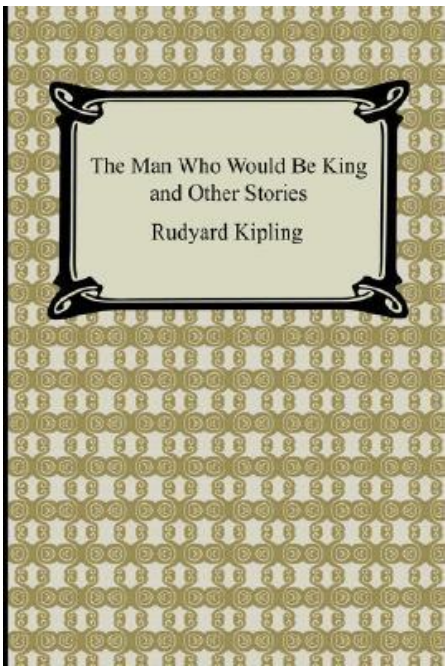

The Man Who Would Be King and Other Stories

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"The Man Who Would be King and Other Stories" is a classic collection of some of the most loved short stories of Rudyard Kipling. Contained here in this volume are the following short stories: The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes; The Phantom 'Rickshaw; Gemini; A Wayside Comedy; At Twenty-Two; The Education of Otis Yeere; The Hill of Illusion; Dray Wara Yow Dee; The Judgment of Dungara; With the Main Guard; In Flood Time; Only a Subaltern; Baa Baa, Black Sheep; At the Pit's Mouth; Black Jack; On the City Wall; and The Man Who Would be King.

The Man Who Would Be King and Other Stories Details

Date	:	Published January 1st 2007 by Digireads.com (first published 1888)
ISBN	:	9781420929560
Author	:	Rudyard Kipling
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From Reader Review The Man Who Would Be King and Other Stories for online ebook

Shovelmonkey1 says

I have a weird relationship with Rudyard Kipling (and not in any kind of creepy, bothering-the-dead kind of way thank you). He wrote extensively on subjects, times and places which I find fascinating. It therefore stands to reason that I should love and be totally absorbed by his prolific literary output in all its formats. Frankly, I'm not. Kim? Zzzzz, that one nearly put me to sleep standing. The Jungle Book? Strike me down for saying this but I'm giving a thumbs up to the Disney version. I want to love them but they just fail to excite.

On the other hand, there is The Man Who Would be King which appeals wholeheartedly to all my senses of ridiculous 19th century adventuring, treasure seeking and generally being all foreign and exotic and far flung in a land far, far away.

Daniel Dravot and Peachy Carnehan - two men who decide the the British Empire simply is not big enough for them after having performed the amazing feat of pissing off pretty much everyone in British India, and so off they go, looking for some land (specifically an actual whole country) which they can call their own. Essentially these two conmen at large have more front the entire Himalayas and manage to sufficiently charm/con/bamboozle local populations into believing their own particularly British brand of bullshit. Utilising their gift of the gab and the ability to monopolise any random situation and turn it to their advantage they do actually succeed in setting themselves up as kings. Their success is glamorous and gold laden but obviously short-lived. Slowly their schemes and dreams unravel leaving Mr Dravot's life hanging literally in the balance, while Peachy gets nailed and not in a good way.

The whole tale is narrated by Kipling himself which gives it a charmingly realistic edge, especially when he relates how the concluding part of the tale finds it's way back to civilisation. I am a sucker for this kind of story and it is the only Kipling that I actually enjoyed without a yawn. That and I secretly heart the slightly bad film which was made in 1970s. It is synonymous with rubbish Christmas viewing as kid in the 1980s and for that I will always hold it dear.

J. Alfred says

The Anglo-Indian Kipling reminds me of what I've eaten of Indian food: you might not like it, but there's lots to choose from and, whatever you decide on, it'll be highly flavored.
These short stories were written when he was around 23, says the introduction. They're cynical and violent and unpleasantly hero-worshipping, but they're also inventive and will give you a broader perception of Empire.
All that said, "Baa Baa Black Sheep," probably the quietest story in here, is the one that I think will stick with me best. Give it a look.

Yigal Zur says

the best ever short story. the great master

The Converted Bookworm says

This collection of short stories had to be one of the better reads in my Literature class. I enjoyed a majority of the stories, and I honestly liked how it gave me a view of colonized India from the English view point. It did have a lot of racist undertones because of the time it was written, but some of the stories were good and had great themes.

