



# Adam Robots

*Adam Roberts*

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## Adam Robots Adam Roberts

Gathered together for the first time from a major publisher are the short stories of Adam Roberts. Unique twisted visions from the edges and the centre of the SF genres. Stories that carry Adam Roberts' trademark elegance of style and restless enquiry of the genre he loves so much. Acclaimed stories, some that have appeared in magazines, some in anthologies, some appearing for the first time. Stories to make you think, to make you laugh, to make you wonder, to make you uneasy. Stories that ask questions, stories that sow mysteries. But always stories that entertain.

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## Adam Robots Details

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Author : Adam Roberts

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# From Reader Review Adam Robots for online ebook

## Alan says

Oh, come on. Can you *see* that cover? That giant robot; those streamlined rocket ships? There was simply *no way* I was going to leave the second-hand store without this book. And then there's the title pun, which is even more delicious when read in a British accent. For Adam Roberts is a British author, and Adam Robots is a very British science-fiction (and fantasy) collection.

The stories inside Adam Robots are, mostly, almost as retro as that cover, harking back to the 1950s and 1960s, when sf was stretching boundaries in the afterglow of the Atomic Age and just starting to consider the experimental stances of the New Wave. That appeal may be their only commonality, in fact. As Roberts points out in his Preface (which does *not* contain the egregious grammatical error from its back-cover excerpt, by the way),

They're all different (apart from the one which isn't; you can work out which one I mean yourself). Even the ways in which they differ differ.

So there's the title story, about a robot named Adam in a Garden where there's just one rule; another about the problem with time travel (which turns out to be a very big problem indeed); a third ("Thrownness") about an involuntary traveller between parallel universes... but also, later on, a fantasy about a woman whose name *must* be discovered, one ("And tomorrow and") where the Scottish play gets turned on its head, and another half-a-tale that might be just a drugged dream of wonder in a Medieval field of flowers.

Two dozen stories, in all.

There's usually a twist, and often a point, to these tales—so whether we're talking about the soldier for a decadent Galactic Empire who led an army of his own offspring in "The Imperial Army" or the Bradburyesque "Me:topia," about the Neanderthals who crash-landed their spaceship on an endless, wind-swept steppe, we're talking about some pretty good, pretty old-school stuff—just as the cover promised.

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## Liviu says

I read most of the stories here in their original venue - having an Adam Roberts stories makes an anthology generally an automatic buy (assuming reasonable prices and availability of course) - so it took me a few months to buy this one as I oscillated between even 2-3 newer AR stories are worth the price and I am already spending so much on books not to be able to justify this one...

Finished the collection; definitely worth the money and probably the most diverse, inventive and overall excellent author collection I've read in a long time with a few stories as good as anything in their category (never could bother to discern between short story, novella, novelette beyond the obvious if it is close to a novel, it's a novella and if it's one page it's a short...); here I will group the stories into:

the best of the best, stories that are at the top of the genre:

The Imperial Army (mil space opera a la Adam Roberts; while the main conceit is similar to the one in

Exultant by S. Baxter, the story is chock full of irony and goodies)  
Anticopernicus (first contact and the Fermi Paradox a la AR; wrote more in its review on original publication)  
Shall I Tell You the Problem With Time Travel? (time travel..)  
Throwwness (multiverse or many worlds QM)

excellent and stories that would be the highlight of any volume

Adam Robots (Adam and another Adam rather than Eve in paradise)  
A Prison Term of a Thousand Years (long lived humans)  
The World of the Wars (Wells reinterpreted)  
Constellations (dogma and its questioning on alien planets)  
Review: Thomas Hodgkin, Denis Bayle: a Life (review of imaginary books)  
Wonder: A Story in Two (sense of wonder a la AR)

very good and enjoyable

Godbombing (riff on religious wars)  
The Mary Anna (Kipling for the 22 century; in verse too)  
Dantean (as expected)  
The Chrome Chromosome (short from the perspective of the chromosome)

stories that are an ironic take or a straight-out parody on various tales and which maybe try too hard to fully succeed, but are still quite good

S-Bomb (short and stringy, tries too hard for gross out funniness)  
ReMorse® (wonder drugs parody)  
The Time Telephone (calling from the future)  
The Man of the Strong Arm (future criticism of early sf)  
The Cow (famous children story retold in 8 lines)  
Pied (sfnal zombies and the like)

stories that just failed to impress me in the least - rare and surprising for an AR story; still readable

