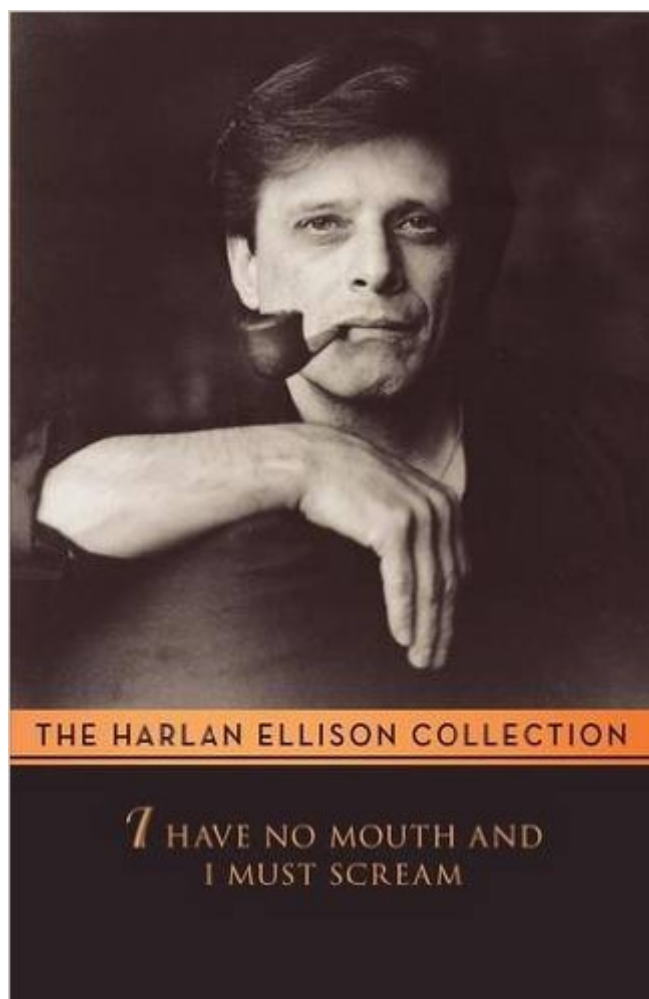


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I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream



Synopsis

Among Ellison's more famous stories, two consistently noted as his very best ever are the Hugo and Nebula Award-winning, postapocalyptic title story of this collection of seven shorts and the volume's concluding story, the Nebula Award finalist "Pretty Maggie Moneyeyes." Since Ellison himself strongly resists categorization of his work, we will not call them science fiction, or SF, or speculative fiction or horror or anything else except compelling reading experiences that are utterly unique. They could only have been written by the great Harlan Ellison, and they are incomparably original.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This collection of short fiction by Harlan Ellison consists of only seven stories. It was originally published in the late 1960s and a second edition was released in 1983—the latter being the edition I read. Despite a bit of Cold War zeitgeist—most notably in the title story—this collection holds up well to time. I'll proceed by discussing each of the seven stories.1.) "I Have No Mouth & I Must Scream": It's after World War III, the Soviets, Americans, and Chinese had built artificial intelligences (AIs) to help prosecute the war. The AIs ganged up against humanity and exterminated all humans—excepting five individuals (4 men and 1 woman.) The AI finds a way to indefinitely extend the lives of the five so that it can keep its playthings around. The AI is kind of like a sadistic child with an ant farm. The story is told from the perspective of one of the five remaining humans.2.) "Big Sam Was My Friend": A folksy narrator tells the tale of how a fellow interstellar circus performer met his ends. The deceased, Big Sam, was capable of teleportation, like the

character Nightcrawler (Kurt Wagner) in the X-men. Ellison does an excellent job of creating a unique character and tone in this story.3.) âœEyes of Dustâ•: On a planet of beautiful people, there remains a family of uggos--and the child is the ugliest of all. However, ugliness isnâ™t the boyâ™s only unique trait. This is one of the weaker stories of the collection in my opinion, but itâ™s not bad.4.) âœWorld of The Mythâ•: The three-person crew of a spaceship crashes on an unfamiliar planet. The planet is inhabited by ant-like creatures that can form complex shapes, and through such displays the creatures can reflect the essence of who a person is back at them.

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