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Wandering Realities: Mormonish Short Fiction

WANDERING REALITIES

THE MORMONISH SHORT FICTION OF
STEVEN L. PECK



Synopsis

"Wandering Realities gathers together much of the Mormon-themed short fiction of perhaps Mormondom's best living writer," says Michael Austin. "The collection is strange, wonderful, eye opening and amazing. It is a book of revelations and spiritual gifts from an immensely talented author to his religious community, which has long needed somebody to show us how strange and wonderful (and strange) we can actually be." "Wandering Realities is perfectly satisfying, a treat from beginning to end," says Steven Evans. "It is alternatively touching and funny and poignant, with horrors and wonders. Steven Peck is a gift to Mormon literature, and any opportunity to read his stories is not to be missed." "This collection is one of the freshest, most engaging, and most entertaining contributions to Mormon literature that I've seen in a long while," says Jonathan Langford. "Steve Peck is an alien. . . . That's the only explanation I can come up with for how, in this set of 16 stories, he so consistently manages to provide such startlingly different, yet at the same time deeply insightful, perspectives on the culture and religion he has adopted for his own." "Peck's highly imaginative stories run the gamut from Mormons reverting to a medieval society on Mars to a bishop who is killing the neighborhood dogs. These stories not only entertain and delight, but they challenge and provoke as well. This collection includes several award-winning stories, including: "Two-Dog Dose"â "best short story of 2014, Association for Mormon Letters "A Strange Report from the Church Archives"â "second place, Irreantum fiction contest "Avek, Who Is Distributed"â "first place, Four Centuries of Mormon Fiction Contest 2012" "When the Bishop Started Killing Dogs"â "second place, Four Centuries of Mormon Fiction Contest 2012" "Every story Steven L. Peck writes seems to lead Mormon fiction in exciting and innovative new directions," says Scott Hales. "I hate hyperbole, but Peck might be the Moses of Mormon letters in the twenty-first century." "Wandering Realities "may be the book of the year," says Andrew Hall. Peck is "perhaps the most interesting contemporary author of Mormon fiction." "Peck is the best LDS science fiction writer currently out there," says Steven Evans. "Wandering Realities is an immensely enjoyable and powerful collection of short fiction, one that highlights both the possibilities and inevitabilities of Mormonism."

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Customer Reviews

So much Mormon writing either tries to prove the LDS Church is true, or at the very least, assumes it is true. There is almost a litmus test among Mormon publishers for these specific literary ingredients. What is refreshing about Steven L. Peck's writing is that neither of these usual goals is present, and yet the stories are still thoroughly Mormon. His characters believe the Church is true and act accordingly, but the truthfulness itself is not really the issue. How people behave inside a complex Mormon world, even on distant planets or far into the future, is what Peck writes about. He is therefore able to take a rich culture and invest it with even more riches. Readers are fortunate to have a writer like Peck to take on this delightful task. Peck's work is not good writing "for a Mormon," but good writing, period.

Whoa! This is lovely stuff! Peck's voice is a little Ray Bradbury, a little CL Moore and Henry Kuttner, with just a dash of Theodore Sturgeon, all spoken with a distinct Mormon accent. Would that all of our Pinewood Derbies came out so well!

One big advantage of a short story collection is that you can skip around, see what you like, and accept that some stories will work better for you than others. I really like the ones where Peck's wild imagination and quirky narrative voice mix with characters who have deep and sympathetic motives

and face complex problems. In the "Other Worlds" section, my favorite is "Avek, Who Is Distributed." In the "This World" section, it's "When the Bishop Started Killing Dogs." Sometimes Peck's narrow/legalistic characters feel a bit too caricatured and one-dimensional for me, especially given that his narrative voice tends to highlight the inherent buffoonery in all of us. I'm probably overly sensitive, though, since whipping the legalist is such a widespread cliché in literary Mormon fiction. In the end, though, I don't think a complaint like that should take even one star from Peck's collection. In the end, the measure of the range of his experiments in fiction is the height of what he's achieved, not the shortcomings in some pieces along the way. In the end, *Wandering Realities* opens up important possibilities for the Mormon reader and writer in terms of concept, tone, character, and thematic question. Well worth reading for fun and as a primer in what the future of Mormon Lit might yet hold.

Very entertaining and if you're familiar with the culture very interesting.

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