Woodpunk (riff on the "original on publication" steampunk mania; forced and it shows, so pointless and boring)  
Me-topia (creation envisioned by AR; again forced and boring)  
And tomorrow and (Macbeth somewhere; never cared about Macbeth, so could not care about this)  
The Woman Who Bore Death (sort of fantasy Roberts; could be interesting at longer length but here came as disjointed and pointless)

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## Gordon Collins says

I started off liking this. It's classic SF: Take a (Sciencey) idea to its extremes. But it's much better written than most of the genre and that's why I bought it. However, along with some literary sensibilities, he has added a veil of literary obfuscation. Has he? Or am I missing the point in so many of these? Perhaps I am but if so then I can't quite be bothered to dig out the ideas.

You know the pub menu which runs to 12 pages? You know that some of the dishes are overambitious Is the chef just trying to demonstrate his range when he should be concentrating on a few signature dishes?

Roberts tries to write in every possible sub-genre of SF. So it's a bit hit and miss. Some of the stories are satisfying and interesting Some aren't.

The Mary Anne poem is naff. The MacBeth pastiche is just sad. Woodpunk gives us an insight into the mix and match method of story production. Like the landlord's attempt at "fusion".

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## Raj says

Adam Roberts is good at short stories. In the introduction, he says that this collection contains his attempts to write a story in each of the myriad genres within SF, and although I haven't counted, it certainly feels like he's succeeded. Each story has a new idea, from the Biblical Adam of robots to time travel, space opera, dystopia and more. The only problem, for me, at least, is that eventually it becomes wearing. I found myself longing for a run of a few good, simple, adventure stories. However, I readily accept that this is my failing, not the book's (nor the author's). There were a few stories towards the end that I really didn't like, *Wonder: A Story in Two* is probably the one that made me want to throw the book across the room the most. This felt very experimental and "New Wave-y", but since I've never really been a fan of the New Wave, it totally left me cold.

There is, however, an awful lot to like. From the very meta *Review: Thomas Hodgkin, 'Denis Bayle: a Life'* (a review of a biography of a fictional SF author) to *And Tomorrow And*, a very funny retelling of *Macbeth*. So as I say, there's an awful lot to enjoy, but it's probably worth taking your time over.

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## Jeremy Hornik says

He is so smart and so clever and I kind of hate short stories but these have a lot going for them... if he could only break my heart I would love him forever. But he hasn't yet. And I suspect he never will. Welp.

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## Matija says

*"I suppose there is more of the now in grief than in happiness."*

A quite peculiar set of *science fiction* (and light *fantasy*) stories. Not one is alike and most all have

something to offer. I thoroughly enjoyed approximately half of the stories in this book. The rest were decent: part interesting, part confounding and part confusing. A handful of stories I found somewhat abstract and unable to understand. Either partly or completely. Not sure who's fault was that, the writer's or my own.

Regardless, **Adam Robots** is a loving tribute to SF writing as a whole and it is worth your time. The opening story is especially endearing to read.

**Best stories:**

Adam Robot

Thrownness

Dantean

And tomorrow and

Wonder: A Story in Two

Anticopernicus

Me:topia

*"I still tended to doubt my own sanity rather than the sanity of the world around me. I daresay that says a lot about my personality. Or maybe it's normal. Maybe anybody, finding themselves in my situation, would do what I did.*

*I tend to believe so."*

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**Owen Townend says**

It's been too long since I last read science fiction that excited me as much as some of the stories in this book. When Roberts explores theoretical concepts he really invests time and energy into them and thereby makes it an undeniably fun experience for the reader as well.

I also love how he covers a cornucopia of subgenres from classic time travel to postmodern space opera.

Providing a rich variety from start to finish Roberts also attempts some fantasy though to mostly middling effect.

Furthermore some of the scientific explanations he offers are difficult to keep up with let alone unravel and so a handful of stories fall flat long before their ending.

Nevertheless Roberts has enthralled my nerdiness with this collection.

Notable Stories

- Thrownness - it must be a lonely existence perpetually flitting between dimensions like this.
  - The Imperial Army - masturbation for money has never before led to such militaristic madness.
  - And tomorrow and - Macbeth has never been cooler, let alone more logical about the rules of magic.
- 

**Jose Brox says**

Puntuación por relatos más abajo.

