



Chocolate and Cuckoo Clocks

THE ESSENTIAL
ALAN COREN

'A comic genius' The Times

Chocolate And Cuckoo Clocks: The Essential Alan Coren

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In a prolific forty-year career Alan Coren wrote for 'The Times', 'Observer', 'Tatler', 'Daily Mail', 'Mail on Sunday', 'Listener', 'Punch' and the 'New Yorker'. Edited by his children, this title presents an anthology of writing from the former editor of 'Punch' and Radio 4 national treasure Alan Coren, who died in October 2007.

Chocolate And Cuckoo Clocks: The Essential Alan Coren Details

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Author : Alan Coren , Victoria Coren (Editor) , Giles Coren (Editor)

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Bettie? says

**Cricklewood oh Cricklewood
you stole my life away
for you are young and beautiful
and I am old and grey**

Book of the Week: Chocolate and Cuckoo Clocks: The Essential Alan Coren 06-10-2008 10-10-2008

1960s: Under the Influence of Literature.

John Sessions reads from a new anthology of humorous writing by the late Alan Coren, edited by his children, Giles and Victoria.

1970s: Let Us Now Phone Famous Men

1980s: Tax Britannica; £10.66 And All That

1990s: Eight Legs Worse; Time for a Quick One; Tuning Up

2000s: Radio Fun; I Blame The Dealers; The Long Goodbye.

Nick Hylands-white says

He is very eclectic in his writing styles. Some articles are hilarious, others humorous, some fall flat. For me anyway. I'm sure older readers who are more of his time will relate to the contents and find it enjoyable.

Neil says

One of the great humourists, Coren brightened my life when I was a young, aspiring writer. This compendium of his work can only be faulted on two counts. The first being that some of the material has dated (who remembers Idi Amin these days?), and the second being that his children, who edited the book, may have erred on the side of generosity. There are some pieces that are rather below the otherwise scintillating standard.

But it's a keeper, this. Once read cover to cover, it's for dipping into whenever you need a lift. In my case, all too regularly.

Ben Baker says

A fantastic collection of a much missed comic mind I only really knew from the radio.

Alan Fricker says

Nuggets of genius

Sarah says

This is a very funny book. I have to admit I enjoyed the second half more than the first, though I'm not quite sure why. There are a couple of pieces which are absolute GENIUS; one of my favourites is the pastiche of 1984. Highly recommended.

Lynda says

I loved Coren when as a teenager I read his Punch article and the the age infatuation remains un diminished ! This is some one who writes brilliantly , who's humour can be a gentle nudge or much more cutting . I love the way that sometimes his imagination just took off, Getting the hump,...the real reason Richard the thirds suit of armour was so fashioned,Suffer little Children , showing every leading author has at least one children's book in them.
Just two random pieces that made me laugh .

Vasilia says

Laughed aloud more than once, which makes it a top notch book in my humble opinion.

Jane Walker says

My favourite Coren piece isn't in this anthology, but it's in another I own (it's called Slouching Towards Bethlehem). His wit was always dazzling, and these short pieces are marvellous examples of that wit. Some are inevitably dated now, others timeless.

Roberta says

I have to confess that this collection started a little badly for me - I picked it up as a recommendation by Sir

Terry Pratchett, and the first couple of stories absolutely did not do it for me - they felt dark, depressing, as far from funny as it could ever be possible. However, as I pushed through (Thanks, Sir Terry!) it got better, and from the 1970s period onwards, I was laughing out loud, and appreciating most of the stories. I suppose it may have been the period, too - a lot of Coren's work is imbued with pop and literary references, which may be hard to pick up after a while. It is hard to pick any stories in particular to recommend - I enjoyed almost everything in the periods from 1970 until 2007, as Coren has a distinctly consistent style that delivered almost every single time.

Winterwade says

Coren is, quite simply, a comedic genius. Certainly his erudition and wit are ever-present, but he deftly avoids the ostentatious intellectualism with which his modern-day inferiors strive to succeed. A truly enjoyable book, much recommended.

Philip Whiteland says

What can I say? Simply the greatest humorist ever, no question. This collection doesn't contain some of my favourite articles but has introduced me to others that I never knew about. I've chuckled my way through this book, even though I'm saddened that we'll never read any more from him. If you have never read Alan Coren before, then you're in for a treat and this would be a good place to start.

CuteBadger says

I hadn't read any of Alan Coren's pieces for years when I picked up this book, but I remember some of them incredibly well from reading earlier collections when I was in my teens. There was a bargain bookshop in the city where I lived and it always seemed to have a shelf of Alan Coren compilations, probably not great news for him, but wonderful for me. As Victoria Wood says in her introduction to a section of the book, his work isn't something you'd think would appeal to teenage girls, but I had the same experience of it as she did and devoured everything of his that I could find. There was even a brief craze for his books at my secondary school with them being passed round all of us and discussed at length.

This collection is arranged by date, but there's nothing to say that you have to read it that way. I laughed out loud on a couple of occasions (I know people say that all the time and don't mean it - but I really did) and enjoyed the pieces immensely. There were some familiar friends here from the 70s and 80s, but I hadn't read much of the earlier work before and there were some new gems in his later columns.

I was really trying not to read too much of this at once as I wanted to make it last, but I failed so it was over all too quickly. I'll definitely read it again though and would recommend it to anyone who wants an amusing and acute view of British society over the past half a century.

Emily Richards says

Alan Coren (1938-2007) was one of the comedic greats. Most notably, he was editor for Punch magazine, columnist for The Times and starred in Radio 4's The News Quiz. *Chocolate and Cuckoo Clocks* is a compilation lovingly compiled, chronologically with some treasured photos, by the late Coren's son and daughter, Giles and Victoria.

Amongst this collection are some humorous gems. A couple that particularly shone out to me were *Father's Lib* (15) and *Dr No will See You Now* (28). The former aptly depicts Coren's spin on an exhausted father who is weighing the pros and cons of extended paternity leave. He has a crying baby, a tiddling toddler and an unimpressed wife to contend with, at night-time with a cat and a milk bottle to fill. Need I say more? The later snippet shows us 007 in his twilight years, wheezing and creaking, resisting the need for glasses or hearing aids. James Bond wakes Miss Moneypenny to shoot the wig stand. To quote the end of this scene: "Moneypenny sighed. At sixty-eight, it seemed, her virginity was moving slowly but surely beyond threat."

A joy to read in small doses, this cheeky book of fictional and timely anecdotes will have you chucking out loud. Of course, as some were written in lieu of a current moment, some jokes might pass you by, but Coran's writing is witty and conversational. This one is a pleasure to read and ideal for the Tube.

Colin says

Genius!