Kostas Tzonas says

Στις ιστορ?ες αυτ?ς περιλαμβ?νονται σκην?ς μ?ας εποχ?ς για την οπο?α γν?ριζα ελ?χιστα. Δεν μπορ? να πω ?τι ?γινα σοφ?τερος, καθ?ς οι ιστορ?ες επικεντρ?νονται στις ζω?ς των Βρεταν?ν και δεν ασχολο?νται και πολ? με τους Ινδο?ς.

?να σ?ντομο σχ?λιο για κ?θε ιστορ?α:

1) Μια γυνα?κα δε?τερης κατηγορ?ας (A second-rate woman): Η κυρ?α Χ?κσμπι και η κυρ?α Μ?λοου κ?θονται και σχολι?ζουν τους ?λλους. Μου θυμ?ζουν μια απε?ρως πιο εκλεπτυσμ?νη και αμυδρ?ς θηλυκ?τερη εκδοχ? των γ?ρων του Μ?πετ Σ?ου. Απ? ?να σημε?ο και μετ?, για maximum comedy effect, ?ρχισα να διαβ?ζω τα λ?για της κυρ?ας Χ?κσμπι με τη φων? της Χρυσο?λας Διαβ?τη, και τα λ?για της κυρ?ας Μ?λοου με τη φων? της Αντιγ?νης Γλυκοφρ?δη. 4/5

2) ?νας κατ?τερος αξιωματικ?ς (Only a Subaltern): Μ?α ιστορ?α περ? αισθ?ματος καθ?κοντος και του π?ς ο καλ?ς καλ? δε βλ?πει. 2/5

3) Η Αυτο? Μεγαλει?της ο Βασιλε?ς (His Majesty the King): Η αδιαφορ?α των γον?ων απ? την οπτικ? γων?α του παιδιο?. Το γιατ? αποκαλε?ται βασιλι?ς δεν το κατ?λαβα. 1/5

4) Μ?α Παρ?δια Κωμωδ?α (A Wayside comedy): Η ζω?ς των λιγοστ?ν Βρεταν?ν κατο?κων της Κασ?μα περιπλ?κονται, καθ?ς ο ?νας επιθυμε? τον ?λλο, μ?χρι που ?λα ?ρχονται στη φ?ρα. ?μως αυτο? οι ?νθρωποι δεν ?χουν πουθεν? αλλο? να π?νε, και ε?ναι υποχρεωμ?νοι να συνυπ?ρξουν. Θα καταφ?ρει το μπ?ντζο του ταγματ?ρχη Βανσ?ιντεν να αμβλ?νει τα π?θη; 3/5

5) Η επιμ?ρφωση του ?τις Γιρ (The education of Otis Yeere): Η κυρ?α Χ?κσμπι και η κυρ?α Μ?λλοου κ?νουν την επανεμφ?νισ? τους. Η κυρ?α Χ?κσμπι π?ει να το πα?ξει μ?ντορας εν?ς ?ντρα. Την προτιμ? ως μια εκλεπτυσμ?νη κακ?στρω, ?πως τη γν?ρισα στη "Γυνα?κα δε?τερης κατηγορ?ας". 2/5

6) Η δικ? μου αληθιν? ιστορ?α φαντασμ?των (My own true ghost story): Δεν ε?μαι σ?γουρος τι ακριβ?ς ?θελε να πει ο ποιητ?ς, αν ?θελε να πει κ?τι. 1/5

7) Μπε μπε, μα?ρο πρ?βατο (Baa baa, black sheep): Δ?ο αδ?ρφια αναγκ?ζονται να ζ?σουν μακρι? απ? τους γονε?ς τους. Το αγ?ρι δυσκολε?εται στη ν?α του ζω?, και η μαλακισμ?νη που τον προσ?χει δε βοηθ?ει καθ?λου. Δε θα με παραξ?νευε καθ?λου αν η συκγκεκριμ?νη ιστορ?α εν?πνευσε τη δημιουργ?α των χαρακτ?ρων της θετ?ς οικογ?νειας του Χ?ρι Π?τερ. 4/5

