

*Stories at the Edge of Time*

Alan Robbins

iUniverse (2007)

ISBN 9780595471072

Reviewed by Olivera Baumgartner-Jackson for Reader Views (1/08)

I'll be the first to admit that short stories usually cannot hold my attention for very long. More often than not I'll read one or two in a collection; then decide that they are all the same anyhow and I'll give up. Well, this was not the case with Alan Robbins' collection of science-fiction short stories "Stories at the Edge of Time." The nineteen stories held my attention throughout the entire collection and I enjoyed them immensely.

The stories are diverse and extremely engaging. Most of them seem to deal with time, be it the passage of time, the relativity of it or some other aspect of it. They are all fresh and very different from each other, yet linked by superb writing and boundless imagination. It would be a tough call to decide which of the stories could be my favorite. Part of me would be in favor of "Sudden Insight," the story of a mathematician on the brink of a huge discovery – which never happens. Or maybe it could be "The Dead Got It Good," of the "suave detective and hard-nosed dame" genre that I've always enjoyed so much in the vintage detective novels. But wait, we cannot forget "The Time Phone!" Would it not be nice to be able to telephone into the future? Or would it be? Then we have "Uncle Jack Eats a Mummy," a very insightful story about immortality. If this one does not make you stop and think, you are probably beyond help. While all of those stories I've just named, as well as all the rest of them, enchanted me, amused me and made me wonder, I would probably pick "The Edge of Time" if I truly had to pick one only. As an avid reader I love the premise of stories and reading being able to change our fate – and that's exactly what happens in "The Edge of Time."

So – pick "Stories at the Edge of Time" and immerse yourself in it – I am pretty certain that your universe will experience a little shift as well.