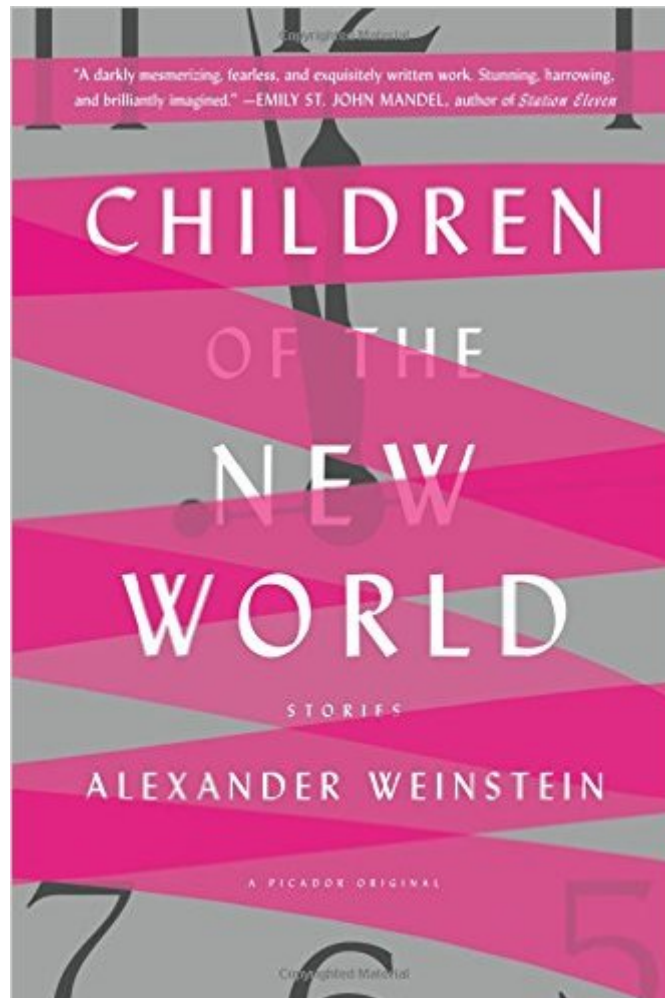


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Children Of The New World: Stories



Synopsis

AN EXTRAORDINARILY RESONANT AND PROPHETIC COLLECTION OF SPECULATIVE SHORT FICTION FOR OUR TECH-SAVVY ERA BY DEBUT AUTHOR ALEXANDER WEINSTEIN

Children of the New World introduces readers to a near-future world of social media implants, memory manufacturers, dangerously immersive virtual reality games, and alarmingly intuitive robots. Many of these characters live in a utopian future of instant connection and technological gratification that belies an unbridgeable human distance, while others inhabit a post-collapse landscape made primitive by disaster, which they must work to rebuild as we once did millennia ago. In "The Cartographers," the main character works for a company that creates and sells virtual memories, while struggling to maintain a real-world relationship sabotaged by an addiction to his own creations. In "Saying Goodbye to Yang," the robotic brother of an adopted Chinese child malfunctions, and only in his absence does the family realize how real a son he has become. Children of the New World grapples with our unease in this modern world and how our ever-growing dependence on new technologies has changed the shape of our society. Alexander Weinstein is a visionary new voice in speculative fiction for all of us who are fascinated by and terrified of what we might find on the horizon.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"We were like babies. Like Adam and Eve, some said. We reached out toward one another to see how skin felt; we let our neighbors' hands run across our arms. In this world, we

seemed to understand, we were free to experience a physical connection that we'd always longed for in the real world but had never been able to achieve. Who can blame us for being reckless? (Children of the New World) Publicly, we sold memories under Quimbly, Barrett & Woods, but when it was just the three of us, working late into the night, we thought of ourselves as mapmakers. [] Here was the ocean, here the ships, here the hotel, here the path that led to town, here the street vendors, here the memories of children we never had and parents much better than the ones we did. And far out there was the edge of the world. (The Cartographers) It's not often that I'm so truly and hopelessly blown away by a collection of short stories. Anthologies with multiple contributors are almost always a little choppy, and even those written by a single author tend to be a mixed bag. But Alexander Weinstein? He works some serious magic in CHILDREN OF THE NEW WORLD. The thirteen stories found within these pages are beautiful, imaginative, and deeply unsettling. Together, they create a portrait of a future beholden to technology: where consumers willingly and happily abandon memories based on fact in favor kinder, gentler fictions; where humans rarely leave the virtual world, let alone their houses; where people fornicate like mad but reproduce through cloning and sometimes even programming. Where lovers can peel back all their layers metaphorically and literally and grant their partners access to every fleeting thought, emotion, and memory. Where even the apocalypse is powerless to break the hold that mere things like Lego toys and Kitchenaid mixers exert over us. I fell in love with most of the stories, and liked the rest well enough; not a single one rated less than 4/5 stars. Usually it's hard for me to play favorites, but I definitely have mine here. In "Saying Goodbye to Yang," Jim and Kyra adopt a little girl from China rather than clone themselves, as is all the rage in the U.S. To help bridge the cultural gap, they also purchase Yang, a sort of babysitter android programmed to speak Mandarin and teach Mika about her homeland. When Mika's Big Brother malfunctions, the narrator and his wife are made to recognize the central role Yang played in their lives and his fundamental humanity. "Children of the Real World" also deals with parental grief, though of a much different (and even less socially acceptable) sort. I don't have kids, but I've loved and lost many dogs over the years and the guardian in me can definitely relate. In this vein, "The Cartographers" is also melancholy AF, though you don't quite realize how much so until the very end. As with "Children of the New World," the tenuous line between what's real and what's not forms the emotional core of the story. How I long to say more, but spoilers! On the unsettling end of the spectrum are "Migration" and "Rocket Night," in

which parents consider selling photos of them online; and actually *do* put their kids in rocket ships and shoot them into the stars. I didn't quite get the second story, though I suspect it's symbolic of our tendency to sacrifice the lesser among us for the greater good but just what that good consists of, I'm not sure. Or perhaps it has more to do with distancing ourselves from tragedy? What's especially interesting about this collection is that, while each story is its own discrete entity, they come together in strange and unexpected ways. This could be the same universe, or the same universe at different points in time. Or it could be many different parallel universes, separated only by the delicate flutter of a butterfly's wings. Or maybe (just maybe!) a judge's ruling that consciousness is, indeed, privately owned (Failed Revolution). Not even all of these are stories per se; Failed Revolution is a yarn masquerading as an academic paper, while the surprisingly funny (and feminist!) Excerpts from The New World Authorized Dictionary consists of several terms (brainflea, mushing, togging) and their definitions. Whatever form the story assumes, Weinstein's writing is graceful and lovely, earnest and thoughtful, and disturbing on so many levels. These stories are guaranteed to make you think well into the wee hours of the morning. If you love speculative fiction or consider yourself a tech geek, you owe it to yourself to meet the CHILDREN OF THE NEW WORLD. Saying Goodbye to Yang 5/5 The Cartographers 5/5 Heartland 5/5 Excerpts from The New World Authorized Dictionary 5/5 Moksha 4/5 The Children of the New World 5/5 Fall Line 4/5 A Brief History of the Failed Revolution 4/5 Migration 5/5 The Pyramid and the Ass 4/5 Rocket Night 4/5 Openness 5/5 Ice Age 5/5 ** Full disclosure: I received a free ARC for review through Goodreads. **

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