**Archive (UK Short Stories 2015)**

~~~~

**Short Stories 2015**

~~~~

**Mai Al-Nakib | The Hidden Light of Objects | Bloomsbury 9789927101168 | £8.99 | 23rd April**

Winner of the 2014 First Book Award from Edinburgh International Book Festival.

For fans of Alice Munro and Lorrie Moore.

A young girl, renamed Amerika in honour of the US role in the liberation of Kuwait, finds her name has become a barometer of her country’s growing hostility towards the West. A middle-aged man dying from cancer looks back on his extramarital affairs and the abiding forgiveness of his wife.

The headlines tell of war, unrest and religious clashes. But if you look beyond them you will see life in the Middle East as it is really lived – adolescent love, the fragility of marriage, pain of the most quotidian kind. Mai Al-Nakib’s luminous stories unveil the lives of ordinary people – and the power of objects to hold extraordinary memories.



**Molly Antopol | The Unamericans | Fourth Estate 9780007548835 | £8.99 | 4th June**

A former dissident from Communist-era Prague fears his daughter’s new play will cast him in an unflattering light. A divorced dry cleaner tries to move on, bemused by his daughter’s reawakened faith. A Hollywood actor is imprisoned by the House Un-American Activities Committee and has a fraught reunion with his son. A young Israeli journalist, left unemployed after America’s most recent economic crash, begins dating a middle-aged widower. And in the book’s final story, a tour de force spanning three continents and three generations of women, a young American and her Israeli husband are forced to reconsider their marriage after the death of her art-collecting grandmother.This collection is a stunning exploration of characters shaped by the forces of history. Each finely turned story presents a different, morally suspenseful problem. Arranging and resolving these problems, Molly Antopol writes with an orchestral richness, in fiction that is intricately but delicately composed. But ‘The UnAmericans’ is remarkable as much for its heart as its sophistication: each voice is humane, full of warmth and wit; each page brims with a love of life. The result is a debut collection with the power not only to absorb and thrill, but to move.



**Donald Antrim | The Emerald Light in the Air | Granta 9781847086518 | £8.99 | 3rd September**

In elegant, precise prose Donald Antrim crafts funny, tender stories of men and women disorientated by love, loss, and bouts of sorrow.

An unfaithful husband goes out to buy flowers for his wife, while across town a new couple, both survivors of difficult childhoods, find comfort together in other people’s apartments. On the edge of a university campus, a group of students are brought together by their ageing drama professor, whose predilection for pot and crush on his star pupil threaten to tip their performance of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*into a surreal and dangerous farce*.*And in the title story, a bereaved art teacher drives into the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia intending to throw away his ex-girlfriend’s paintings.

 ~~~~

**Tom Barbash | Stay Up With Me | S&S 9781471128448 | £8.99 | 26th Feb**

The stories in Tom Barbash’s evocative and often darkly funny collection explore the myriad ways we try to connect to one another and to the sometimes cruel world around us. The newly single mother in ‘The Break’ interferes with her son’s love life over his Christmas vacation from college. The anxious young man in ‘Balloon Night’ persists in hosting his and his wife’s annual watch-the-Macy’s-Thanksgiving-Day-Parade-floats-be-inflated party, while trying to keep the myth of his marriage equally afloat. The young narrator in ‘The Women’ watches his widowed father become the toast of Manhattan’s midlife dating scene, as he struggles to find his own footing.
The characters in Stay Up with Me find new truths when the old ones have given out or shifted course. Barbash laces his narratives with sharp humour, psychological acuity, and pathos, creating deeply resonant and engaging stories that pierce the heart and linger in the imagination.



**Amy Bloom | Rowing to Eden: Collected Stories | Granta 9781783782154 | pbk | £9.99 | 6th August**

Amy Bloom has long been regarded as a master of the short story form. Here, her brilliance shines across two decades and more than twenty-five stories. From the bereaved widow who finds unexpected comfort in ‘Sleepwalking’, to the matchmaking shrink in ‘Psychoanalysis Changed My Life’; from the teenage girl furious at her dying mother in ‘Hold Tight’ to the transgressive lovers of ‘The Gates Are Closing’; from the married friends irresistibly drawn to one another in ‘William and Clare’ to the brave and heartless girl in ‘Permafrost’ – these are stories brimming with life and grief, erotically charged and beautifully crafted.

 

**CJ Box | Shots Fired | Head of Zeus 9781781852828 | £7.99 | 7th May**

In ‘One-Car Bridge,’ one of four Joe Pickett stories, Pickett goes up against a ‘plain mean’ landowner, with disastrous consequences, and in ‘Shots Fired,’ his investigation into the radio call of the title nearly ends up being the last thing he ever does. In ‘Pirates of Yellowstone,’ two Eastern Europeans, strangers in a strange land, hear that American tough guys can be ruthless, but it’s not till they try strong-arming one that they discover the real truth of the statement; and in ‘Le Sauvage Noble,’ a Lakota Indian takes a job in the Wild West Show at Disneyland Paris and finds its perks to be pleasant – good wages, decent food, and French women who find his ‘noble savage’ act to be pretty exotic – that is, until he meets Sophie. Then he finds out what ‘savage’ really means.



**John Boyne | Beneath the Earth | Doubleday 9780857523402 | £14.99 | 27th August**

In this collection of twelve dark, unerring and surprising short stories, John Boyne explores the extremities of the human condition in all its brilliance and brutality. The secrets we keep and the ways in which they shape us, the impossibility of shared loss, the lengths we will go to in order to protect our families and the distance we will run to protect ourselves.

Drawing on a host of enthralling characters – a farmer, a cuckold and a teenager exploring his sexuality; good parents, bad parents, writers and soldiers; a student, a rent boy and a hitman – Boyne examines the hopeful and the damaged without prejudice or judgement.

This, his first collection of short stories, is some of John Boyne’s finest writing to date. It includes ‘Rest Day’ which won the 2015 Writing.ie Short Story of the Year award in Ireland.



**Nickolas Butler | Beneath the Bonfire | Picador 9781447238201 | £12.99 | 30th July**

**From the award-winning author of *Shotgun Lovesongs*, a dazzling collection of stories sure to surprise readers as often as it moves them . . .**

Young couples gather to participate in an annual ‘chainsaw party’, cutting down trees for firewood in anticipation of the winter. A group of men spend a weekend in the wilderness where they grew up, and where some still find themselves trapped. An ageing environmentalist takes out his frustration and anger on a singular, unsuspecting target. A woman helps another get revenge against a man whose crime extends to an entire community.

In these ten stories, Nickolas Butler demonstrates his talent for portraying a place and its people with unparalleled tenderness, evoking an American landscape that will be instantly recognizable to readers enchanted by his debut novel, *Shotgun Lovesongs*.



**Kate Clanchy | The Not-Dead and The Saved and Other Stories | Picador  9780330535250 | £14.99 | 18th June**

None of us are perfect, in the way we love, age, or view the world.*The Not-Dead and the Saved* offers us an opportunity for reinvention: of ourselves, those we have lost, and the world in which we live. From a man doomed to spend his life trying to find solutions to cancer; to a new mother haunted by a swaddling, tablet-eating great-aunt; to an intrepid literary agent who travels to the Yorkshire Moors to discover the next big thing, and ends up eating Anne Bronte’s rock cakes, we meet a host of characters who are desperately, creatively, and often hilariously trying to evade the underlying truths of their lives.

*The Not-Dead and the Saved* is a cascade, of warm, wise and insightful stories about human nature, frank, funny, and sometimes desolating, but always underpinned by tenderness, and by a faith in enduring bonds of love.



**Mary Higgins Clark | Death Wears a Beauty Mask | Simon & Schuster 9781471143205 | £20 | 7th April**

A collection of Mary Higgins Clark’s acclaimed short stories, with her most famous unfinished story finally completed.
From the first-ever published story (1956’s ‘Stowaway’), to classic ‘Alvirah and Willy’, ‘My Gal Sunday’ and many more, Death Wears a Beauty Mask and Other Stories gives readers the chance to revisit the short story highlights from the prolific ‘Queen of Suspense’. As a grand finale to this collection of previously published hits comes a brand-new novella showcasing the dazzling and dangerous world of high fashion in 1970s New York City: ‘Death Wears a Beauty Mask’.
When Janice steps off the plane in New York City with her new husband Mike, she can barely contain her excitement knowing Alexandra is waiting at the gate. It’s been nearly a year since Janice saw her glamorous, fashion model older sister, whose busy workload even kept her from attending Janice and Mike’s wedding.
But when Alexandra doesn’t meet them at the airport as promised, Janice begins to worry. Even worse, no one has seen or heard from the beautiful model since she returned from shooting a campaign in Europe for the latest in luxury cosmetics: Beauty Mask.
As Janice and Mike race around New York searching for clues, they are swept into the secretive world of modeling agents, fashion photographers, and high-stakes advertisers who are all as desperate as they are to find Alexandra, and learn the truth behind the Beauty Mask.

