

Staff Picks



Contemporary Short Stories

So, you don't think you have the time for a good story? Sure you do. Not every great story is a novel. Enjoy these collections of short stories ... reading in small bites.

Compiled by: Keith C.



A Thousand Years of Good Prayers

Yiyun Li Li

This debut collection by Li is filled with individual gems about Chinese and Chinese Americans and the effects of the Cultural Revolution on their lives. Destruction and violence is tempered with hope and faith.



Birds of America

Lorrie Moore Moore

Author of both short fiction and novels, Moore's writing works best in short stories. Alternating between humor and despair, Moore's characters run the gamut of human emotion in twelve stand-alone stories. Warning: the range of emotion does lean to sadness, making for a sometimes dark, but also honest and observant read.



Dangerous Laughter

Stephen Millhauser Millhauser

Exploring human folly with a side serving of dark mystery and good tempered humor, Millhauser returns to short stories after his Martin Dressler won the Pulitzer Prize. His stories are complex and insightful, but also really fun to read.



Homeland

Barbara Kingsolver Kingsolver

Early in her writing career Kingsolver wrote this collection of short stories focusing partially on mothers and daughters. Heavy in symbolism, Kingsolver shows her writing talent in every story and proves she is one of the most talented living American writers.



Mothers and Sons

Colm Toibin Toibin

Nine stories from Irish author Toibin explore the intricacies of relationships between mothers and adult age sons. Often sad, these stories give us a complex insight into human lives that is both global and timeless.



Olive Kitteridge

Elizabeth Strout Strout

Thirteen linked tales revolve around Olive Kitteridge and present a portrait of a small coastal Maine community. While Olive isn't always a likeable character, the emotional power of Strout's writing combined with the pitch-perfect details of ordinary life and relationships make this a wonderful read. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.



Ten Little Indians

Sherman Alexi

Alexie

While American Indians are prominently featured and lots of basketball is played in Alexie's stories, the themes of love, loss and regret are easy to identify with and wonderful to read. Alexie's special brand of humor shines through the despair and makes these short stories unique.



The Red Convertible: Selected and New Stories, 1978-2008

Louise Erdrich Erdrich

A great voice of American literature, Erdrich weaves these tales with a combination of strong women, American Indians, humor, folklore and Midwestern sensibilities. Her tales are terrific and vibrant, a must read for any short story fan.



Too Much Happiness

Alice Munro Munro

Munro has created yet another set of ten stories that delve deep into human pain without being painful to read while actually empowering the reader to understand the power of transcendence. This Canadian author is a master short storyteller, and any of her compilations including Runaway and Open Secrets is worth checking out.



Unaccustomed Earth

Jhumpa Lahiri Lahiri

Lahiri again takes on the difficulties first generation Bengali-Americans face in this short story collection (after her first short story collection, Interpreter of the Maladies, won the Pulitzer Prize). While the culture and generational clashes between children and their parents are specific, the themes are universal.