8) Ο ?νθρωπος που θα γιν?ταν βασιλι?ς (The man who would be king): Το ψαχν? αυτο? του τ?μου. Εκτεταμ?νο δι?γημα, αλλ? κ?λλιστα θα μπορο?σε αυτ? η ιστορ?α να απλωθε? κι ?λλο, καθ?ς κ?ποια ενδιαφ?ροντα κομμ?τια τα διηγε?ται εν τ?χει ο ημ?τρελος Π?τσι. 4/5

9) Ο παρ?ξενος περ?πατος του Μ?ρομπι Τζουκς (The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes): Ο Μ?ρομπι Τζουκς φουντ?ρει απ? μια πλαγι? και παγιδε?εται σε ?ναν φυσικ? σχηματισμ? που λειτουργε? ως φυλακ? ανεπιθυμ?των. Μπρος γκρεμ?ς (που δεν μπορε? να σκαρφαλ?σει), π?σω ρ?μα (στο οπο?ο παραμονε?ει οπλισμ?νος φρουρ?ς), παραδ?πλα κινο?μενη ?μμος. Ενδιαφ?ρουσα η ιδ?α και η παρουσ?αση, το τ?λος λ?γο τζο?φιο. 4/5

Jason says

Some nice short stories here, the title story and The Drums of the Fore and Aft i particularity enjoyed. Always interesting reading stories from different eras and opinions,

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Jason Koivu says

Fantastical stories and powerful imagery. Sure, technological advances have numbed us to the violence of war, but Kipling's writing loses little of its punch due to the passing time. The adventurous spirit imbued in his work still thrills the soul with its wanderlust, even its foolhardy daring. The images of death and dying, so sudden and stark, are horrific even today. One can only imagine the impact they made on the populous back home in an age when photographs were in their infancy.

Elliott says

If you didn't already know: Kipling's unwavering belief in the innate superiority of the White Man (especially the Englishman) over the indigenous populations of the British Empire and the view that the English presence is an unequivocal Good is ever present in his work, and colors (is that racist?) the five short stories in this volume to greater and lesser degrees.

I found nothing particularly thrilling about the psychological thriller, "The Phantom 'Rickshaw," and, moreover, it is only superficially psychological at best. Discuss amongst yourselves.

"The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes," is awful, period.

"The Man Who Would Be King," is a classic adventure yarn. I'm surprised Kipling neutered it into a short story.

"Wee-Willie Winkie" is rather charming in its old-fashioned English childishness (cf. Mary Poppins, Peter Pan).

"Without Benefit of Clergy," is a surprisingly tender and tragic story of love and loss during the British Raj. Are you thinking what I'm thinking? Period romance starring Ralph Fiennes and Freida Pinto for the win!

Jay Fromkin says

A brief, punchy story that John Huston made into a wonderful film with Sean Connery and Michael Caine. Huston and Gladys Hill kept to the outline of Kipling's story (the story is actually an outline itself), and fleshed out the characters unforgettably. This is really Peachy Carnahan's story, and his telling of his and Daniel Dravot's adventures in Kafiristan (northeast Afghanistan)is heartbreaking, despite the con artists' hubris and stupidity. I suppose this is a microcosm of the British experience in Afghanistan - as well as the Russians'. Whether colonialism writ large, or colonialism writ small, it all seemed doomed from the start.

Philip says

Four stars for the title story alone; the rest are so-so Kipling also-rans. But what a title story -- and an even better film! Sean Connery, Michael Caine AND Christopher Plummer!!

Cherie says

The best thing I can say is that I finished. I listened to the audio book several times and I read almost all of them over and I still couldn't tell anyone what some of them were about. A few were simply unfathomable to me. Several were very exciting, but strange. My goal was to get through the title story to see the movie. I didn't want the movie to tell me what Kipling wrote. How pathetic was that? I read every word and all the mumbo-jumbo too. Moving on...

I hope Kim is better. I really want to know the story.

Jefferson says

Comedy, Tragedy, Romance, Ghosts, Adventure, and Kids in the British Raj

The Naxos *The Man Who Would Be King* collects 12 Kipling short stories originally published between 1885 and 1890. The tales are varied in quality, mood, and genre. A few are classic, a few forgettable, the rest strong. There are two adventure stories (one brutal, one surreal), two ghost stories (one straight, one comedic), three supernatural stories (one straight, two comedic), three romance stories (one comedic, one tragic, one political), and two boy stories (one comedic, one excruciating). They are unified by Kipling's authentic depiction of life in the Raj (British Empire in India); by his criticism of and sympathy for the Anglo rulers and their indigenous subjects; by his ability to write compelling stories, characters, and settings that reveal the human condition; by his first-person narrators and nested narratives; and by his concise, dynamic, and flexible style.

