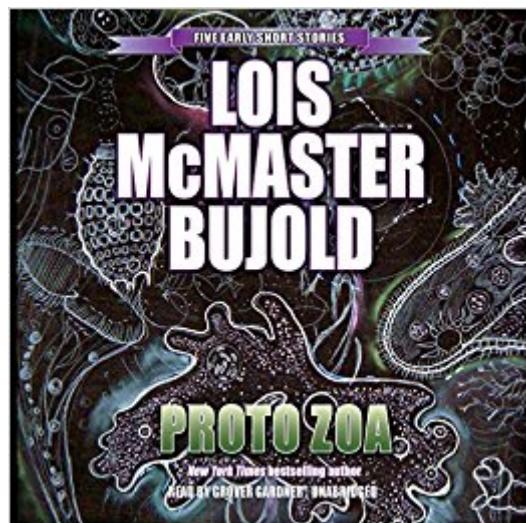


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Proto Zoa: Five Early Short Stories



Synopsis

'Protozoa' is a word from biology via the Greek meaning "first animals." These short stories were indeed among the first life spontaneously generated in Lois McMaster Bujold's nascent writing career. Along with an introduction by the author, this collection features the short stories "Barter," "Garage Sale," "The Hole Truth," "Dreamweaver's Dilemma," and "Aftermaths."

Book Information

Audio CD: 1 pages

Publisher: Blackstone Audio, Inc.; Unabridged edition (February 1, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1504674278

ISBN-13: 978-1504674270

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.7 x 5.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.1 out of 5 stars 35 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #11,052,051 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #53 in Books > Books on CD > Authors, A-Z > (B) > Bujold, Lois McMaster #1419 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories #40870 in Books > Books on CD > Literature & Fiction > General

Customer Reviews

Lois McMaster Bujold is one of the most honored writers in the fields of science fiction and fantasy, having won five Hugo Awards and three Nebula Awards. Her second novel, *The Warrior's Apprentice*, introduced young Miles Vorkosigan, one of the most popular characters in science fiction. In 2011, she was awarded the Skylark Award for her significant contribution to science fiction. The mother of two, she lives in Minneapolis.

I love Bujold's writing, so it was a pleasure to find this volume of her earliest works, finally gathered together. I could see the potential in these early stories, especially the novella, *Dreamweaver's Dilemma*. It was fascinating to read the earliest story set in her incredible Vorkosigan universe! I had to give the book 4 stars because she has so much improved her craft since these were written. Any Bujold fan should enjoy this book, and anyone who picks it up to sample her works, rest assured: as enjoyable as this is, it's not nearly as good as it gets!

I am an avid and loyal fan of Bujold and bought this to pass the time while waiting for her next book. Clearly the publishers knew this and because I am a fan of Bujold, I think she wanted to show her fans, that her work was not always as polished as it now is. (Those of us still getting "pink slips" take heart.) A collection of short stories, some funny, some extremely short, some really old fashioned....Not my favourite Bujold at all, but it does offer an insight to the creative mind and it was certainly entertaining.

These stories were new to me (except for the last one, which is included in *Shards of Honor*/Cordelia's honor, but which is worth re-reading any number of times). Each one exhibits the qualities I've come to expect from Bujold -- characters that are really people, not cardboard "move the plot along" stand-ins; good writing; and interesting ways to look at the world. I tend not to like short stories all that much because they seem gratuitously depressing and all about the "twist" (so much so that most of the time they are totally predictable). However, I do like the short stories from a few authors, and this collection puts Bujold among them. None of these stories are bleak or tormented, and two of them reminded me of the Good Ol' Days when *The Magazine of F&SF* was thriving.

There are comments here that these stories can be found elsewhere in Bujold's work. However, this collection is a must for anyone who hasn't read her works and perhaps doesn't intend to. The story called "Aftermath" is worth more than the price of admission. It is moving and surprising and may be the best thing this great, great writer ever produced. I purchased this collection, despite the fact that I already owned print books that included most of the works because it would be handy to read the short fiction on my Kindle and the collection delivered. I also bought the short piece "Winderfair Gifts" and it is also wonderful.

Reading Lois McMaster Bujold's creations is akin to being in a feelie-dream. Her genius for giving birth to new worlds from her imagination is awesome. This is a writer whose prose is so full of life and richness, that you must force yourself to savor her stories and not gluttonously race through them. Her writing transcends the science fiction genre and joins the wider ranks of great literature.

I am a sucker for a good short story and this collection does not disappoint. I enjoyed the science fiction section and the human interactions. That is what a good story is about - the characters - and the rest is just window dressing. Bujold understands this and every story here feels like she is

attempting to build something that lasts even if you will only be part of it for a handful of pages.

I love everything this author writes.

Love that dreamweaver has been made available as an e-book. And three non-Vorkosigan pieces are enjoyable reads. Aftermath is probably not knew to most folks who get this book, but still good.

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