



## The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction

*George Mann (Editor) , Brian W. Aldiss , Mary A. Turzillo , Adam Roberts , Stephen Baxter , Ian Watson , Mike Resnick , David Gerrold , more... Keith Brooke , Simon Ings , Tony Ballantyne , Eric Brown , Jeffrey Thomas , Neal Asher , Jay Lake , Greg Van Eekhout , James Lovegrove , Paul Di Filippo , Peter F. Hamilton ...less*

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An eclectic collection of all-original science fiction stories from some of the foremost luminaries in the genre. Featuring new tales of far future murder, first contact, love and war from such well-regarded and award winning authors as Peter F. Hamilton, Stephen Baxter, Adam Roberts, Jeffrey Thomas, Eric Brown, Paul Di Filippo, Neal Asher, Jay Lake and Ian Watson, this collection is sure to delight all fans of good science fiction. "A wide range of topics and diverse styles characterizes this enjoyable collection of science-fiction stories. While mediocre science fiction fails to work on any level other than the conceptual, the best of the stories in this new Solaris anthology successfully navigate both conceptual and emotional territory... Editor Mann has gathered a collection that should appeal to science-fiction buffs, and make a worthwhile introduction for novices. Stands as proof that science fiction is alive and well." Kirkus Discoveries, VNU US Literary Group

## The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction Details

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Author : George Mann (Editor) , Brian W. Aldiss , Mary A. Turzillo , Adam Roberts , Stephen Baxter , Ian Watson , Mike Resnick , David Gerrold , more... Keith Brooke , Simon Ings , Tony Ballantyne , Eric Brown , Jeffrey Thomas , Neal Asher , Jay Lake , Greg Van Eekhout , James Lovegrove , Paul Di Filippo , Peter F. Hamilton ...less

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## From Reader Review The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction for online ebook

### Norman Howe says

I liked most of the stories in this collection; a few were disturbing. One turned me off due to the tone:\*\*\* In his Sights by Jeffrey Thomas - An extreme case of mistaken identity turns deadly.\*\*\* Bioship by Neal Asher – Captain and crew interact on a living seagoing vessel.\*\*\* C-Rock City by Greg van Eekhout and Jay Lake – A spacer searches an asteroid habitat for signs of his mother.\*\*\*\* The Bowdler Strain by James Lovegrove – A virus capable of being spread verbally escapes from a laboratory. Hilarious in the style of R. A. Lafferty.\*\*\* Personal Jesus by Paul Di Filippo – Technology gives everyone a direct connection to God.\*\*\* If At First... by Peter F. Hamilton – A billionaire is being stalked by a childhood friend.\*\*\* A Distillation of Grace by Adam Roberts – A teenager rebels against his society's breeding program.\*\*\* Last Contact by Stephen Baxter – End of the Universe story. Reminiscent of "The Nine Billion Names of God" by Arthur C. Clarke\*\* Cages by Ian Watson – Aliens attach awkward devices to every adult human", for no apparent reason.\* Jellyfish by Mike Resnick and David Gerold – Portrait of a dysfunctional science fiction writer. Written in the style of Kurt Vonnegut Jr.", this is a mean-spirited piece.\*\*\*\* Zora and the Land Ethic Nomads by Mary A. Turzillo – Environmental activists endanger a family on Mars. Good old-fashioned Hard SF story\*\* Four Ladies of the Apocalypse by Brian W. Aldiss – A despot tries to fight abstractions. Confusing", as are many of Aldiss's stories.\*\*\* The Accord by Keith Brooke – A bartender meets an angel.\*\* The Wedding Party by Simon Ings – Disturbing story of an innovative people-smuggler.\*\*\* Third Person by Tony Ballantyne – Military recruiters use a hypnotic drug.\*\* The Farewell Party by Eric Brown – Benevolent aliens may have a sinister agenda.

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### Bicefalus says

ci voleva proprio di tornare a leggere racconti brevi di fantascienza ... piccole gemme che portano in mondi lontani fantastici e che hanno sempre un finale un po a sorpresa

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### Gabriel says

Discussed at SF Gospel:

"I was surprised at the number of stories in The Solaris Book of New Science Fiction that include religious themes, both explicit and implicit."