Pros:

1) Adam Roberts escribe realmente bien. No se trata de que maneje un vocabulario vasto (aunque sabe usar perfectamente una palabra culta cuando le apetece), sino de que sabe moldear el lenguaje, algo realmente extraño en la ciencia ficción; para comparar, ahora estoy leyendo Babel-17 de Delany (en inglés), que se supone que está excelentemente escrito, y palidece en comparación. En particular, Roberts dedica al menos un párrafo de cada relato a describir el amanecer o la iluminación de un paisaje, y todos resultan fascinantes (por su buen uso de la metáfora y el color).

2) Cada historia trata un tema diferente, y son 24, no han escatimado a la hora de recopilar. La diversidad hace que la inevitable decepción con algunos relatos no haga perder esperanza en el resto del libro.

3) Algunas de las ideas leídas me han resultado originales. La creatividad de Roberts no se limita a su maestría con la prosa.

Contras:

1) Se nota, como pasa con tantos otros escritores "de ciencia ficción", que Roberts no sabe mucho de ciencia. En consecuencia algunas ideas importantes están muy manidas, otras son erróneas, y otras no tienen ningún sentido (no son más que pseudoexplicaciones para salir del paso). Los fuertes de Roberts no son la verosimilitud de la idea ni la exploración de sus consecuencias, sino su explotación como artefacto argumental. Esta falta de verdadero sustento de sus conceptos de ciencia ficción es en parte responsable de que me hayan gustado más los relatos fantásticos de la recopilación.

2) Se nota que el autor se considera un intelectual literario, lo cual se agradece en su estilo, pero a veces molesta en sus experimentos. En algún pasaje me ha aburrido el exceso descriptivo. Dejar un final en el aire puede quedar muy postmodernista y parecer muy inteligente, pero en realidad es una señal de vagancia y un hurto a los lectores, especialmente si se lleva a cabo en una historia larga. Roberts lo hace dos veces.

3) Hay relatos que son una simple pérdida de tiempo y no deberían haber pasado el corte del editor, incluyendo parodias breves y un relato misticista.

4) La intención expresa del autor de escribir una obra de cada subgénero deja una sensación de déjà vu persistente. No es que los relatos parezcan ya leídos, pero no se alejan demasiado de los tópicos habituales, y por tanto no destacan globalmente por su originalidad, a pesar de la frescura del tono.

\* Relatos de 5 estrellas:

- S-bomb (en el estilo de Philip K Dick)

\* Relatos de 4 estrellas:

- Me:topia (sería de 5 estrellas si no se hurtara el final)
- The woman who bore death (4.5 estrellas, final algo abrupto y típico)
- Pied
- Constellations

\* Relatos de 3 estrellas:

- Adam robots (3.5 estrellas, comienzo genial, explicación final un tanto decepcionante)
- ReMorse (3.5 estrellas)
- Anticopernicus (3.5 estrellas, buena idea, pero la física cuántica no funciona así)
- The imperial army (noveleta, comienzo de 4 estrellas, va perdiendo, final hurtado)
- Shall I tell you the problem with time travel?



- A prison term of a thousand years (la personalidad del protagonista no es coherente a lo largo del relato)
- Thrownness
- The time telephone
- Review: Thomas Hodgkin, Denis Bayle: a life (crítica imaginaria de crítica imaginaria)
- Dantean

\* Relatos de 2 estrellas:

- Godbombing (la idea me gusta, el estilo no)
- The Mary Anna (en rima, pero aburrido; parodia de algo)
- The chrome chromosome (muy enrevesado para la premisa final que tiene)
- And tomorrow and (basado en Macbeth)

\* Relatos de 1 estrella

- The world of the wars (reinterpretación del final de The War of the Worlds)
  - Woodpunk (relato estúpido, seguramente crítica a cf pulp antigua)
  - The cow (microparodia de algún cuento infantil)
  - The man of the strong arm (otro relato estúpido)
  - Wonder: a story in two (relato simple supuestamente crípico que para el autor se queda)
- 

## Scott says

Adam Roberts is one-man Science Fiction writing machine, pumping out amazing work at a rate that makes me wonder whether he's chained to a desk in an SF sweatshop somewhere.

With masterworks like *Stone*, *Bete* and *Jack Glass* behind him Roberts is one of the best and most innovative writers working in his genre today. How the rights for his books haven't been scooped up by Amazon or Netflix boggles my mind- there's a riot of ideas in his catalogue to rival (dare I say it... damnit, it's justified) the worlds and concepts of Philip K. Dick.