~~~~

**Lydia Davis | Can’t and Won’t | Penguin 9780241968086 | £9.99 | 26th March**

Lydia Davis has been universally acclaimed for the wit, insight and genre-defying formal inventiveness of her sparkling stories.

With titles like ‘A Story of Stolen Salamis’, ‘Letters to a Frozen Pea Manufacturer’, ‘A Small Story About a Small Box of Chocolates’, and ‘Can’t and Won’t’, the stories in this new collection illuminate particular moments in ordinary lives and find in them the humorous, the ironic and the surprising.

Above all the stories revel in and grapple with the joys and constraints of language – achieving always the extraordinary, unmatched precision which makes Lydia Davis one of the greatest contemporary writers on the international stage.

Lydia Davis is the winner of the Man Booker Prize 2013



**Carlotto, Carofigllo and de Cataldo | Cocaine | Maclehose 9780857053305 | £14.99 | 7th May**

In Carlotto’s *The Campagna Trail*, Inspector Campagna uses an old friendship with notorious drug dealer Roby Pizzo in a Machiavellian attempt to keep the peace. But when an interfering new police chief demands Campagna bring down the Mafioso who heads Pizzo’s gang, Campagna must use every weapon he has to save his job – and his life.

Meanwhile in Carofiglio’s *The Speed of an Angel*, a writer in crisis strikes up an unlikely friendship with a mysterious woman he meets in a quiet seaside café. As their conversations deepen, and their obsessions darken, their drug-fuelled relationship begins to spiral, in this haunting tale of damnation and redemption.

Finally in De Cataldo’s *The White Powder Dance*, the city police are put on the trail of a baby-faced new graduate in the Milanese banking sector. As the pursuit accelerates through back streets and skyscrapers, it becomes clear that there is more to organised crime than getting your hands dirty.



**Jeffery Deaver | Trouble in Mind | Hodder 9781444704549 | £7.99 | 30th July**

A unique collection of short stories from the Number One bestselling author and master of misdirection Jeffery Deaver.



**Ceridwen Dovey | Only the Animals | Atlantic 9781782397175 | pbk | £8.99 | 6 August**

Perhaps only the animals can tell us what it is to be human.

The souls of ten animals caught up in human conflicts over the last century tell their astonishing stories of life and death. In a trench on the Western Front a cat recalls her owner Colette’s theatrical antics in Paris. In Nazi Germany a dog seeks enlightenment. A Russian tortoise once owned by the Tolstoys drifts in space during the Cold War. In the siege of Sarajevo a bear starving to death tells a fairytale. And a dolphin sent to Iraq by the US Navy writes a letter to Sylvia Plath.