Here follows an annotated list of the stories.

1. The Man Who Would Be King (1888)

Two British con man "loafers" plan to become kings in Kafiristan, a mysterious, mountainous corner of Afghanistan, by smuggling in guns and training the locals in soldiery, agriculture, and infrastructure. How they succeed and fail makes an absorbing and appalling adventure story that satirizes the ignorant attempts of "superior" civs to force enlightenment on "inferior" ones, not unlike the Raj project.

2. The Phantom Rickshaw (1885/1890)
In this morbidly funny and moving psychological study of guilt Jack Pansay comes to see the phantoms of a rickshaw, its coolies, and the woman he wronged as more real than the living people around him. The doctor diagnoses overwork and indigestion, but the narrator figures that "there was a crack in Pansay's head and a little bit of the Dark World came through. . ."

3. My Own True Ghost Story (1888)
The narrator has never experienced any of the many ghosts in India, until he stays the night in a dak-bungalow. Convinced he's heard a spectral billiard game in the next room he's planning to write a ghost story with which to paralyze the British Empire-- until he takes a peek into the room.

4. The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes (1885)
After riding out into the desert to kill a wild dog, feverish engineer Morrowbie Jukes comes to his senses in a sandy crater. He finds himself among dozens of skeletal and smelly Indians dumped there after failing to die from fatal diseases. Rather than give Jukes his due respect as a white Sahib, the living dead laugh at or ignore him, and one ex-Brahmin even tries to master him. There is no escape from the pit. The vivid details and surreal horror--existence pared down to eating roast crow--prefigure Kafka or Kobo Abe.

5. The Mark of the Beast (1890)
"The gods of the heathen are stone and brass, and any attempt to deal with them otherwise is justly condemned." Everything in this story contradicts that sentiment, after a drunken Brit stubs his cigar out on the forehead of a statue of the Hindu god Hanuman and starts behaving bestially. A doctor diagnoses hydrophobia, but the narrator and the policeman Strickland suspect the curse of a leper priest.

6. Without Benefit of Clergy (1890)
John Holden is a British bachelor civil servant in India by day, an unsanctioned husband of a 16-year-old Muslim Indian girl by night. When Ameera bears a son, the couple experiences "absolute happiness," but "The delight of that life was too perfect to endure." There is great beauty, love, and pain in the story: "It was not like this when we counted the stars."

7. The Sending of Dana Da (1888)
Kipling mocks Anglo theosophy and spiritualist religious types via a mysterious (con) man's supernatural "sending" of kittens to an ailurophobic foe of the narrator.

8. Wee Willie Winkie (1888)
The 6-year-old son of the regimental colonel follows the foolish fiancé of Lt. Coppy across a verboten dried riverbed into Afghanistan, the land of the "Bad Men" ("goblins"). His little boy-talk is almost too cute (e.g., "Vis is a bad place, and I've bwoken my awwest"), his awareness that he is the "child of the dominant race" repugnant. And the bandits know that if they harm the captives, the British regiment ("devils") "will fire and rape and plunder for a month till nothing remains."

9. On the City Wall (1889)
A prostitute, her admirer, a political prisoner, a Muslim festival in a Hindu part of Lahore, and the narrator's perceptions of all those. Love, faith, India, changing times, and the difficulty (and hypocrisy) of British Raj

rule. This is a great story: funny, ironic, sensual, romantic, political, and moving.

10. The Education of Otis Yeere (1888)
In this comedy of manners, Mrs. Hauksbee feels empty and wants power, so she applies all her formidable strategy and style to make a man. She molds boring Otis Yeere, whose career in the Raj is going nowhere, into a smart Man on the Rise. With its many Wildean lines (e.g., "A man is never so happy as when he is talking about himself"), the story is funny, but Otis' broken heart and Mrs. Hauksbee's ego sting.