Full review here:

[http://sfgospel.typepad.com/sf\\_gospel...](http://sfgospel.typepad.com/sf_gospel...)

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### Christian Pedersen says

It's always hard to rate an anthology. So 3 stars it is, and the best stories are Brian Aldiss' Four Ladies of the Apocalypse and James Lovegroves The Bowdler Strain.

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## **Stephanie says**

I don't read many anthologies, puzzling since I enjoy reading and writing short stories, but after reading this one, I may pick up some more. Mr. Mann has gathered an interesting set of writers for this book, mostly British since Solaris is a British publisher, and most of whom are unknown to me.

In my experience, anthologies are a mixed bag, just like magazines Analog, Asimov's, and Science Fiction and Fantasy. That's not a bad thing if you think about it – everyone has different taste in stories so if all the stories appealed to me chances are none would appeal to someone else. A happy medium is important so that more people will buy the book. A side benefit is that you might find yourself reading a story that you would not have since it is in the book anyway thus expanding your palate.

Of the 16 stories, here is the breakdown:

- Really Liked – 4
- Enjoyed – 4
- OK – 4
- Didn't Care For – 4

Of the four I didn't care for, only one was poor in my opinion, the other three just had subject matter that I don't like.

My favorite was the last story – The Farewell Party by Eric Brown. It tells the story of a group of friends who hang out at a pub once a week and one day a stranger comes in and becomes a friend. The science fiction aspect unfolds gradually as we find out more about the stranger. Even though I saw the ending coming, it was very satisfying. The reason I like this one best is because the characters are well written and the story line flows so brilliantly.

The most humorous story was Jellyfish by Mike Resnick and David Gerrold, two names well known in this genre. It is a tongue-in-cheek, no holds barred, no prisoners satire on the science fiction writing life, conventions and publishers. I laughed out loud several times, and if you have been fan for long, the inside jokes will induce serious hilarity – don't drink anything while reading this unless you want it coming out your nose as you laugh.

The story that confused the heck out of me was Four Ladies of the Apocalypse by Brian Aldiss. I just could not get a handle on it. Oddly, it was the shortest story in the book.

Some of the notable authors in this collection, in addition to those mentioned, are Neal Asher, Stephen Baxter, Peter F. Hamilton, and Mary A. Turzillo. While many of the authors are probably well known, I am not familiar with their work.

If you enjoy short fiction, I recommend adding this book to your collection.

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## Ari says

The Bowdler Strain by James Lovegrove makes this book worth reading. A couple of other good ones included too.

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## Isabel (kittiwake) says

*Hopes were pinned on Windbag for two reasons. First, its symptoms were less startlingly dramatic than Bowdler's, and nowhere near as unsettling. Second, by its very nature, Windbag instilled the avoidance of vulgarity. No-one who caught Windbag would resort to four-letter words, not while they were so enthusiastically utilizing fourteen-letter words. The full range of the English language was theirs to command, so what need was there to wallow amid the baser idioms when altogether more refined and elegant modes of expression were available?* from "The Bowdler Strain".

My favourite stories were "Personal Jesus", the amusing tale of "The Bowdler Strain" and the poignant "Last Contact", but overall this was a very good selection of stories.

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## Roddy Williams says

In His Sights – Jeffrey Thomas  
Bioship – Neal Asher  
C-Rock City – Jay Lake & Greg van Eekhout  
The Bowdler Strain – James Lovegrove  
Personal Jesus – Paul Di Filippo  
If at First... - Peter F Hamilton  
A Distillation of Grace – Adam Roberts  
Last Contact – Stephen Baxter  
Cages – Ian Watson  
Jellyfish – Mike Resnick & David Gerrold  
Zora and The Land Ethic Nomads – Mary A Turzillo  
Four Ladies of The Apocalypse – Brian Aldiss  
The Accord – Keith Brooke  
The Wedding Party – Simon Ings  
Third Person – Tony Ballantyne  
The Farewell Party – Eric Brown

Solaris is a new SF imprint, making an enterprising splash with an anthology of newly commissioned material from the great and good of the SF world.

In His Sights – Jeffrey Thomas

Jeffrey Thomas starts us off with a story from Punktown featuring a character who also features in a novel shortly to be published by Solaris. Bearing this in mind, I was setting myself up to be disappointed, but was

genuinely impressed by this story of a shapeshifter war veteran whose face has frozen as one of his victims from his time in the war (with blue-sinned people from an alternate reality).