Exquisitely written, playful and poignant, *Only the Animals* is a remarkable literary achievement by this bright young writer. An animal’s-eye view of humans at our brutal, violent worst and our creative, imaginative best, it asks us to find our way back to empathy not only for animals, but for other people, and to believe again in the redemptive power of reading and writing fiction.

~~~~

**Stuart Evers | Your Father Sends His Love | Picador 9781447280576 | £12.99 | 21st May**

The stories are a moving and vivid exploration of parental love and parental mistakes. They are unified by their compassion and animated by the unsaid, and by how powerfully they extract the luminous from the ordinary.



**Christopher Fowler | Bryant & May – London’s Glory | Doubleday 9780857523457 | £16.99 | 5th Nov**

In every detective’s life there are cases that can’t be discussed, and throughout the Bryant & May novels there have been mentions of some of these such as the Deptford Demon or the Little Italy Whelk Smuggling Scandal.

Now Arthur Bryant has decided to open the files on eleven of these previously unseen investigations that required the collective genius and unique modus operandi of Arthur Bryant and John May and the Peculiar Crimes Unit – investigations that range from different times (London during the Great Smog) and a variety of places: a circus freak show, on board a London Tour Bus and even a yacht off the coast of Turkey.
And in addition to these eleven classic cases, readers are also given a privileged look inside the Peculiar Crimes Unit (literally, with a cut away drawing of their offices), a guide to the characters of the Peculiar Crimes Unit, and access to the contents of Arthur Bryant’s highly individual library.



**Rivka Galchen | American Innovations | HarperCollins 9780007548774 | £8.99 | 7th May**

In one of these intensely imaginative stories a young woman’s furniture walks out on her. In another, the narrator feels compelled to deliver a takeout order that has incorrectly been phoned in to her. In a third, the petty details of a property transaction illuminate the complicated dependences and loves of a family.Following spiralling paths towards utterly logical, entirely absurd conclusions, Galchen’s creations occupy a dreamlike dimension, where time is fluid and identities are best defined by the qualities they lack. The tales in this groundbreaking collection are secretly in conversation with canonical stories, allowing the reader the pleasure of discovering familiar favourites in new guises. Here ‘The Lost Order’ covertly recapitulates James Thurber’s ‘The Secret Life of Walter Mitty’, while ‘The Region of Unlikeness’ playfully mirrors Jorge Luis Borges’s ‘The Aleph’.By turns realistic, fantastical and lyrical, all these marvellously uneasy stories share a deeply emotional core and are written in dryly witty, pitch-perfect prose. Whether exploring the tensions in a mother-daughter relationship or the finer points of time travel, Galchen is a writer of eye-opening ingenuity.



**Jane Gardam | The Stories | Abacus 9780349140384 | £9.99 | 4th June**

Throughout her career, prize-winning novelist Jane Gardam has been writing glorious short stories, each one hallmarked with all the originality, poignancy, wry comedy and narrative brilliance of her longer fiction.Passion and longing, metamorphosis and enchantment are Gardam’s themes, and like a magician she plucks them from the quietest of corners: from Wimbledon gardens and cold churches, from London buses and industrial backstreets. A mother watching her children on the beach dreams of a long-lost lover, an abandoned army wife sees a ghost at a moorland gate, a translator adrift in Geneva is haunted by the unspeakable manifestation of her own fears, and a colonial servant wreaks a delicious revenge on her monstrous masters. Gardam’s cast is wide and wonderful, saints and mystics, trollops and curmudgeons, yearning mothers and lost children, beloved figures such as Old Filth and less familiar – but equally unforgettable – characters like Signor Settimo, the sad-eyed provincial photographer marooned in Shipley or Florrie Ironside, the ferocious matron he seduces.With a mischievous ear for dialogue, a glittering eye for detail and a capacious understanding of the vagaries of the human heart, Jane Gardam’s stories will captivate, sadden and delight. *Acknowledgements*: Amazon UK



**David Gates | A Hand Reached Down to Guide Me | Serpent’s Tail 9781781254912 | pbk | £12.99 | 6th August**

A woman moving calamitously into middle-age; a musician taking in a friend with terminal cancer; a failed actor moving to the country: cynical, unreliable, sinking into middle age or alcoholism, dealing with physical decline or mediocrity, Gates’s characters are a dark reflection of our own urban and suburban lives. Terrifyingly self-aware, overcome by the burdens of the human condition, they find their impulses pulling them away from comfort into distraction or catastrophe. But wherever it is they’re going – and sometimes it’s nowhere fast – they won’t go gently.

Relentlessly inventive, by turns comical, caustic and tragic (and often all three together) but always moving, the novella and ten short stories which make up
*A Hand Reached Down to Guide Me* reinforce David Gates as ‘a true heir to both Raymond Carver and John Cheever.’ (*New York Magazine*).

 

**Anna Gavalda | Life, Only Better | Europa Editions 9781609452940 | pbk | £9.99 | 24th Nov**

Mathilde is twenty-four. She has abandoned her studies in art history in lieu of a menial job and lives in a house she shares with twin sisters. One day she forgets her bag in a café and a week later an unknown man returns it to her. Following this encounter, Mathilde decides to throw caution to the wind and change her life entirely. Yann is twenty-six, a university graduate, unemployed. There may be better days ahead. Perhaps. While waiting for them, he works as a sales assistant in a home appliances store. He wouldn’t say he is unhappy. But sometimes when he is crossing a bridge over the Seine River at night, he imagines jumping. One day he does a favor for one of his neighbors and is asked to stay for dinner as thanks. The following morning Yann throws caution to the wind and decides to change his life entirely. These two novellas by best-selling author Anna Gavalda are among her most moving and inspiring. Love in this book is a fragile emotion, easily ruined and eternally subject to the choices one makes in life. Gavalda’s great gift is her ability to reach readers who will feel as if she is addressing them directly in a voice that is inventive, forceful, yet intimate. *Life, Only Better* is a touching, cleverly crafted book about choices and their consequences.



**Barry Gifford | Writers | Seven Stories Press 9781609806491 | £11.99 | 5th Nov**

n *Writers*, great American storyteller Barry Gifford paints portraits of famous writers caught in imaginary vulnerable moments in their lives. In prose that is funny, grotesque, and a touch brutal, Gifford shows these writers at their most human and exposed. Here is Ernest Hemingway drunkenly setting explosive trip wires outside his home in Cuba and Albert Camus conversing with a young prostitute while staring at himself in the mirror of a New York City hotel room. Gifford also conjures up Martha Gellhorn, Jack Kerouac, B. Traven, John Huston, Nelson Algren, Arthur Rimbaud, Jane Bowles, Marcel Proust, Herman Melville, Charles Baudelaire, Jorge Luis Borges, Roberto Bolaño, James Joyce, and Samuel Beckett.

In Gifford’s house of mirrors, we are offered a unique perspective on this group of literary greats. We see their obsessions loom large—and none larger than a shared preoccupation with mortality. And yet these stories, which are meant to be performed as plays, are also tender and thoughtful exercises in empathy. Gifford asks: What does it mean to devote oneself entirely to art? And as an artist, what defines success and failure?



**Jessie Greengrass | An Account of the Decline of the Great Auk, According to Those Who Saw It | John Murray | tpb | £10.99 | 30th July**

The twelve stories in this startling collection range over centuries and across the world.

There are stories about those who are lonely, or estranged, or out of time. There are hauntings, both literal and metaphorical; and acts of cruelty and neglect, but also of penance.

Some stories concern themselves with the present, and the mundane circumstances in which people find themselves: a woman who feels stuck in her life imagines herself in different jobs – as a lighthouse keeper in Wales, or as a guard against polar bears in a research station in the Arctic.

Some stories concern themselves with the past: a sixteenth-century alchemist and doctor, whose arrogance blinds him to people’s dissatisfaction with their lives until he experiences it himself.

Finally, in the title story, a sailor gives his account – violent, occasionally funny and certainly tragic – of the decline of the Great Auk.



**Romesh Gunesekera | Noontide Toll | Granta  9781783780174 | £8.99 | 7th May**

Vasantha is a van driver for hire, ferrying aid workers, returning exiles, and tentative entrepreneurs across the battle-scarred landscapes of Sri Lanka. The civil war is finally over, but the traumas of the past are still haunting. Behind the facade of peace we are made to remember the war: mysterious hoteliers conceal scars under their collars; genial old soldiers are secretly identified as perpetrators of brutal crimes; young Sinhalese men pine after Tamil girls whose brothers died by their hands. Vasantha keeps his own counsel, lingering on the periphery of his passengers’ stories, but as time goes on he reveals a little of his own story too.

Perceptive, sombre and finely-tuned, *Noontide Toll* paints an extraordinary portrait of a post-war Sri Lanka grappling with the ghosts of its troubled past.