Anyway, obviously I'm pretty much a crazed fan who will gobble up anything he writes, but even so, *Adam Robots* never really caught my eye, what with the golden-era SF robot on the cover and the seeming play on the author's name. Of course, the cover is no way to judge a book, and this collection is much better than its old-timey cover art suggests. This is an interesting, sometimes experimental collection of memorable stories, that well earns its place on your shelf next to Robert's other work.

Like any collection of short stories *Adam Robots* has its highlights and bum notes, but in the main this is a harmonious piece, and the highs significantly outnumber the lows.

*Shall I Tell You the Problem With Time Travel?* is an absolute standout, a real ripper of a story with a great underlying concept and a kicker of an ending – this is the sort of short story that makes me love SF.

Another standout - *The Imperial Army* - is a very cool, fairly chilling space opera that sees humanity at war with a near infinite enemy, whose limitless ability to spawn themselves leads to our implementing tactics that diminish the value of human life and poison our own military leaders against us.

In the tradition of *Stone* Roberts plays with some fascinating quantum theory in *Anticopernicus*, a real killer of a short story that will have you thinking about the nature of intelligence (and its impact on reality) for

hours.

Others, such as the eight line reimagining of a child's nursery rhyme *The Cow* and *The Strong Man* - a story that plays with future criticism of contemporary SF - are more whimsical, and have the feeling of an author who knows his genre so well that he can subvert it's rules and tropes.

There are of course weaker links (I've yet to encounter a short story collection that is nothing but solid gold, and sadly, *Adam Robots* isn't the exception to that rule), and stories like *ReMorse*® and *The Time Telephone* don't really hold up next to their stronger page-mates.

However, there is *substantial* SF gold in this collection, and even if you aren't a fan of Roberts you'll find stories to love. If you haven't read him before I'd start with *Stone*, or *New Model Army* or one of his numerous other amazing novels, but if short stories are your thing you'll find plenty of reading pleasure in *Adam Robots*.

Of course, if you're a crazed Adam Roberts fan like me you'll love just about everything in here, and you'll likely find yourself caught in daydreams of endless armies, quantum theory and time-travel conundrums for days after you've finished it.

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### Alex Sheldon says

Can't decide if I should rate this a 3 or a 4 out of 5.

3.5 would be more on point for me, but Goodreads, for whatever reason, doesn't give us that much-needed option.

Ratings aside, this felt like a literary exercise in new-wave writing for the most part, and even a little experimental in some cases.

Certainly not my favorite style of writing to read, at least on a regular basis, which would account for why it took me almost a year to get through (between other books).

And yet, it was also refreshing and I *did* appreciate Robert's originality and his take on a variation of sci-fi themes.

When in the right frame of mind, I not only enjoyed, but was also impressed with his varying styles of storytelling. And just as well, as I already have 2 full length novels from Adam Roberts sitting on my shelf waiting to be read, and I'm highly curious as to how his long-form style might differ to his short story approach.

All in all, there were some stories here that I found highly enjoyable to read, despite less than satisfactory endings. Besides, there's rarely a good payoff when it comes to the endings of short stories, so no surprises there.

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### Dark Matter says

James Kennedy reviewed this book; for more reviews by James, see [James Kennedy on Dark Matter Zine](#). To see all reviews on Dark Matter Zine, go to [Dark Matter Zine's reviews](#).

Adam Robots is a collection of science fiction short stories. It's a five-star tasting menu of many different sci-fi sub-genres and it was a perfect book for a novice sci-fi reader like me because it allowed me to discover which sci-fi sub-genres I enjoyed reading the most.

By far the best story in this book was 'Thrownness', a twist on Groundhog Day. The title, 'Thrownness', is a rough translation of the German word "Geworfenheit", which is a philosophical term used to describe the feelings people have about a past that is neither deterministic nor chosen. Author Adam Roberts brings this bizarre abstract concept to life by making the protagonist's world 'reset' itself every 70 hours. After a 'reset' all the characters go back to where they were 70 hours ago and start going about the same 3-day routine in perfect repetition. The only difference between each cycle is what the protagonist chooses to do (his location and thoughts are not reset each time). He starts off well-behaved, but soon learns that the only way to survive is to rob, cheat and steal. (He steals from the same people in each 3-day cycle but his 'crimes' are forgotten after 3 days!) There's definitely an element of dark, understated humour that's unmistakably British underlying this short story.

'Thrownness' also makes a political point about incarceration and the notorious problem of reoffending. The situation, not the man himself, propelled the protagonist's downward spiral. With no roots and no long-term direction in his life, he very quickly resorts to crime.

