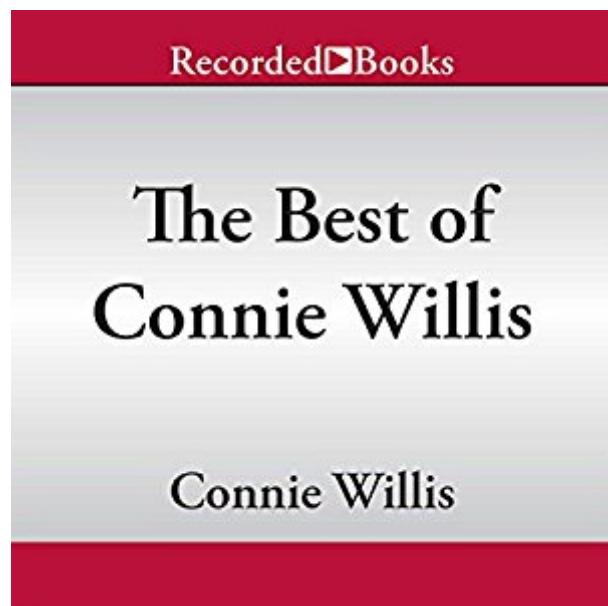


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The Best Of Connie Willis: Award-Winning Stories



Synopsis

Few authors have had careers as successful as that of Connie Willis. Inducted into the Science Fiction Hall of Fame and recently awarded the title of Grand Master by the Science Fiction and Fantasy Writers of America, Willis is still going strong. Her smart, heartfelt fiction runs the gamut from screwball comedy to profound tragedy, combining dazzling plot twists, cutting-edge science, and unforgettable characters. From a near future mourning the extinction of dogs to an alternate history in which invading aliens were defeated by none other than Emily Dickinson; from a madcap convention of bumbling quantum physicists in Hollywood to a London whose Underground has become a storehouse of intangible memories both foul and fair. Here are the greatest stories of one of the greatest writers working in any genre today. All ten of the stories gathered here are Hugo or Nebula award winners - some even have the distinction of winning both. With a new Introduction by the author and personal afterwords to each story, plus a special look at three of Willis' unique public speeches - this is unquestionably the collection of the season, an audiobook that every Connie Willis fan will treasure, and, to those unfamiliar with her work, the perfect introduction to one of the most accomplished and best-loved writers of our time. The full list of narrators includes Graham Winton and Suzy Jackson.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I love short story collections. Oh, it isn't because I have any trouble keeping the plots of many novels separate in my head at all times so I can read one while I'm cooking, one in the bedroom, one during the commercials and the boring parts of tv shows and one in everyone's private reading

room, the bathroom. Even at my advanced age I can still keep track of what's happening to whom in which novel. No, I love reading short story collections because I enjoy the change of viewpoints and ideas, the differences of styles and varieties of talents. And then, there's always the chance I'll find a previously unread (by me) author who touches my heart or makes me laugh out loud, or sends me to the phone to tell my friends they have GOT to buy everything they can find by this writer. In a collection edited by Mercedes Lackey, I found such an author. Before I even finished the story I was looking through books, searching for anything else by Connie Willis. I was lucky enough to find this whole book of her short stories, which I have just now finished. In this book she made me laugh, taught me some history about St. Paul's I'm ashamed I didn't already know, choked me up, made me laugh... After one story I was her fan. After a book full of her stories, I'm her ardent admirer. As soon as I send this off, I'm going to start on her novels, and if you have any sense yourself, you'll quit reading NOW and start reading this book of her stories. Every second you wait is keeping you from being introduced to a Master of her craft.

Reviewing this collection was a pleasure. I love Connie Willis' writing. All of it. Short stories, novels, novellas, everything. In this volume, I especially enjoyed her introduction because I had already read the stories and loved them all. Getting additional insight into how she came to write them was enormously interesting to me. Equally interesting were her list of the authors who influenced her, especially since they are the same authors who influenced me, notably (but not limited to) Shirley Jackson and Robert Heinlein. My introduction to Connie Willis was *The Doomsday Book*. Not exactly one of her lighthearted humorous books, but it was written entirely for me. I have two huge literary passions: the 14th century and time travel. *The Doomsday Book* is about time travel back to the 14th century, so I was predestined to love it. After that, I worked my way through the rest of the Cambridge Time Travel series and then ... I discovered her shorter works. *All Seated On the Ground* (included in this anthology) had me laughing so hard it woke my husband from a dead sleep to ask me what in the world was going on. This has got to be the funniest alien invasion in all of science fiction. Yet it also has a message. Willis is one of the few authors who can include a message without making you feel like someone's banging you over the head with it. It's there, not hidden, not obscure, but gently put. For your consideration. I love every story in this collection, though *All Seated On the Ground* is my favorite. *The Last of the Winnebagos* is a must-read for every science fiction fan. Honestly, every story in this collection is a must-read. These are fantastic, wonderful, elegantly written stories. Some of them are novellas and are long enough to sink into and stay a while. *A Letter From the Clearys* is an example of perfect economy in writing. Every sentence is crafted,

layered, purposeful. Every paragraph is important as the story slowly peels away layers to uncover a post apocalyptic world in which one family tries desperately to cope. The stories are, without exception, gems. At the Rialto is funny, weird, full of the bizarre contradictions of time travel and chaos theory. Connie Willis is obviously fascinated by chaos theory as am I. I am obliged to admit at this point that short stories are not my favorite literary form. I prefer long books. Very long books. I like series of very long books. After I move into a world, I want to stay there, settle down, and get to know the neighbors. Connie Willis is the only author whose short stories I like as much as her longer works. Do not miss this collection. Even if you have read the stories elsewhere, having them together in one binding is special. I hate to sound like an advertisement, but this would make a great gift for anyone who loves science fiction. The book includes: A Letter from the Clearys, At the Rialto, Death on the Nile, The Soul Selects Her Own Society, Fire Watch, Inside Job, Even the Queen, The Winds of Marble Arch, All Seated on the Ground, The Last of the Winnebagos. And although I have all these stories in various books including a couple of them as standalone novellas, this is worth having for the wonderful introduction (don't skip it!) and the delight of having such great stuff in one book. I have it on Kindle, but this one? I've ordered the hardcover version ... because some books are worth the shelf space.

While I enjoyed the stories, the writing style was rough for me. I have a hard time describing it. All I can say is "hectic and or chaotic".

This book is trivially easy to rate. Some of these stories I've read before in Analog or Asimov's magazine (I don't remember which). But Willis is an author that is fresh even in reruns. Every story was interesting or unique. All had prose that flowed smoothly from start to finish. All had characters that were *real*, not characters. Some of the stories are classics, such as Last of the Winnebagos. Simply put: A collection not to be missed.

Some excellent stories, some not so great. Was nice to see a science fiction collection like this though, of a single writer.

I discovered Connie Willis in another anthology book of time-travel stories and was immediately smitten. I love the humour in her writing, the attention to detail and the fascinating characters she creates. I've ordered more of her work since reading this and love everything!

I forget sometimes how brilliant Connie Willis is. How funny, smart and readable. Fire Watch deserves all the accolades it has received over the years, but I'm delighted that this collection also includes lesser-known stories like Even the Queen and my favorite novella, All Seated On the Ground (which I read every Xmas season). Brilliant, funny, smart and accessible. Great stuff here.

ms willis is a true story teller. a mix of dark drama and whimsy. comedy and pathos in the same story. she writes with a wonderful feel for dialog, intense emotions and the truly human condition. when she writes humor it is laugh-out-loud humor and when she shifts to tragedy, it tears the fabric of mind and soul.

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