



American Short Story Masterpieces: A Rich Selection of Recent Fiction from America's Best Modern Writers

From 2049145481

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This highly Acclaimed collection of short stories by American writers contains only the best literary art of the past four decades. With a bias toward realism editors Raymond Carver and Tom Jenks have selected fiction that “tells a story”—and tells it with a masterful handling of language, situation, and insight.

But what is so special about this volume is that it mirrors our age, our concerns, and our lives. Whether it’s the end of a marriage, as in Bobbie Ann Manson’s “*Shiloh*,” or the struggle with self-esteem and weight in Andre Dubus’s “*The Fat Girl*,” the 36 works included her probe issues that give us that “shock of recognition” that is the hallmark of great art—wonderful, absorbing fiction that will be read and reread for decades to come.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In the introduction to this collection, Carver mentions an earlier volume, *Short Story Masterpieces* published in 1954. The 36 tales here, he says, are distinguished by a similar narrative durability and stand up to the classic stories of that earlier generation. No argument. These unexperimental stories are substantial, solid and, to a paragraph, satisfying. By American writers exclusively (the earlier collection was one-third English and Irish), the offerings are arranged alphabetically by author, from James Baldwin's "Sonny's Blues" to "The Liar" by Tobias Wolff. Between is an assortment of modern classics: Doctorow's powerful and lyric story of betrayal, "Willi," Flannery O'Connor's chilling "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," Roth's "The Conversion of the Jews" and Arthur Miller's near-perfect "The Misfits." Other pleasures lie in the wisdom and dignity that mark "Talk of Heroes" by Carol Bly, in the characteristic energy of Elkins's "A Poetics for Bullies," in the spare surprise of David Quammen's "Walking Out" and in the views of modern mall life from Bobbie Ann Mason, Joyce Carol Oates and Jayne Anne Phillips. There are also tales from Helprin, Brautigan, Bourjaily, Carver, Salter, Paley and others. Missing are authors, such as Cheever and Welty, whose works were included in the 1954 *Masterpieces*, as well as those writing outside the narrative tradition. While this is not a comprehensive collection, its selections are indeed masterpiece testament to the hearty good health of the traditional modern short story and proof of the genre's continuing rewards.

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From School Library Journal

YA There's something for everyone in this collection of 36 of the best of American short stories written from the 1950s through 1986. Students of the short story, as well as more casual readers, will find a rich mixture of realistic tales in this well-balanced anthology. This book deserves a place next to *Short Story Masterpieces* (Dell, 1954; o.p.), edited by Robert Penn Warren and Albert Erskine.

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From Library Journal

The editors preface this collection with Aristotle's observation: "The excellent becomes the permanent." Then, choosing stories published between 1953 and 1966, presumptuously proclaiming it as "the most climatic, and traumatic, period in American literary history," they select 36 stories, not all of which are excellent and few that might be considered "masterpieces." Interlarded with fine tales by Baldwin, Le Guin, Malamud, Arthur Miller, and Flannery O'Connor are stories by such contemporary favorites as E. L. Doctorow and Bobbie Ann Mason that are above average but can they truly be considered enduring masterpieces? Unfortunately, the editing is minimal, omitting even mini-biographies of the authors. Overall, an uneven work. Glenn O. Carey, English Dept., Eastern Kentucky Univ., Richmond

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Users Review

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Robert Zamora:

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