'Shall I Tell You the Problem With Time Travel?' was another one of my favourite stories in this book. Protagonist Professor Bradley, a scientist developing time travel in the near future, has realised that every time travel attempt causes a giant explosion at the intended time and place of arrival. He also notes that he can only travel into the past—not into the future. I won't give anything away here, but the story is very cleverly-written and not contradicted by present-day scientific theories, which is important for me.

Reality is very important for me in books, which is why I read so much non-fiction. I'm not a fan of the extremely farfetched—complicated alien civilisations and the like, or artificial intelligence—and I'm put off by scientific impossibility. I learned all this by reading Adam Robots. I learned that I enjoy reading sci-fi that's set either in a believable future, or in a slightly altered present and Adam Robots gave me a very generous serving of both. ('The Time Telephone' and 'A Prison Term of A Thousand Years' in this book were also very good.)

Recommended for people who want to get more into reading sci-fi.

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## **Niall says**

Thesis: Adam Roberts is distinctive among contemporary sf writers not just because he writes unashamed ideas-fiction, but because he writes unashamed old ideas-fiction. There aren't many novums here you won't have seen before, from the Adamic robot of the title to the various kinds of immortality, the ethics-modifying substances to the time travel devices. That's perhaps true of much of the field, and yet by and large Roberts doesn't pursue either of the common strategies for dealing with it, or even give much indication that he sees it as a problem; he doesn't really write multi-novum stories, and his worlds are often too streamlined to be fully immersive. So in what ways do the stories here work? First, I think Roberts is getting extremely good at structure; his stories vary widely in length and register, from a very effectively fragmented tale like "A Prison Term of a Thousand Years" (2008), which at four pages is in no danger of outstaying its welcome, to a near-novella-length piece like "Anticopernicus" (2010), which uses its duration to invest its Fermi Paradox-riff with psychological and thematic complexity. Second, his writing is precise and often funny,

with its now-familiar precise yet fussy-fidgety style. And third the absence of immersion is actually often freeing, used as a prompt to encourage critical reading and reflection. Some of my favourite stories are the most meta-referential, such as "Wonder: A Story in Two" (2007), which explicitly investigates the notion of conceptual breakthrough, and is echoed by "Dennis Bayle: A Life" (2013), a review of an imaginary book filled with imaginary books that asserts and (I think) disproves the notion that sense-of-wonder requires "novelistic momentum." Most of the pieces here didn't get much attention on their first publication -- there are few Year's Best alumni, and no award nominees -- but Adam Robots demonstrates that Roberts can be as effective in the short form as in the long.

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## David Raz says

Adam Robots: Short Stories by Adam Roberts

First, a sort of warning. The book name has "Robots" in it, and so does the cover, so I was a bit misled to think these are Robot Short Stories, but they are not. In fact, the author writes "I like the idea of writing at least one thing in all the myriad genres and sub-genres of SF..." and even that is a bit misleading as some of the stories belong to the Fantasy genre and some are... well just stories.

That out of the way, I think this is quite a misleading book. I was going to rate it much differently while reading it than what I ended up doing. The author really did try to write in as many genres as he could. It starts with some solid stories, short and energetic. A good robot story, followed by some good time travel, a thought about immortality and so on. Then in the middle of the book are some stories which are a bit dragging and boring. They seem like the author stretched his capabilities to areas where he had very little to say. Then, if you managed to get there, the last few stories are pure gems, imaginative and thought provoking.

Almost all short story collections are a mixed bag, some stories better than other. I tend to think a good collection is one which leaves enough impact on you to remember the good one and ignore the rest. This book certainly does that, deserving a recommendation to read and 4 out of 5 stars.

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## David says

This is a collection of short fiction by the author Adam Roberts. In the preface, Roberts states that he was working towards exploring all the common themes and sub-genres of science fiction. The stories are previously published with four being original to this book.

A tone that connects a lot of the stories is a sense of dark humour or satire. Religion is a recurring theme from the examination of familiar stories in 'Adam Robots' to fundamentalism and repression in 'Constellations'. There are also new approaches to older material such as 'The World of the Wars' and 'Pied'. The best of these is 'And tomorrow and ' dealing with the precise wording of the prophecies in 'Macbeth'. The highlight of the collection for me, is 'The Imperial Army' a dissection of military science fiction space operas and trying to fight long term wars that goes into very dark directions.

