



Shock II

Richard Matheson

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Shock II Details

Date : Published July 1st 1979 by Berkley (first published 1964)

ISBN : 9780425041581

Author : Richard Matheson

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From Reader Review Shock II for online ebook

Mike McConnell says

Having spent two days sick in bed I rattled through this between bouts of dozing, fever and groaning. This was definitely the silver lining on the sick cloud.

Matheson's stories are so well constructed and yet work a sparsity of details in such a way that you create as much as you are given. So whether it's the humour of a door-to-door prostitute service or a creepy old man telling children to dig for a surprise this collection really satisfied.

Or is that the fever medicine talking?

Ape says

2007 bookcrossing:

I picked this up over a year ago from a charity shop because the cover and back blurb were just too funny to resist. They're really short stories - nothing inspired inside from what I've read, although I never managed to get very far into the book...

2009 bookcrossing:

I came back to this book a couple of days ago. I'd been watching some old Twilight Zone episodes from the late 50s/early 60s - great black and white programmes. And I'd noticed that some of them were based on short stories written by Richard Matheson. The name rang a bell, so I dug out this book and thought I'd read it.

The cover doesn't do it any favours - it makes it look really trashy, plus there isn't gore on that scale in the book, nor any green monsters. Having said that, this isn't high literature either, and they are just slightly trashy horror and mystery stories, some serious, some a bit tongue in cheek such as "A Flourish of Strumpets" and "Big Surprise". Nothing overly amazing but they pass the time.

The back is just pure cheese:

"Thirteen Stories - Thirteen Shocks!

Master of the macabre Richard Matheson presents his second collection of stories to chill and terrify - thirteen SHOCKing tales that will make your blood run cold.

Between the pages of this feast of fear you'll meet:

The man who became a machine...

The noblewoman who believed in vampires...

The doctor who faced a witchdoctor's voodoo curse...

The peculiar old man who gave local children a big surprise...

and many more characters guaranteed to give you the SHOCK of your life!"

Dear me. And the peculiar old man line sounds particularly dodgy. The story isn't actually what you'd think, but it is a wierd one. And none of these stories is particularly terrifying.

Bob Rust says

A Flourish of Strumpets • (1956)
Brother to the Machine • (1952)
No Such Thing as a Vampire • (1959)
Descent • (1954)
Deadline • (1959)
The Man Who Made the World • (1954)
Graveyard Shift • (1960)
The Likeness of Julie • (1962) [as by Logan Swanson]
Lazarus II • (1953)
Big Surprise • (1959)
Crickets • (1960)
Mute • (1962)
From Shadowed Places • (1960)

Jeff Szpirglas says

A highly consistent collection of Matheson tales, dated, but worthy.

Nick Wallace says

More of the same and still great.

TK421 says

Richard Matheson is a pillar within horror fiction. But unlike some of today's over-the-top horror writers (I will omit names, but you know of whom I speak), Matheson's approach to writing horror was a stripped down, psychological endeavor. His stories unnerved readers. His stories made readers think. Combine these two attributes--unnerving and thinking--and it is not a stretch to say that Matheson was successful because even when the reader was to "justify" a story within their mind, Matheson "rewired" the reader to experience a new way of thinking and deciphering and displaying the world. In this collection, SHOCK II does this in spades. From the opening story "A Flourish of Strumpets," a story about man's unquenchable desire of the flesh, to the story "No Such Things as a Vampire," a story that might be one of the best revenge stories I have ever read, Matheson takes the fantastic and embeds it into realistic settings.

But Matheson doesn't just look at the fantastic. In the story "Descent" Matheson takes a look at the status of

the Cold War, and gives his own commentary about the subject. Normally, I would think a story like this would be outdated; this is not the case...I dare say that this story is more prescient today concerning nuclear annihilation (I'm looking at you North Korea) than when it was written. Additionally, Matheson has fun in his storytelling. Within this collection, there are pieces that are written in the format of a play ("The Man Who Made the World"), and as epistolary ("Graveyard Shift"); and these pieces lose none of their oomph because of these playful formats. That might be because Matheson was a genius with a pen. But I digress.

All things considered, Matheson makes storytelling fun, but he can also deliver a poignant, heartfelt story of family, and the travails of family, as the story "Lazarus II" depicts. When reading this story I was torn between hating the mother, and hating the fact that, as a parent, I sometimes have to remind myself that my children's lives are not my own, they are their's, period.

Thirteen tales. 192 pages. Read them as a whole, or devour them over a few weeks. Regardless how you enjoy these stories, I'm willing to bet that you'll find yourself looking for more of Richard Matheson the next time you decide to haunt your favorite bookshop or library.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

Debra says

Stephen King recommended author and book.

Book noted as "important to the genre we have been discussing" from *Danse Macabre*, published in 1981. Author discussed in chapter 9.

Tanvir Muntasim says

A good collection of stories from the writer of 'I am Legend'. Relies more on clever twists than blood and gore, which makes it much more enjoyable.

Althea Ann says

I got this short-story collection in my ebay lot when I had to pick up "I Am Legend" for my book club. Just got around to reading it.

I enjoyed the physical book itself... 1965 paperback marked "50 cents" – but in remarkably good condition. Sometimes old books are just fun!

The stories themselves, however, were a bit uneven, and some of them seemed rather dated and anti-climactic. Genre-wise, they're kind of in that twilight-zone area between horror and sci-fi.

Includes:

- * A Flourish of Strumpets
- * Brother to the Machine
- * No Such Thing as a Vampire
- * Descent

- * Deadline
 - * The Man Who Made the World
 - * Graveyard Shift [The Faces]
 - * The Likeness of Julie [as by Logan Swanson]
 - * Lazarus II
 - * Big Surprise [What Was in the Box?]
 - * Crickets
 - * Mute
 - * From Shadowed Places
-

Bjørn Sørlien says

Twilight Zone-ish.

Mute is the longest and also the best in this collection