Very dark. Quite Gothic. China Mieville likes it.

Bioship – Neal Asher

A rather weak tale from Asher about sexual rivalry on board a sentient ship (a sea-vessel not a spaceship). It features the genetically modified lip-tentacled humans (I presume) that we met in the novel 'Brass Man.'

C-Rock City – Jay Lake & Greg van Eekhout

One of the crew of a trading vessel docks at a city composed of three linked asteroids where he has a regular date with a security guard. However, the man is also on a pilgrimage to find his mother; one of the blind slaves who built the station for The Proctor.

Very moving. Well-paced. Atmospheric.

The Bowdler Strain – James Lovegrove

An excellent tale from Lovegrove about an escaped logovirus which alters the speech centres of the brain. This particular virus, the Bowdler strain, makes it impossible for people to swear. It comes out as gibberish. It is up to the scientist in charge and the military to get the situation resolved.

See also 'The Isolinguals'

Personal Jesus – Paul Di Filippo

Set in a world where one can have one's own personal Jesus, rather like an i-pod, giving one advice in one's ear. Is it all just too good to be true?

The voice of God was discovered when the first quantum computers went online and now everyone has their own godPod through which they can talk to Jesus whenever they wish. The world is a peaceful and contented place.

Our hero, however, has his doubts as to how happy he actually is.

If at First... - Peter F Hamilton

Hamilton's story, in contrast to the previous two, is a fairly simple idea, but told ingeniously. Narrated by the policeman who investigated the original case, it slowly becomes clear to us that his history is a different one to our own.

It turns out that a man has been stalking a multi-millionaire businessman because he suspects that he has a time-machine and has been passing information to his younger self.

Things, however, are not quite as simple as that.

A Distillation of Grace – Adam Roberts

A religious cult (Roberts seems keen on his religious fanatics) settles on a world 2700 light years from Earth and, following the teachings of Shad, are composed of two thousand and forty-eight people, half male, half female, who will pair off and produce one child per couple in every generation until the birth of the final child; The Unique, and thus install Grace into the Universe.

Grace, the cult believes, travels backwards through time and will therefore reach Earth at the time of Christ's birth.

It's no more bonkers than any other religious theories, and Roberts writes so damn well that the characters' convictions come across startlingly powerfully.

#### Last Contact – Stephen Baxter

What does one do when one knows that the world will end on a specific date, and ironically, just when SETI is beginning to receive messages from the stars?

A mother and her daughter come to terms with the discovery of the Big Rip, which is destroying the universe by degrees and will deal with the earth on October 14. Perversely, SETI – with which the mother is involved – has begun receiving messages from super-civilisations across the cosmos. The mother has her own ideas as to what these messages may be.

#### Cages – Ian Watson

Watson has made a name for himself by taking absurd premises and carving exquisite short pieces from them, like beautifully wrought ivory figures.

Here, earth has been invaded by Hoops, which hang in the air and disgorge giant bee-like aliens (The Harrow) who attach irremovable cages to various parts of people's bodies. An intelligence agent is sent to a festival where some musical reactionaries are planning to transmit some of the bees' remixed sounds back through the hoops in order to provoke them into some kind of dialogue.

As with all Watson's work, it's a brilliantly dense piece of writing, full of complex 'stuff' and surely deserves a larger format to explore more global and personal ramifications.

The concept of 'cages' of course, works on different levels in this story, some obvious, some more subtle.

#### Jellyfish – Mike Resnick & David Gerrold

In this post-modern parody, Resnick and Gerrold show us the life of a writer based on an amalgam I suspect, of PK Dick, Kurt Vonnegut and William Burroughs. A tale full of SF devices, clichés and in-jokes and featuring an attack on a whole plethora of SF writers, thinly disguised, including the two authors themselves. They even manage to sneak in AE van Vogt's famous Sevagram.

#### Zora and The Land Ethic Nomads – Mary A Turzillo

A brilliant bit of character-driven drama in which an African couple and their young son, working on mars, have to temporarily take in some Land Ethic Nomads. They believe that Man should live nowhere but Earth and are trying to persuade Mars settlers to return.

