoyed "Number Two." As usual, very unique and interesting.

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## Charlie says

I read this book many times as a child and wow, they have stuck with me quite a bit. This is a completely different brand of horror than you're used to - more abstract and experimental. I can still remember most of the stories quite vividly, because I have never read anything like them. Highly recommended!

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## Aelvana says

Shusterman's short stories are small glimpses of strange worlds and a good introduction to the author for new readers. All of these stories stand alone. It did amuse me how many of them involve people getting eaten by something or other.

The stories themselves are a fairly mixed bag. Overall it's a strong collection, and I'll highlight a few of my favorites.

"Ralphy Sherman's Jacuzzi of Wonders" has Daddy's new girlfriend meeting the kids. Oh, the stories kids tell... only they don't appreciate Vermelda trying to play along with them. And how many of them are actually stories is up for debate.

"Terrible Tannenbaum" is one of the most amusing Christmas stories I've ever read, because it's about an evil Christmas tree, as well as a boy who hates Santa and does his best to ruin Christmas for everyone else. When Mom and Dad won't admit it's war against the tree, who's going to win?

"Boy on a Stoop" is worth a mention if only for its ending. It's an unlikely friendship between the perfect boy and a less-than-perfect girl, but which of them is more terrible?

Generally it was the shorter ones that didn't work so well. "Number Two", "Dead Letter", and "Loveless" were three of the less entertaining stories. All of the stories to a certain degree rely on a twisted ending, but these lacked the buildup to make them good (or in the case of "Number Two", understandable; I was trying to figure out what was going on until the last sentence).

Scary stories? Maybe. I found them more humorous than anything else. It's a good collection of bizarre children's stories. I rate this book Recommended.

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### **Amanda Mic Perkins says**

Great stories. The twists and turns will keep you reading, especially (in my opinion) Boy On A Stoop. Fun existential horror I was not expecting in a children's book (think Coraline).

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