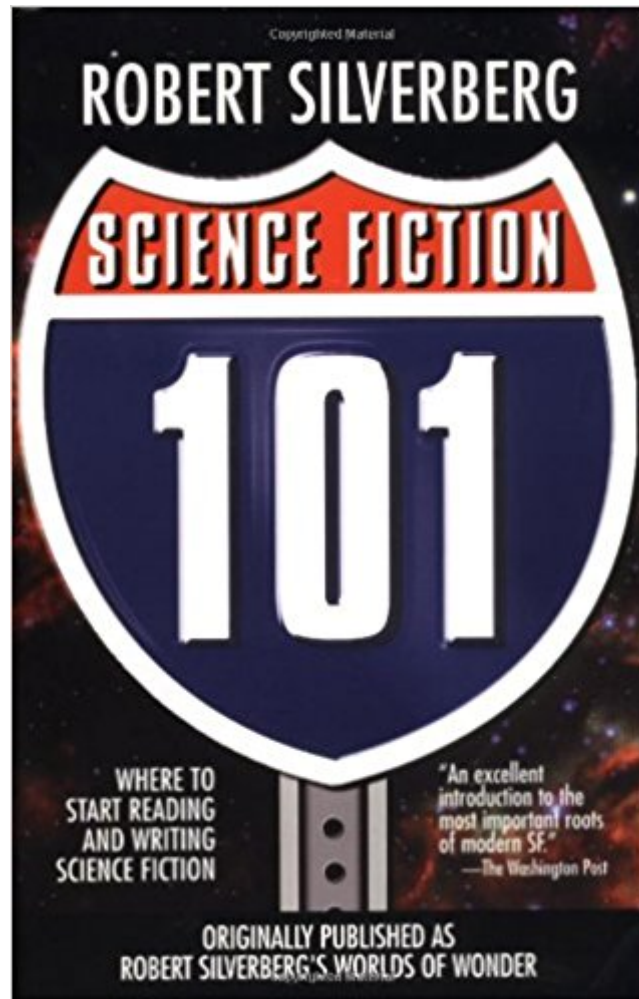


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Science Fiction 101: Where To Start Reading And Writing Science Fiction



Synopsis

If you read or write science fiction, here is the best introduction to the secrets, the craft and the art of science fiction. Included are thirteen classic works of modern sf; wondrous stories by Alfred Bester, Philip K. Dick, Jack Vance, Frederick Pohl and many others. If you love science fiction, read how a young fan grew up to become one of the most honored masters in the history of the field, as told in his own words.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As the blurb on the book says, there really is something for any science fiction fan in here. You may choose to skip the first part where Silverberg talks about his entry into the world of SF writing, though, as a writer myself, I enjoyed it a great deal. It's a warm reminiscence not only of a young writer finding his voice but of those halcyon days of the so-called Golden and Silver Ages of science fiction. The stories themselves are a terrific collection and include some true masterpieces of short story writing, some of which are rarely anthologised. Just go to the sample pages above to check out the contents list. I defy any SF fan not to enjoy most of these stories. Then there are the essays on the stories, where Silverberg deconstructs and analyses the stories (without, I should add, in any way detracting from them). This isn't a case of the illusion being spoiled when you look at how it's done. I came away from them only more admiring of the skills and imaginations of the writers. As to those who accuse this of being an ego exercise by Silverberg I can only say they obviously miss the point. There's a clear love of the craft and art of science fiction at work here. Silverberg tells us

plainly that he chose these stories not because they are the all-time greats of the genre necessarily (though some actually are - and for a fuller list of such stories see Silverberg's anthology *The Science Fiction Hall of Fame* vol.1. The greatest SF short stories as chosen by the SF Writers Association). These are the stories that a fledgling writer was moved by, astounded by, impressed and dazzled by. We all have our own lists of such stories and they often include ones that wouldn't be on anyone else's list. Doesn't make them bad choices, just personal ones.

Note that this is the same book as Robert Silverberg's *Worlds of Wonder: Exploring the Craft of Science Fiction*; don't do what I almost did and buy both books. In this volume, the multi-Hugo and multi-Nebula award winner Robert Silverberg presents a book that's part autobiography of his early years as a developing writer, part literary criticism, part guide to other beginning writers, and part anthology. Thirteen stories are included, each by a different author, ranging in date from 1944 to 1966. Silverberg selected these stories both for their value as lasting classics of the SF genre, and for the influence they had on him as a young writer. In a brief essay that follows each story, Silverberg explains why he considers it among the best that SF has produced, analyzes what makes it "work" as a story, and often, how the story influenced him when he first read it. Fascinating tidbits about the genesis of the story, its reception at the time of its publication, and its influence on the SF field in general are also sometimes included. Any devoted reader of SF short stories will be familiar with some, if not all of the stories here. But the book works on several levels: As a fine collection of classics, as a work of SF criticism and analysis that will give readers new insights into some well-known stories, and as a partial autobiography of the early career of one of SF's greatest authors, revealing much about the man, his thoughts about SF writing and the circle of writers he moved among.

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