~~~~

**Katherine Heiny | Single, Carefree, Mellow | Fourth Estate 9780008105556 | tpb | £12.99 | 12th Jan**

In the title story, we meet Maya, who is torn between her wryly funny boyfriend and the allure of her veterinarian. In “Andorra,” a woman’s lover calls her every Thursday as he drives to meet his wife at marriage counselling. “How to Give the Wrong Impression” shows us a woman pining for her roommate, a man who will hold her hand but then tell her that her palm is sweaty. In “The Dive Bar” a girl agrees to have a drink with her married lover’s wife. Revisiting Maya in several stories, chronicling her various states of love, this is a collection about how we are unfaithful to each other, both wilfully and unwittingly. Populated with unwelcome house guests, disastrous birthday parties, needy but loyal friends, and flirtatious older men, the stories are emotionally astute, sexy, and disarming-and they introduce us to a tart, and marvellous, new voice.



**Peter James | A Twist of the Knife | Pan 9781447212102 | £7.99 | 4th June**

**A fabulous collection of short stories by Peter James, combining ebook bestsellers *Short Shockers One* and *Short Shockers Two*,with a never-seen-before collection of new material.With each twist of the knife, a chilling new journey begins . . . From a woman intent on bizarre revenge, to a restaurant critic with a morbid fear of the number thirteen; and from a man arranging a life-changing assignation, to a couple heading for a disaster-filled vacation . . .**

In multi-million-copy bestselling author Peter James’ collection of short stories we first come to meet Brighton’s finest detective, Roy Grace, and read the tale that went on to inspire James’ hugely successful novel, *Dead Simple*. James exposes the Achilles heel of each of his characters, and makes us question how well we can trust ourselves, and one another. Each tale carries a twist that will haunt readers for days after they turn the final page . . .

Combining every twisted tale from the ebook bestsellers *Short Shockers One* and *Short Shockers Two*,with a never-seen-before collection of new material, *A Twist of the Knife* shows Peter James as the undisputed grand master of storytellers with this sometimes funny, often haunting, but always shocking collection.



**Adam Johnson | Fortune Smiles: Stories | Doubleday 9780857522979 | £16.99 | 27th August**

Adam Johnson takes you into the minds of characters you never thought you would meet – a former Stasi prison warden in denial of his past, a refugee from North Korea unsettled by his new freedom, a UPS driver in hurricane-torn Louisiana looking for the mother of his son.

These are tales of love and loss, natural disasters, the influence of technology, and how the political shapes the personal. Tender, wry, utterly compelling, they show us humanity where you might least expect it.



**Stephen Jones | The Mammoth Book of Frankenstein | Robinson 9781472120168 | £10.99 | 6th August**

Frankenstein . . . his very name conjures up images of plundered graves, secret laboratories, electrical experiments and reviving the dead.

Within these pages, the maddest doctor of them all and his demented disciples once again delve into the Secrets of Life, as science fiction meets horror when the world’s most famous creature lives again!

*The Mammoth Book of Frankenstein* collects together for the first time twenty-fourelectrifying tales of cursed creation that are guaranteed to spark your interest – with classics from the pulp magazines by Robert Bloch and Manly Wade Wellman, modern masterpieces from Ramsey Campbell, Dennis Etchison, Karl Edward Wagner, David J. Schow and R. Chetwynd-Hayes, and contributions from Graham Masterson, Basil Copper, John Brunner, Guy N. Smith, Kim Newman, Paul J. McAuley, Roberta Lannes, Michael Marshall Smith, Daniel Fox, Adrian Cole, Nancy Kilpatrick, Brian Mooney and Lisa Morton.

Plus you’re sure to get a charge from three complete novels: *The Hound of Frankenstein* by Peter Tremayne, *The Dead End*by David Case, and Mary W. Shelley’s original masterpiece *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus.*

As an electrical storm rages overhead, the generators are charged up, and beneath the sheet a cold form awaits its miraculous rebirth. Now it’s time to throw that switch and discover all that Man Was Never Meant to Know.



**Rachel Joyce | A Snow Garden and Other Stories | Doubleday 9780857523532 | £9.99 | 5th Nov**

A Faraway Smell of Lemon: The School Term has ended. It is almost Christmas but Binny, out last-minute shopping couldn’t feel less like wishing glad tidings to all men. Ducking out of the rain she finds herself in the sort of shop she would never normally visit.

The Marriage Manual: Christmas Eve. Two parents endeavour to construct their son’s Christmas present from a DIY kit and in the process find themselves deconstructing their marriage.

Christmas at the Airport: A glitch in the system, travellers stranded and all sorts of lives colliding in the face of a sudden birth…

The Boxing Day Ball: Maureen has never been out with the local girls before. Who knew that a disco in the Village Hall could be life-changing?

A Snow Garden: Two little boys, dumped with their divorced father for his share of the Christmas holidays and none of them with a clue how to enjoy it.

I’ll Be Home for Christmas The most famous boy in the world comes home hoping to escape the madness with a normal family Christmas.

Trees: As if Christmas wasn’t wearing enough, now his elderly parent is asking for a hole in the ground … Father and son break old habits and plant a tree to mark the start of the new year.



**Ken Kalfus | Coup de Foudre | Bloomsbury 9781408844960 | £16.99 | 18th June**

The explosive new collection by the celebrated author of *Thirst* and PEN/Faulkner Award finalist *Pu-239 and Other Russian Fantasies*, *Coup de Foudre* is the kind of groundbreaking work of literary invention Ken Kalfus’s fans have come to expect. The book is anchored by the full text of the provocatively topical title novella that appeared in *Harper’s*, a sometimes farcical, ultimately tragic story about the president of an international lending institution accused of sexually assaulting a housekeeper in a New York hotel. Recalling recent news events with irony and compassion, Kalfus skewers international political gridlock and the hypocrisies of acceptable sexual conduct.In “The Moment They Were Waiting For,” a murderer on death row casts a spell granting the inhabitants of his city the foreknowledge of the dates they will die. In “v. The Large Hadron Collider,” a judge distracted by the faint possibility of an adulterous affair must decide whether to throw out a nuisance lawsuit that raises the even fainter possibility that the entire Earth may be destroyed. “The Un-” is a nostalgic story of a young writer’s struggles as he tries to surmount the colossal, heavily guarded wall that apparently separates writers who have been published from those who have not.Varying boldly in theme, setting, and tone, the stories in *Coup de Foudre* share Kalfus’s distinctive humor and intellect, inextricably bound with high literary ambition.



