

SFBC CHOICES ALREADY PUBLISHED

EARTH ABIDES by George R. Stewart

The story of our civilisation, overwhelmed by a tremendous natural catastrophe. "One of those novels, so rare in our time, that the reader wishes would never end."—*New Yorker*.

THE MARTIAN CHRONICLES by Ray Bradbury

"Delights our fancy, moves our compassion and excites our terror . . . catches all the colours and fire that lie in the magic of words."—Angus Wilson.

LAST AND FIRST MEN by Olaf Stapledon

"One book which no one seriously interested in science fiction can ignore—or is ever likely to forget."—Arthur C. Clarke.

TOMORROW SOMETIMES COMES by F. G. Rayer

"Well worth reading for the vivid conception of the mechanical super brain, which is a brilliant symbol of man's domination by machinery."—Olaf Stapledon.

MINIMUM MAN by Andrew Marvell

Andrew Marvell's beautifully written story of a pocket-sized genius is told with wit and humour.

NO PLACE LIKE EARTH

A science fiction Anthology edited by John Carnell. Contributions from Britain's leading science fiction writers.

I, ROBOT by Isaac Asimov

"The notion that a mechanical man must be a destructive monster has been hard to put down; but Isaac Asimov has done it, deftly and convincingly—and most entertainingly."

—Walter Gillings.

THE VOYAGE OF THE SPACE BEAGLE by A. E. Van Vogt

Far out among the stars the crew of the expeditionary ship *Space Beagle* find themselves faced with alien life forms surpassing nightmare, and battle for their lives against creatures with unearthly powers.

PLAYER PIANO by Kurt Vonnegut

This brilliant novel of life in a machine dominated America after a Third World War is also a penetrating satire of contemporary materialistic tendencies.

us forcibly of Wells; in Stapledon's resolute avoidance of "explanation" he shows himself to be, not a straggler after older masters, but one who was in the very vanguard of a newer mode of story-telling.

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Odd John is the story of a mutant, but although the results of the experiments in which the fruit-fly was exposed to "hard radiation" were certainly available to Stapledon before he wrote *Odd John*, no reference is made to any possible cause of John Wainwright's "oddness". He was just "born odd", and the novel sets out to tell the story of his brief and exciting life as a Mutant.

The story does not drag—Stapledon was a superb narrator, with a journalistic gift for plunging immediately into the action of the plot.

On the very first page, we are introduced to the wonder-child, in a passage which not only sums up the whole plot, but makes us disinclined to put down the book until we have read to the last page.

To this day I know little but the amazing facts of his career. I know that he never walked until he was six, that before he was ten he committed several burglaries, and killed a policeman, that at eighteen, when he still looked a young boy, he founded his preposterous colony in the South Seas, and that at twenty-three he outwitted the six warships that six Great Powers had sent to seize him. I also know how John and his followers died.

Such facts I know; and even at the risk of destruction by one or other of the Six Great Powers, I shall tell the world all I can remember.

Thus, in the passage, the author does what the kindly reviewer tries to avoid. He gives away the plot—completely. All that he does not do is to give the details of the plot—and I shall not do so either. How the freakish son of a Midland doctor and his Swedish wife came to an end heavy with the