11. The Judgment of Dungara (1888)
When a well-meaning but ignorant German missionary husband and wife succeed too well in converting the Buria Kol, a nude and lazy folk who worship a God called Dungara, the sly priest of Dungara takes action.

12. Baa Baa Black Sheep (1888)
This fictional account of the experience of Kipling and his sister uproots 5-year-old Punch and 3-year-old Judy from their idyllic lives with their parents in Bombay and inserts them for five years into the Dickensian hell of Downe Lodge in England.

The reader of the audiobook, Sean Barrett, greatly enhances the stories, handling the many characters--young or old, male or female, British or Indian, sane or mad--all just right.

If you've read Kipling's *Plain Tales from the Hills*, you know what to expect here, though the stories in this collection are longer and fewer. Both sets of stories provide a vision of British rule in India (and of "civilized" rule of "uncivilized" peoples anywhere) more complex than merely, "Kipling was an imperial apologist." His humane interest in all kinds of people--from prostitutes to priests, from 6-year-old British Colonel's sons to aged Sikh revolutionaries--shines through.

Wastrel says

A peculiarly mixed collection of stories (it's a collection of three smaller collections, each originally with a general theme of its own). This represents almost the beginning of Kipling's career - having returned to his homeland in India at the age of 16 after an abusive childhood, he became a newspaperman, and eventually started writing short stories for his papers, before publishing them in collections.

In 1888, Kipling published eighty short stories in book form, of which a few dozen had previously been published in newspapers in the previous year and a half or so. This collection brings together 14 of those stories. These include the classic colonialism story, "The Man Who would be King", as well as probably the most important story for understanding the author, "Baa, Baa, Black Sheep", a fictionalisation of his own childhood.

These stories would have been written when Kipling was 22 or 23.

Both the content and the quality of these stories is variable, as might be expected of such a young and inexperienced author, but there are clear signs here of the genius that would be seen in his later, more famous works, and some of these stories are, or should be, classics.

More generally, they are a fascinating insight into Kipling's world - the world of British India in the later decades of the 19th century, roaming from the Afghan wars to the indolent hill station resorts to the domestic

homes and nurseries of Mumbai, taking in a couple of ghost stories along the way. Throughout, Kipling employs a sharp, sometimes even brutal, ironic tone to deconstruct the failures and insanities of the society around him, from the level of government policy down to the relationships between lovers, or between parents and children - Wilde and Saki spring to mind as comparisons, although to be honest Kipling works best in these stories when he leaves the satire to the background and gives himself a proper plot to focus on.

Anyone interested in Britain or India in the 1880's (or thereabouts) should probably read these stories.

However, I can't give it full marks. Some stories are not as good as others; particularly in the early stories he can be too blunt and obvious (Wilde and Saki are both better at the satire side); and even when the stories are good, they are generally cool and distant, more to be admired than to be invested in (though there are exceptions).

In short, there's enough evidence in this collection that I'm sure you could compile a Kipling short story collection that was truly excellent, even if you confined yourself to those eighty stories from 1888; this isn't that collection, I'm afraid, but it's still well worth the £2 cost and 200 pages of reading, for its value both as a literary product and as a historical artifact.

Above all, I think I've come out of this with a much more well-rounded and interesting view of Kipling - many of these stories are nothing like his more famous works.

Anyway, my ***titanically (I'm not joking)*** lengthy full review (in five parts!) is over here on my blog if anyone can possibly sit through it all.

Dfordoom says

Rudyard Kipling might be deeply unfashionable these days but I have a weakness for unfashionable writers. He was something that is almost unimaginable these days - an enormously popular writer who also won the Nobel Prize for Literature. He’s also the sort of writer the PC Thought Police would like to stop us from reading.

Kipling was one of the grand masters of the art of the short story and *The Man Who Would Be King and other stories* gives us five splendid examples.

I’ve been meaning to get round to reading the title story for years, ever since the first time I saw John Huston’s magnificent 1975 film adaptation. It was a remarkably faithful adaptation, but then it’s such a great story and so perfectly suited to cinematic adaptation that there was really no reason to change anything.

A newspaperman in British India in the late 19th century encounters two somewhat disreputable British adventurers. They tell him their plan, which is a simple one. They intend to journey to a remote valley on the borders of Afghanistan and set themselves up as kings. They have pooled their financial resources in order to buy twenty Martini rifles. With their own military backgrounds (they might be rogues but they’re trained soldiers with an appreciation for the virtues of military discipline) and these guns they will teach the inhabitants of the valley the art of modern warfare, whereupon they will undoubtedly be acclaimed as kings.