**Marina Keegan |**[**The Opposite of Loneliness**](http://yaledailynews.com/crosscampus/2012/05/27/keegan-the-opposite-of-loneliness/)**| S&S 9781471139628 | £12.99 | May 2015**

Marina Keegan’s star was on the rise when she graduated from Yale in May 2012. She had a play that was to be produced at the New York International Fringe Festival and a job waiting for her at the New Yorker. Tragically, five days after graduation, Marina died in a car crash.

As her family, friends and classmates, deep in grief, joined to create a memorial service for Marina, her unforgettable last essay for the Yale Daily News, ‘The Opposite of Loneliness’, went viral, receiving more than 1.4 million hits. She had struck a chord.
Even though she was just 22 when she died, Marina left behind a rich, expansive trove of prose that, like her title essay, captures the hope, uncertainty and possibility of her generation. The Opposite of Loneliness is an assemblage of Marina’s essays and stories that articulates the universal struggle we all face as we work out what we aspire to be and how we can harness our talents to make an impact on the world.

~~~~

**AL Kennedy | All the Rage | Vintage 9780099587422 | £8.99 | 5 March**

*She doesn’t ever lie to him unless it’s for the best.*A husband and wife wait for a train as their relationship unspools silently around them. A woman contemplates the idea of her lover dying as she queues in a bank. An almost impossibly uncomfortably lunch culminates in a passionate kiss. In this dazzling collection of stories lies the battlefield of the heart, where characters who have suffered somehow emerge – haltingly, awkwardly – into the astonishment of intimacy.



**Danilo Kiš | The Encyclopedia of the Dead | Penguin Classics 9780141396989 | £9.99 | 7th May**

An entrancing, otherworldly collection of short stories from one of Serbia’s most accomplished 20th century writers, new to Penguin Modern Classics

A counter-prophet attempts the impossible to prove his power; a girl sees the hideous fate of her sister and father in a mirror bought from a gypsy; the death of a prostitute causes an unanticipated uprising; and the lives of every ordinary person since 1789 are brought to life in the almighty Encyclopaedia of the Dead. In this wide-ranging collection of stories about humanity, society and relationships, Kiš plays with the distinction between fact and fiction, horror and comedy, drawing on key influences such as James Joyce and Franz Kafka. This was Kiš’s final work, published in Serbo-Croatian in 1983.



**Hanif Kureishi | Love+Hate | Faber 9780571319695 | £14.99 | 4th June**

Hate skews reality even more than love.

In the story of a Pakistani woman who has begun a new life in Paris, an essay about the writing of Kureishi’s acclaimed film *Le Week-End*, and an account of Kafka’s relationship with his father, readers will find Kureishi also exploring the topics that he continues to make new, and make his own: growing up and growing old; betrayal and loyalty; imagination and repression; marriage and fatherhood.

The collection ends with a bravura piece of very personal reportage about the conman who stole Kureishi’s life savings – a man who provoked both admiration and disgust, obsession and revulsion, love and hate.

~~~~

**Richard Lange | Sweet Nothing Stories | Mulholland Books 9781444790016 | £13.99 | 12th Jan || pbk | 9781444790023 | £8.99 | 5th Nov**

Every life is uncertain. Every choice is a danger.

Set on the dark side of Los Angeles, this is a masterful collection of edge-of-your-seat tales: a prison guard must protect an inmate being tried for heinous crimes. A father and son set out to rescue a young couple trapped during a wildfire after they cross the border. An ex-con trying to make good as a security guard stumbles onto a burglary plot. A young father must submit to blackmail to protect the fragile life he’s built.

*Sweet Nothing* is an intense and gripping journey through real lives with big problems, from one of America’s great short story writers.



**Elmore Leonard | Charlie Martz and Other Stories | Orion 780297609797 | £18.99 | 18th June**

When Elmore Leonard died in 2013, he left behind a 60-year legacy of crime novels which, through their trademark wit and grit, transcended genre fiction. He also left behind a treasure trove of unpublished early stories.

Largely written during his years as a copywriter at a Detroit advertising agency, these stories find Leonard exploring far-flung locations, from the bars of small-town New Mexico to a military base in Kuala Lumpur. They also introduce us to unforgettable Leonard characters, some of whom – like ageing lawman Charlie Martz and former matador Eladio Montoya – star in his other works but were born in these pages.

Whether embodying an extra on a movie set in Spain or a desperate man out for vengeance in Detroit, these stories are endlessly entertaining – revealing a master who honed his craft from a young age, and reminding us why Leonard is so sorely missed.



**Andrea Levy | Six Stories | Tinder Press 9781472222695 | £7.99 | 7th May**

“None of my books is just about race,” Levy has said. “They’re about people and history.” Her novels have triumphantly given voice to the people and stories that might have slipped through the cracks in history. From Jamaican slave society in the nineteenth century, through post-war immigration into Britain, to the children of migrants growing up in ’60s London, her books are acclaimed for skilful storytelling and vivid characters. And her unique voice, unflinching but filled with humour, compassion and wisdom, has made her one of the most significant and exciting contemporary authors.

This collection opens with an essay about how writing has helped Andrea Levy to explore and understand her heritage. She explains the context of each piece within the chronology of her career and finishes with a new story, written to mark the centenary of the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. As with her novels, these stories are at once moving and honest, deft and humane, filled with insight, anger at injustice and her trademark lightness of touch.



**Stuart Macbride | 22 Dead Little Bodies and Other Stories | Harper 9780008141769 | £7.99**

Four stories set in Aberdeen featuring detectives McRae and Steel.