When they leave, it appears that one of them, Valkini, has sabotaged their nuclear plant since their radiation monitors are showing high levels.

#### Four Ladies of The Apocalypse – Brian Aldiss

A prose-poem-ish piece from Aldiss in which four ladies (and a fifth) visit a dictator. The horsemen are, it appears, too exhausted by their labours to appear at this juncture.

### **The Accord – Keith Brooke**

Tish and her husband run a bar on a strange and beautiful world. They are happy until a mysterious stranger turns up, pursued by three other mysterious strangers, intent on his capture. She becomes infatuated with the stranger and is determined to discover who or what he is.

### **The Wedding Party – Simon Ings**

Simon Ings often reads like Ian Watson a serious acid downer.

In a future Europe, a man goes to extraordinary and somewhat surgical lengths to smuggle his African lovers into the UK.

Beautifully written. Very poetic. Very dark.

### **Third Person – Tony Ballantyne**

The British Army are in Spain, fighting the S.E.A., and have to pillage what they need to get back to Britain. It's a tale about military ethics and who or what one might sacrifice for the greater good.

### **The Farewell Party – Eric Brown**

A surprise story, which starts in the real world where a group of friends who meet at a village pub are curious about a new arrival, a writer. Then we are hammered by the news that first contact has already been made, and that the aliens, the Kethani, can resurrect humans who have been implanted with one of their chips.

The narrator has already been resurrected but his recollections of the Kethani world are vague. The writer's latest book is about a group of friends who commit joint suicide in order to be resurrected and travel the Universe together.

So who or what is the writer, and should the group be tempted by the idea?

It's one of the most intriguing stories in this volume since its theme is Faith and conviction, and although the fact of resurrection has been proven here, the details of the 'afterlife' are unclear, perhaps necessarily so, or perhaps there is a more sinister purpose in the Kethani's plans.

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### **Elisabeth says**

A mixed bag, as any anthology must be. Some were bland, 1970's holdovers full of angst white men. Some were silly; one or two were disturbing; and some were quite good. Surprisingly, Stephen Baxter's contribution was among my favorites; I haven't liked anything else of his I've read (2 novels, 1 short story) and I almost passed on the whole collection because of him. I also enjoyed David Gerrold and Mike Resnick's skewering of the genre: I recognized Ursula LeGuin and Frank Herbert among their victims, as well as Gerrold himself. The stories cover a wide range of ideas and styles, some fascinating, some weird, none ground-breaking. As it's basically a 'best-of' magazine collection, I'd recommend it for readers interested in short form sci-fi.

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### **Andrew says**

I don't read much sci-fi, though I should read more. Good writing, storytelling, characters and plot in any genre is worth reading.

I only found 3, maybe 4, of these stories engaging. Some of the premises in the stories were interesting, and perhaps they could be carried out more fully in longer form.

Unfortunately, most of the stories didn't grab me. I would like to find a better collection of short stories.

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### **Trogdor says**

James Lovegrove's "The Bowdler Strain" was quite good. Paul Di Filippo's "Personal Jesus" was interesting. Baxter's "Last Contact" was frankly excellent -- bounds beyond the rest. Don't bother with the remaining stories.

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### **Ian Mcenaney says**

This book taught me how much our technology has and can evolve in the next 50-100 years of our lives. Also I learned that we are and have been trying to invent a "super-soldier" that should take the place of a human being and replace it with a robot.

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### **Nicholas Whyte says**

<http://nwhyte.livejournal.com/1997182.html> [return][return] There were a couple of stories I liked here - Stephen Baxter's "Last Contact", and Keith Brooke's "The Accord" (which I note were also the two picked by Gardner Dozois for his annual collection) - many which didn't especially grab me, and one awful attempt to channel Kurt Vonnegut by Mike Resnick and David Gerrold.

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### **Robert says**

With the exception of one story, a really fun anthology containing well-written and intriguing tales. The "Third Person" is a fun little trip for the reader, and I love that the alien antagonists in "The Farewell Party" are never even seen or heard from.

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### **Angie says**

Stopped at a very bizarre metafiction story involving science fiction writers as characters in another writer's novel. It gave me a headache. Otherwise, the stories were succinct, well-written, and thought-provoking

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