The journalist takes a certain liking to these two adventurers but there’s not the slightest doubt in his mind they he will never see them alive again.

A couple of years later a broken wreck of a man shambles into his newspaper office and he learns the strange fates of Peachy Carnehan and Daniel Dravot.

Of the other stories in the collection *The Phantom Rickshaw* is an effective ghost story whilst *The Strange Ride of Morrowbie Jukes* is a bizarre but excellent piece of weird fiction concerning the place where the dead who aren't really dead end up.

Without Benefit of Clergy is a tale of a relationship between a British colonial official and an Indian Muslim woman that demonstrates Kipling's complex and subtle understanding of the problems of colonialism for both sides.

Kipling was an intelligent, humane and perceptive writer who deserves to be more widely read. *The Man Who Would Be King and other stories* is a pretty good place to start.

Chloe says

Rudyard Kipling –do we love him for his well-formulated stories of colonial India or despise him for his imperialist attitude and his nigh-willful delusions concerning the treatment of the native peoples and the "white man's burden"? Either way, Kipling's works provide us with a window into the world of British imperialism from the point of view of the conquerors. The ideologies that justified the expansionist beliefs can often be determined more clearly in the forms of stories than tracts, and the short story is rather the modern parable when it comes to political and social hobbyhorses.
The Man Who Would Be King is certainly fascinating as an observational study when it comes to the racial and class relations of the place and time. On the one hand, it is certainly not in agreement with the two would-be monarchs. Their quest is quixotic, as the semi-autobiographical narrator certainly believes: irresponsible, dangerous, vainglorious. Yet, all criticism comes from worries that the white men may put themselves in harm's way. There are places two Westerners just should not go, not because they simply aren't wanted and it isn't their land to begin with, but because the region itself, place and people, is unfriendly to the West. It is as though failed expansion is not so much a poor idea, but that there are places that reject the planting of a Western seed, like an inhospitable soil to a specific plant. This, of course, is true. The heroes (antiheroes?) certainly don't understand the culture of the native people, and so comes their eventual downfall. Yet, this reveals a certain level of ambiguity. Ought the foreigners to try to learn more of the countries they inhabit? Or, is Kipling pointing out the futility of trying to assimilate with the culture, pressing a white-dominated ideology?
I believe, in the context of Kipling's other work, most especially The Jungle Book and his poem "The White Man's Burden", there is little evidence to suggest that the author wanted to encourage the foreign occupiers to be more understanding of the native cultures. After all, in this story they turn on their leaders and kill (or attempt to kill) them and their followers in brutal ways. The only "civilized" members of the country are the ones who attempt to act, well, British. This isn't to say that the heroes are entirely civilized themselves, but their eventual downfall is actually catalyzed by trying to be too native and even, (doom, sorrow and forlorn), trying to marry into the native people. (Women are such a corrupting luxury…)
This idea has always fascinated me. One would think that being in a new country, with new people and an unfamiliar culture would lead thinking people to want to learn more about their area and the people therein. However, de sjil seemed to be to make everything as British and ethnocentric as possible and to complain wildly of the area and the people. Why? It's a very obvious question; the British didn't have to be there. I'm hardly one to condemn England when America has no fewer flaws. But, really, India and the Middle East would never be England, and the fact that they, and every imperialist anywhere ever, couldn't figure this out

or were so unwilling to believe it is retrospectively astounding. Just my little thought about history.
This is not to say that the book is without literary merit. On the contrary! As a vantage point to see into this place and time, and understand the mindset of the imperialists, it is extremely valuable. The prose itself, while wordier than later modern works, especially post-Hemingway prose, but still bears the plain style and lack of floridity that is so common to the era. The use of brutality and violence as a story telling means is certainly affective if somewhat heavy-handed, as opposed to the use of the grotesque in, say, Flannery O'Connor. But, it certainly does its job. Sometimes I felt the stiff, British-gentleman persona to be off-putting; this isn't a novella you get emotionally involved in. However, it is not a poor piece of modern English literature. It is, though, hampered by its political sensibilities and parabolic nature. It's like an artifact: not without merit, but with merit of a specific, historical kind.