**Shena Mackay | Dancing on the Outskirts | Virago  9780349007038 | £16.99 | 5th**

Mackay sees “eternity in a plastic flower and the human condition in the brittle pink Little Princess Vanity Set in the supermarket” – junk not changed, but momentarily backlit, in moments of joy and pain’ *Guardian*



**Deirdre Madden (ed) | All Over Ireland: New Irish Short Stories | Faber 9780571311033 | pbk | £9.99 | 21st May**

All Over Ireland, edited by Deirdre Madden (Molly Fox’s Birthday, Time Present and Time Past), continues the tradition of featuring the work of both new and established writers, including Colm Tóibín, Mary Morrissy and Eoin McNamee. These diverse and accomplished stories, by turns dazzling, thoughtful and startling, bring new ideas and energy to the form and richly enhance the tradition of Irish fiction. **Acknowledgements: Amazon UK**



**Hilary Mantel | The Assassination of Margaret Thatcher | Fourth Estate 9780007580996 | £8.99 | 21st May**

Hilary Mantel is one of Britain’s most accomplished and acclaimed writers. In these ten bracingly subversive tales, all her gifts of characterisation and observation are fully engaged, summoning forth the horrors so often concealed behind everyday façades. Childhood cruelty is played out behind the bushes in ‘Comma’; nurses clash in ‘Harley Street’ over something more than professional differences; and in the title story, staying in for the plumber turns into an ambiguous and potentially deadly waiting game.Whether set in a claustrophobic Saudi Arabian flat or on a precarious mountain road in Greece, these stories share an insight into the darkest recesses of the spirit. Displaying all of Mantel’s unmistakable style and wit, they reveal a great writer at the peak of her powers.

~~~~

**Ben Marcus | Leaving the Sea | Granta  9781847086365 | £9.99 | 5th Feb**

A bold new short story collection from one of the most exhilarating and innovative writers of our time. The stories in *Leaving the Sea* take place in a world which is a distortion of our own, where strange illnesses strike at random and where people disappear without a trace. Ben Marcus has created a labyrinth populated by disturbed, weary men; from the frustrated creative writing teacher to the advocate of self-inhumation; from Paul, whose return home leads him further into his isolation, or Mather, whose child is sick, to an unnamed narrator who spends his lonely evenings calculating the probabilities of his mother’s imminent demise. Dark, funny and utterly unique, *Leaving the Sea* showcases a writer at the height of his powers.

~~~~

**Ben Marcus | New American Stories | Granta 9781783781478 | tpb | £14.99 | 6th August**

The short story is a barometer for the state and shape of literature. *New American Stories*presents the boldest, most innovative and most resonant fiction coming out of the American literary scene.

Ben Marcus, author of *The Flame Alphabet*and *Leaving the Sea*, has here curated an anthology that gives the lay of the literary land. From established masters of the form like Don DeLillo and Lydia Davis to neoteric trailblazers such as Rebecca Curtis and Rachel B. Glaser, this collection sees Marcus trying to ‘prove that the distinctions we erect between styles and approaches to fiction can be essentially meaningless’. The result will be a must-read, must-own volume for readers of literary fiction.



**Colum McCann | Thirteen Ways of Looking | Bloomsbury 9781408869837 | £16.99 | 8th Oct**

A novella and four stories by the National Book Award-winning and }New York Times{ bestselling author of }Let The Great World Spin{ and }Transatlanticism{. Explores the varied consequences that can derive from a simple act.



**Elizabeth McCracken | Thunderstruck and Other Stories | Vintage 9780099592976 | £8.99 | 2nd July**

From the author of the beloved novel *The Giant’s House* – finalist for the National Book Award – comes a beautiful new story collection, her first in twenty years. Laced through with humour, empathy, and rare and magical descriptive powers these nine vibrant stories navigate the fragile space between love and loneliness. In ‘Property’, a young scholar, grieving the sudden death of his wife, decides to refurbish the Maine rental house they were to share together by removing his landlord’s possessions. In ‘Peter Elroy: A Documentary by Ian Casey’, the household of a successful filmmaker is visited years later by his famous first subject, whose trust he betrayed. And in the unforgettable title story, a family makes a quixotic decision to flee to Paris for a summer, only to find their lives altered in an unimaginable way by their teenage daughter’s risky behaviour.

In Elizabeth McCracken’s universe, heartache is always interwoven with strange, charmed moments of joy – an unexpected conversation with small children, the gift of a parrot with a bad French accent – that remind us of the wonder and mystery of being alive. *Thunderstruck & Other Stories* shows this inimitable writer working at the full height of her powers.



**Kseniya Melnik | Snow in May | Fourth Estate  9780007548729 | £8.99 | 23rd April**

Their focus is Magadan, a town in the Northern Far East of Russia, and the unvisited lives of its inhabitants and emigrants – schoolchildren, doctors, teachers, mothers, daughters. Some characters span several stories. Some of their stories span decades and continents. The measure of their telling, though, is invariably the measure of everyday existence. Their dramas, too, are made of quotidian stuff, each life with its own sly or suppressed tragedies, and its brief, often unexpected ecstasies.Kseniya Melnik’s sensibility is sober and humorous; her stories are moving and funny. In their patient, deliberate unfolding – at once surprising and convincing – and in the fitness of their details – vital because they are suggestive – we sense, above all, an assurance that is dazzling.



**Steven Millhauser | Voices in the Night | Little, Brown 9781472114303 | £20 | 1 Oct**

From the Pulitzer and Story Prize winner: sixteen new stories – provocative, funny, disturbing, magical – that delve into the secret lives and desires of ordinary people, alongside retellings of myths and legends that highlight the aspirations of the human spirit.

~~~~

**Lorrie Moore | Bark | Faber 9780571273928 | £8.99 | 5th Feb**

In these eight masterful stories, Lorrie Moore, explores the passage of time, and summons up its inevitable sorrows and comic pitfalls.

In ‘Debarking’, a newly divorced man tries to keep his wits about him as the US prepares to invade Iraq. In ‘Foes’, a political argument goes grotesquely awry as the events of 9/11 unexpectedly manifest at a fundraising dinner in Georgetown. In ‘The Juniper Tree’, a teacher, visited by the ghost of her recently deceased friend, is forced to sing ‘The Star Spangled Banner’ in a kind of nightmare reunion. And in ‘Wings’, we watch the unraveling of two once-hopeful musicians, who neither held fast to their dreams, nor struck out along other paths.

Gimlet-eyed social observation, the public and private absurdities of American life, dramatic irony, and enduring half-cracked love wend their way through each of these narratives, in Moore’s characteristic style that is always tender, never sentimental and often heartbreakingly funny. Acknowledgements: Amazon UK



**BJ Novak | One More Thing | Abacus 9780349139975 | £8.99 | 3rd September**

A boy wins $100,000 in a box of Frosted Flakes – only to discover that claiming the winnings may unravel his family. An acclaimed ambulance driver seeks the courage to follow his heart and throw it all away to be a singer-songwriter. A school principal unveils a bold plan to permanently abolish arithmetic. A new arrival in heaven, overwhelmed by infinite options, procrastinates over his long-ago promise to visit his grandmother. We meet a vengeance-minded hare. We learn why wearing a red T-shirt is the key to finding love; how February got its name; and why the stock market is sometimes just . . . down.

Finding inspiration in questions from the nature of perfection to the icing on carrot cake, from the deeply familiar to the intoxicatingly imaginative, ONE MORE THING finds its heart in the most human of phenomena: love, fear, family, ambition, and the inner stirring for the one elusive element that might make a person complete. The stories in this collection are like nothing else, but they have one thing in common: they share the playful humour, deep heart, inquisitive mind, and altogether electrifying spirit of a writer with a fierce devotion to the entertainment of the reader.

