



The Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Short Stories, 1945-1985

Daniel Halpern (Editor), Various

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The years since World War II have seen an exciting resurgence of the short story. From Albert Camus to William Maxwell, from Amos Oz to R.K. Narayan, from Ann Beattie to Yukio Mishima - this incomparably rich and diverse collection attests to the vigor and excellence of the modern short story throughout the world. Daniel Halpern's marvelous anthology offers not only European and American but also "Third World" literature of the first rank (fully a third of the works are translated); and of the English-language stories, a considerable number are by Australian, African, and Asian writers. The eighty-one masterpieces Halpern has chosen include traditional forms, both of classical realism and of the extended fairy tale or fable, as well as the gossipy village banter of the traditional folktale and the outer bounds of surrealist fiction. Many of the stories are cast against an exotic setting; others are humorous and matter-of-fact; some are political, others entirely absorbed with private themes of the heart.

The Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Short Stories, 1945-1985 Details

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Neil says

A-Z Project #20

I won't rate this since I didn't finish it, but the first 100 pages were awfully uninspired for an anthology that given its nature should be highly selective. Find a different collection to spend your time on.

Linda DiMeo Lowman says

Five Stars! A satisfying collection of international short stories. It took me a long time to read this because for most of the stories I stopped reading to savor the feelings the story engendered with me as the reader. Also, because the stories are international, it's a dive into worlds unknown that are exotic, tragic, and painful in ways that American stories are not.

Adam says

The best anthology of contemporary short stories. The translations are beautiful, and the selection of material is diverse and engaging. Covers such a wonderful list of authors, and is a great introduction to anyone wanting to read short fiction.

Nik says

This is an anthology book of Short Stories iv only read a couple, the ones i read where (Fat by Raymond Carver, Communist by Richard Ford and a couple more that i cant find.) I will give a brefa rewie of the short store called Fat, its a short store about a man who is fat and enters a restaraunt and how everyone is staring at him and giving him the odd look but the waitres takes his order and eventuaaly understand that he is a very nice gentalman and its not his fault he is fat i will stop here becasue im avoiding spolilers. I rated this book 5/5 becuse the stories are reasonably short and are very appiling to diffrent age groupes.

Kossiwa says

Reading for class, but I really like these stories I'm reading; Tobias Wolff's Hunters in the Snow, Margaret Atwood's Hair Jewellery, James Baldwin's Going to the Meet the Man. Going to Meet the Man was an emotional story and I want my stories to be emotional.

David says

Good thing I got through this relatively quickly (I still have Penguin's "The Art of the Story" to trudge through - a more current companion piece of international short stories).

So, out of eighty-one stories, I was almost always approving, somewhat floored, and rarely disappointed. I already know I plan on using this for many future references. Sometimes a flailing read, though rarely, most of the best compilation short story books always eventually pick up their pace. Obviously, this one is no exception.

But the biggest thing I probably learned here is that I've been missing out on some Mishima, which I immediately remedied by putting all of his books on my "to read" list.

Top Ten:

01. Hair Jewellery - Atwood
02. Spring in Fialta - Nabokov
03. Pariotism - Mishima
04. A Set of Variations on a Borrowed Theme - O'Conner
05. The Country Husband - Cheever
06. Children of Their Birthdays - Capote
07. This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen - Borowski
08. First Love, Last Rites - McEwan
09. The Tryst - Oates
10. Little Whale, Varnisher of Reality - Aksenov

Sunniva says

What I really liked about this collection of short stories is, as it says in the title, it's international. The short stories are translated from all kinds of languages, which makes the most of stories very different from what you are used to from your own culture, regardless of where you are from.

I did find the stories very obscure, usually, and it was sometimes difficult for me to reach an interpretation that I thought made sense after looking at all aspects of the stories. This is a personal preference for me, but I usually like stories that are a bit more forth-coming about their ideas.

Hilary says

"What do I think?"

I think I need to delve into the world of international writers! Of course, I've read books of this nature...I JUST NEED TO READ MORE OF THEM!!!! And this book presents a great catalog in which to start.

Alan says

just realised I reviewed this as the Penguin Book of International Short stories 1945-85. Here's what I said:

.. covers a lot of ground and all the usual suspects are there: Marquez, Borges, Singer, Pritchett, Achebe, Boll etc etc, but also some interesting selections I hadn't heard of - Leon Rooke was new to me, as was Leonard Michaels, Juan Rulfo, Luisa Valenzuela (my ignorance), and many stories were new (to me). A quirky selection too I think, going for the less anthologised ones, and obviously dated (introducing a new generation of writers such as Ian McEwan & Tobias Wolf!) but consistently interesting. Maybe has an American bias - 30 (of 85) of the stories are from the USA, but that's probably right given the pre-eminence of US story writers. Eudora Welty's story was one of her finest I think, and James Baldwin's burnt a hole in my brain. If your wrists can take it - it's a very heavy paperback - this is 1000 plus pages of joy for fans of the short story.

Pam says

Normally, I hate short stories. They always seemed like a waste of time to me, and it takes an exceptional writer to create a good story with so few words. But this was for a class. So I decided to approach it with an open mind. I read the whole book. Every. Single. Story. Even though many of them were subpar. Some authors, in whom I had faith, turned out to be horribly disappointing in this genre. To add the icing smack on top of the cake, my professor never uttered a word about any of them. Not one. Zero.

Susan Merrell says

Everyone should read the story Gogol's Wife and then look up the Russian folk tales about the rusalki to see a brilliant use of folk legend...

Morgan says

No I did not read the whole book. This was a book required for class. The stories that I did read varied from really good to really boring. I have no strong opinion about this book or recommendations.

Alan Lindsay says

Excellent collection, enjoyed all the stories (but one). Cheap edition, however, newsprint, a few typos. Otherwise it would be five star.

Blumenthal Molfsee says

I love this book. It travels with me, I travel with it, and it's just marvelous. Most of the stories are wonderful views into worlds I couldn't have imagined before. However, there is also the occasional story that conveys something that feels so personal and intrinsic to who I am, but which I could never articulate myself. I move a lot, and most of my books live in storage, but this one tends to travel with me.

Alan says

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