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Andrés Barba , ????? ????? (????) , ??????? ??????? (??????) , Nariman El Shamly (Translator)

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(Translator)

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Author : Andrés Barba , ????? ???? (????) , ??????? ??????? (??????) , Nariman El Shamly (Translator)

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(???????) , Nariman El Shamly (Translator)**

From Reader Review ??? ???? for online ebook

Bill Hsu says

Most of the characters are mired in a kind of deep, debilitating domesticity. I liked the first story, but really had trouble warming up to the others.

Contrary Reader says

Barba is as Barba does. A crepuscular veil settles over these characters, as they battle hidden demons (of the internal kind). Lucky for us that we get to probe about beneath the surface and explore their consuming issues as they wreak their malign effects. As ever Barba conveys all of this with a simplicity that holds much meaning. I couldn't put this book down

Cristian says

Una prosa limpia y contundente que describe con gran maestría las emociones humanas más complejas: la culpa, el rencor, la obsesión, el autodesprecio, el perdón, el amor, la condena...cuatro relatos que miran la profundidad del alma y la exponen como todos sabemos que somos, pero pocos saben describir tan certeramente.

KATHLEEN says

After I left school, I stopped reading much "real literature." You know, the "serious" stuff that garners critical praise and often awards. The reason is simply that most of these books are as depressing as hell. Read "The Day of the Locust." Or "A Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich." Important literature, but not really what I want my head to be full of very often.

I was intrigued by the cover of "The Right Intention," written by the Spanish author Andres Barba. Ravening animals tearing at each other definitely gets my attention. And the format of the book, four novellas, sounded more readable to me than a book of short stories or one novel with no break from a repetitive sadness.

The book's cover informed me that these stories feature people who are "tested by a single, destructive obsession." Well, that sounds promising as far as gaining the interest of your readers. My take, however, was a little different. I see those stories as being about terribly isolated and unhappy people using an obsession to hold reality at bay and maintain their loneliness.

The first story, and to my mind the unhappiest, is about a gay man in his fifties dreaming of companionship. Apparently grindr is not a thing in Spain or he simply prefers to use the personal section of a paper. And yet when he gets involved with the much-younger Roberto, he is soon pushing him away.

In the next tale, a man dates a woman for eight years and then marries her. A week after the wedding, he

decides that she irritates him. To avoid her, he jumps obsessively into training for a marathon with a new friend, and is soon pushing that friend away, too, in rather paranoid fashion.

Story three is all the sadder since it's about a teenage girl. Like many teenagers she feels she does not fit in with her peers, and avoids all but one girlfriend. It's been three years since her parents divorced. She dabbles in self-destructive habits, and then makes the slow slide into anorexia.

The final story is about a woman taking care of her hated and dying mother. She must also deal with siblings who moved away but feel free to criticize her care. Interestingly, this was the only novella that gave me a feeling of hope. This protagonist actually has a loving husband. And maybe death can sometimes bring people together instead of pushing them apart.

I really thought this book would make it onto my "Couldn't finish" shelf, but Barba is a really effective writer. He understands how families and relationships work-or DON'T work, and he portrays them well. In the novella form he gives you so much more than a short story, including everything you need to know about the protagonist. If you don't require a happy ending and logical reasoning from the human "heart," you may enjoy this work.

Jason Diamond says

The first story shook me. Loved the rest, but the first really stuck. Great collection.

Jen says

four novellas about obsessions, families, relationships, and forgiveness.

i was very moved by the last story in this collection, and didn't care too much for the first two, although i will say that, throughout reading this book, i thought about some of the characters and the choices they made upon reflections of my own life.

Michael Podlasek Kent says

Everyone, please read this now so I have people to discuss it with. My heart hurts from this gorgeous, devastating book.

Nadinedebussy says

3 nouvelles à dévorer pour des personnages attachants touchants, vrais de la pulpe de leurs lèvres aux battements de leur coeur. La première nouvelle à sauter.

Javier says

Cuatro nouvelles parcas, sacadas de la realidad más austera y disfuncional. Con personajes egoístas, enfermos, aburridos de la vida. Están muy bien escritas, si. Pero no es un libro que recomendaría a un amigo.

Adelina says

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jeremy says

madrid-born author andrés barba is quickly (and deservedly) garnering considerable attention among english-speaking readers, mostly on account of his slim, but eerie novella, *such small hands*. of the dozen or so books to his name, *the right intention* (*la recta intención*) is the fourth to be rendered into english. a collection of four novellas, each of these stories amply demonstrates the spanish writer's gifted prose, perceptual acumen, and emotional literacy.

the common thread wending its way through *the right intention* is some form of obsession... and their inevitable consequences. loneliness, self-image, doubt, success, familial devotion; each plays a role in shaping the actions and interactions of barba's characters. what makes the spanish writer's fiction so compelling, however, is the empathy, compassion, and curiosity with which he approaches his stories. his characters, flawed each in their own way, seem all too real, betrayed by a simple gesture, turn of phrase, or internal aside. barba *gets* people and that translates to a wonderfully intimate way of telling a story (even if the story itself leaves nothing to smile about).

of the four novellas that compose *the right intention*, the first two "nocturne" and "debilitation" are the strongest, though the other pair, "marathon" and "descent" are also excellent. late last year, barba was awarded the prestigious herralde prize for his (as yet untranslated) novel, *república luminosa*, which, like the rest of his writing, will hopefully be rendered into english very soon (especially as it seems his most acclaimed works have yet to be translated).

his life, like the lives of compassionate, empathetic people, took the joys and pains of others and made them his own: he felt everything.

*translated from the spanish by best translated book award-winner lisa dillman (herrera, halfon, et al.)

J says

That people seemed all about Such Small Hands and then have also seemed to completely ignore this is a damn joke.

Therese says

A collection of four literary novellas by a Spanish author - I really liked the format of these being longer than short stories, so I could really get sucked into them and feel I was inhabiting the characters and their lives, yet shorter than novels so that I could read each whole story in one day. Kind of the literary equivalent of a movie ... As far as the substance goes, the stories covered fairly depressing material, but were so beautifully written and gripping that I found them more cathartic than sad. So often stories with no happy ending are also slow and boring, as if the author wanted to make readers doubly tormented, but Barba avoids that trap. His novellas are seductive, as if you were being swept along through an ill-fated love affair that you know will end in tears, yet can't let go of because of the beauty. A common theme that runs through them is characters who want to drop out of the world of love and feeling, characters who push away their loved ones and make decisions that are cold and hard and cruel - which is perhaps a common psychological struggle for writers, who push away the world of human closeness to be in their own created worlds where they're safe and in control, where they're the god of their own little universe ...

Emanuella says

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Jen says

Loved every story, but the first one, "Nocturne," was incredible.