~~~~

**Dorthe Nors | Karate Chop & Minna Needs Rehearsal Space | Pushkin Press 9781782271192 | £8.99 | pbk | 26th Jan**

Two daringly original works from the acclaimed Danish author Dorthe Nors, published back to back in a uniquely designed edition.

‘Beautiful, faceted, haunting stories… Dorthe Norsis fantastic’ Junot Díaz

***Karate Chop***

In these glittering, funny miniature tales, the acclaimed Danish writer Dorthe Nors sketches ordinary lives taking unexpected turns: a son’s love for his father is tested when he suddenly discovers its fragility; a woman in an abusive relationship seeks to better understand the choices she has made; a man with dreams of self-improvement is haunted by deceit; and a daughter watches on silently as her mother’s search for meaning ends in madness.

Blending compassion with dark delight, Nors conjures up a flawed, unsettlingly familiar world with each cautionary glance-as fresh moments of wonder, romance and frail beauty are unexpectedly infiltrated by depravity, isolation and despair.

***Minna Needs Rehearsal Space***

Minna is feeling desperate.Lars has just dumped her by text message. Her friends are constantly flaunting their lovers, children and dogs (with Facebook as their cruel accomplice). Andher neurotic sister is everywhere she turns. Minna needs security, and a place in Copenhagen to practise her music. Minna wants a child. Minna needs to stop being answerable to everyone. So, with only Ingmar Bergman for comfort and company, she decides to take a trip away from it all. In this highly original,playful, poignant yet funny novella, Dorthe Nors explores our struggles to find love, relate to others and simply be heard above the relentless noise of the modern age.



**Joyce Carol Oates | High Crime Area | Head of Zeus 9781784081638 | £7.99 | 2nd July**

A collection of darkly compelling tales from the unique imagination of Joyce Carol Oates.

A young professor is convinced she’s being followed, but when she confronts her shadow all is not as it seems…

A promising student attempts to save her brother from his descent into madness, but finds there may be more to his world than hers…

An elderly nun is found dead in her care home, but was it old age or dark secrets that killed her…

These biting and beautiful stories force us to confront, one by one, the demons within.

 

**Chuck Palahniuk | Make Something Up | Jonathan Cape 9780224099073 | £12.99 | 28th May**

Twenty-one stories and a novella that will disturb and delight, from the author of *Fight Club*. The absurdity of both life and death are on full display; in ‘Zombies’, the best and brightest of a high school prep school become tragically addicted to the latest drug craze: electric shocks from cardiac defibrillators. In ‘Knock, Knock’, a son hopes to tell one last off-colour joke to his dying father , while in ‘Tunnel of Love’, a massage therapist runs the curious practice of providing ‘relief’ to dying clients. And in ‘Excursion’, *Fight Club*fans will be thrilled to find a side of Tyler Durden never seen before.

Funny, caustic, bizarre, poignant; these stories represent everything readers have come to love and expect from Chuck Palahniuk.



**Marge Piercy | The Cost of Lunch, Etc | PM Press 9781629631257 | £15.99 | 1st Oct**

Marge Piercy’s debut collection of short stories, *The Cost of Lunch, Etc.*, brings us glimpses into the lives of everyday women moving through and making sense of their daily internal and external worlds. Keeping to the engaging, accessible language of Piercy’s novels, the collection spans decades of her writing along with a range of locations, ages, and emotional states of her protagonists. From the first-person account of hoarding (“Saving Mother from Herself“) to a girl’s narrative of sexual and spiritual discovery (“Going over Jordan“) to a recount of a past love affair (“The Easy Arrangement“) each story is a tangible, vivid snapshot in a varied and subtly curated gallery of work. Whether grappling with death, familial relationships, friendship, sex, illness, or religion, Piercy’s writing is as passionate, lucid, insightful, and thoughtfully alive as ever.

The paperback edition contains an additional two new short stories and a new introduction from the author.



**Uday Prakash | The Walls of Delhi | Seven Stories 9781609806514 | £10.99 | 6th Oct**

A street sweeper discovers a cache of black market money and escapes to see the Taj Mahal with his underage mistress; an Untouchable races to reclaim his life that’s been stolen by an upper-caste identity thief; a slum baby’s head gets bigger and bigger as he gets smarter and smarter, while his family tries to find a cure. One of India’s most original and audacious writers, Uday Prakash, weaves three tales of living and surviving in today’s globalized India. In his stories, Prakash portrays realities about caste and class with an authenticity absent in most English-language fiction about South Asia. Sharply political but free of heavy handedness.



**Donal Ryan | A Slanting of the Sun | Doubleday 9781781620250 | £12.99 | 10th September**

An old man looks into the fearful eyes of a burglar left to guard him while his brother is beaten; an Irish priest in a war-torn Syrian town teaches its young men the art of hurling; the driver of a car which crashed, killing a teenage girl, forges a connection with the girl’s mother; a squad of broken friends assemble to take revenge on a rapist; a young man sets off on his morning run, reflecting on the ruins of his relationship, but all is not as it seems.
Donal Ryan’s short stories pick up where his acclaimed novels *The Spinning Heart*and *The Thing About December*left off, dealing with the human cost of loneliness, isolation and displacement. Sometimes this is present in the ordinary, the mundane; sometimes it is triggered by a fateful encounter or a tragic decision. At the heart of these stories, crucially, is how people are drawn to each other and cling on to love, often in desperate circumstances.
In haunting and often startling prose, Donal Ryan has captured the brutal beauty of the human heart in all its hopes and failings.



**Nicholas Shakespeare | Stories From Other Places | Harvill Secker 9781846559747 | 10th September**

Nicholas Shakespeare’s collected stories take us across oceans and continents into the intimate lives of his characters and the dilemmas and temptations they face. The opening novella, ‘Oddfellows’, tells the little-known history of horrifying events that occurred on 1 January 1915 in the Australian outback town of Broken Hill, where, on the citizens’ annual picnic outing, the only enemy attack to occur on Australian soil during the First World War, took them by surprise.