However, I felt that the stories had a tendency to convey a distancing effect. They are well written and good explorations of the ideas the narrative is dealing with. Still, often they come across as lacking a sense of

engagement with the characters. You are aware of the intelligence of what you are reading, but it becomes something easier to admire the cleverness rather than emotionally care. It is the same problem I have with *Haunted* by Chuck Palahniuk. The material is intelligent but you feel that the author is not really having any feeling for the figures he pushes across a board to get from A to B.

Despite this, there is clearly very good material in the collection. It may just be that the distancing effect is caused by trying to read it all in one sitting. Or this collection may be more suited for readers who already fans of the work of this author rather than complete newcomers.

Originally published

at SF2 Concatenation' link. <http://www.concatenation.org/frev/rob...>

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## **Harrison Fowler says**

In most cases, I'm a huge fan of Adam Roberts. Though hard science fiction isn't always something I enjoy, he does it with such a sense of grandeur and confidence that I can't help but enjoy it. Usually his ideas, whether they be novels or short stories, are original and imaginative beyond belief, and his explanations, though long, are very plausible and enjoyable. For me, scientific accuracy is not always a necessity, but believability is. That being said, 'Adam Robots' is a fantastic collection of stories with mostly excellent tales and very few weaker ones, and not one bad story. To review them all individually would take too much time, so I'll outline the strongest and the weakest.

### **THE STRONGEST:**

'Adam Robots' - The title story is not only a very interesting twist on Genesis, it's philosophically thought-provoking, and it's incredibly compelling. The title is more than a pun on the author's name; it's a very balanced and well-done story.

'Shall I Tell You the Problem with Time Travel?' - An excellent time travel story. I've grown weary of time travel stories due to the sheer number of them, and the lack of originality in most of them. However, this story adds so much more by mixing in Hiroshima. Seems weird at first, but the pay-off is glorious. Highly recommended from me.

'Thrownness' - One of two very long stories, this one is a very engaging multiverse story, with, of course, an Adam Roberts twist to it. I've always enjoyed Roberts's clinical, often impersonal prose, and it's used to perfection here. Each scenario unfolds not as if in a daze by the protagonist, but clearly outlined and explained, and when there's ambiguity, there's a good reason why. Aside from a minor plot hole, it's a great story.

'S-Bomb' - Interesting story based on string theory. Since I'm not entirely familiar with the science, my understanding and appreciation of the story is limited at best, but I found it a thought-provoking read.

'Dantean' - I haven't read any of Dante's works, and I would probably enjoy this story even more with them, but the images conjured in my head reading this startled me. The story is fantastic, and Roberts uses his imagery perfectly to encapsulate and enrich the philosophy used. Who knows, maybe I'd get more texture out of the story if I read Dante, but 'Dantean' is damn good without the extra reading.

'And Tomorrow and' - I like Shakespeare, and this, unlike 'Dantean', is a story that requires one to have read

'Macbeth'. It's required. Good thing I have read it, and good thing I enjoyed it. I would say that 'And Tomorrow and' adds a whole new layer to 'Macbeth', and addresses an amusing plot hole I've myself thought about before, to darkly hilarious effect. Very enjoyable.

'Anticopernicus' - I adore this story. The sheer scope of its vision, its characters, its tackling of Copernicus, everything. The story is beautifully crafted and written from start to finish. It dazzled me with its ideas and storytelling. Easily my favorite of the whole collection.

#### THE WEAKEST

'The Chrome Chromosome' - I've read this story at least five times, and I'm no closer to understanding it. I would consider myself an attentive reader, and I do not mind ambiguity in the least, but this crosses that threshold and skips to a merry tune as it does so. It's interesting, but I have no idea what it is.

'The World of the Wars' - I enjoy the subversion of H.G. Wells's 'The War of the Worlds' and I like the ending, but other than that, it's a somewhat forgettable story that is overshadowed heavily by the other tales in the collection.

'The Woman Who Bore Death' - For a fantasy story - and I do not like fantasy stories - it compelled me, and got me thinking. I like it for that. It's one of the better fantasy stories I've read, but that's not saying much. I find most fantasy to be vague science fiction devoid of ideas or explanations for anything, and 'The Woman Who Bore Death' is sorta like an Adam Roberts sci-fi story without all the sweeping explanations or original ideas. It's good, and it kept my attention, but it falls in the shadow of the others.

The rest were all very good, but make up the other 65% of the book or so. Ultimately, this is a marvelous collection with mostly great stories, a number of amazing ones, and only a few weak ones. Adam Roberts continues to impress me with his work, and I can safely say I haven't been disappointed yet.

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