The other stories range through India, Africa, Argentina and Canada, and include a magnificent tale of civic folly which sees an unreliable young councillor from the Bolivian mining town of Oruro lose himself in the seductions of Paris while trying to commission a bronze statue of his local hero. All of them showcase Shakespeare’s talent for insight and drama, and his fascination with connection and disconnection and cultural misunderstanding.



**Ali Smith | Public Library and Other Stories | Hamish Hamilton 9780241237465 | £16.99 | 5th Nov**Why are books so very powerful?

What do the books we’ve read over our lives – our own personal libraries – make of us?

What does the unravelling of our tradition of public libraries, so hard-won but now in jeopardy, say about us?

The stories in Ali Smith’s new collection are about what we do with books and what they do with us: how they travel with us; how they shock us, change us, challenge us, banish time while making us older, wiser and ageless all at once; how they remind us to pay attention to the world we make.

Public libraries are places of joy, freedom, community and discovery – and right now they are under threat from funding cuts and widespread closures across the UK and further afield. With this brilliantly inventive collection, Ali Smith joins the campaign to save our public libraries and celebrate their true place in our culture and history.



**Carrie Snyder | The Juliet Stories | Hodder 9781444792683 | £8.99 | pbk | 8th Oct**

In the tradition of Alice Munro, an ambitious coming of age novel-in-stories set against the backdrop of the political turmoil in 1980s Nicaragua. Shortlisted for Canada’s Governor General’s Literary Award and selected as a Globe and Mail Top 100 Book.

~~~~

**Peter Stamm | We’re Flying | Granta 9781847087683 | £9.99 | 4th April**

The stories here possess all the qualities that have built Peter Stamm’s reputation as one of the very finest European writers alive today – the undemonstrative prose, the deceptive simplicity of the storylines, and the calm, clear understanding of psychology and emotions. In ‘Expectations’, we meet a woman who becomes involved with her younger upstairs neighbour; in ‘The Result’, a man waiting for the outcome of medical tests; and in ‘Sweet Dreams’, a young couple learning to navigate the thrills and complications of cohabitation. A master of the short story, Stamm does not spare the reader’s feelings — and nor does he waste a word.



**Graham Swift | England and Other Stories | S&S 9781471137419 | £8.99 | 4th June**

A collection of new stories from the Booker-prize winning author of Last Orders and Waterland; ‘a powerful statement about English ways of life and death’ Independent on Sunday
Meet Dr Shah, who has never been to India, and Mrs Kaminski, on her way to Poland via A&E. Meet Holly and Polly, who have come to their own Anglo-Irish understanding; Charlie and Don, who have seen the docks turn into Docklands; Daisy Baker, terrified of Yorkshire; and Johnny Dewhurst, stranded on Exmoor.
Binding these stories together is Graham Swift’s affectionate but unflinching instinct for the story of us all: an evocation of that mysterious body that is a nation, deepened by the palpable sense of our individual bodies finding or losing their way in the nationless territory of birth, ageing, sex and death.



**Rose Tremain | The American Lover | Vintage 9780099548447 | £8.99 | 1st Oct**

Trapped in a London flat, Beth remembers a transgressive love affair in 1960s’ Paris. The most famous writer in Russia takes his last breath in a stationmaster’s cottage, miles from Moscow. A father, finally free of his daughter’s demands, embarks on a long swim from his Canadian lakeside retreat. And in the grandest house of all, Danni the Polish housekeeper catches the eye of an enigmatic visitor.



**Christos Tsiolkas | Merciless Gods | Atlantic 9781782397298 | £12.99 | 3rd September**

Love, sex, death, family, friendship, betrayal, tenderness, sacrifice and revelation…
This incendiary collection of stories from acclaimed writer Christos Tsiolkas takes you deep into worlds both strange and familiar, and introduces you to characters that will haunt you long after you have turned the final page.

 

**Alberto Barrera Tyszka | Crimes | Maclehose Press 9780857053152 | £14.99 | 6th August**

Unexplained blood stains appear in a young couple’s apartment; a disembodied hand is found in a rubbish dump; political prisoners resort to horrific measures in order to make a point.

In this brilliant new collection of stories, Alberto Barrera Tyszka casts an eye on the violence that afflicts Latin America, and in particular its intimate effects on the individuals who suffer and inflict it.

Mixing the surreal with the quotidian, the banal with the unspeakable, Tyszka has created a fragmentary panorama of man’s misdeeds against his own kind. These windingly elliptical stories are ceaselessly surprising, and will bury themselves into your subconscious long after the final page is turned

~~~~

**Sally Vickers | The Boy Who Could See Death | Viking 9780241187692 | £14.99 | 2nd April**

Eli is an ordinary boy with an extraordinary gift. It will shape the course of his whole life but, he learns the hard way, he must keep it hidden from those who know him best. Seeing death is a mixed blessing.

Eli is not the only one defying the world’s expectations of him. Cousin Francesca, a charming spinster and a favourite with the children, is harbouring kleptomaniac tendencies. Sarah Palliser, living alone next to a ramshackle graveyard, is more scared of the small box under her stairs than the ghosts outside her window. Meanwhile dreamy artist Nan is nursing a growing obsession with wolves in Britain and the recently widowed Frances finds herself inventing an exotic imaginary boyfriend to pass the time.

Push through an unassuming front door on an unremarkable street or peer into the glowing fluorescent windows of an urban office block and within you’ll find strange and unforgettable scenes, normal people caught in situations they do not quite comprehend…

Salley Vickers is a master of the uncanny and the unexpected. In this collection of eleven remarkable stories, she explores bereavement and betrayal, closely guarded secrets and common gossip, long-overdue endings and decidedly strange beginnings. Each story is perfectly formed: a snapshot of a total stranger, a fleeting glimpse of lives spiced with a little something extra.

~~~~

**Fay Weldon | Mischief | Head of Zeus | 9781784081027 | £16.99 | 12th Jan**

Reviewers have been describing Fay Weldon’s inimitable voice for years. Now, here is Fay Weldon in her own words. Choosing and and introducing twenty-one of her favourite short stories written throughout her fifty year career as one of Britain’s foremost novelists. Included as a bonus is a new novella, The Ted Dreams, a ghost story for the age of cyber culture, big pharma, and surveillance.



**Simon Winder | Tales of the Marvellous and News of the Strange | Penguin Classics 9780141395043 | £10.99 | 2nd July**

On the shrouded corpse hung a tablet of green topaz with the inscription:*‘I am Shaddad the Great. I conquered a thousand cities; a thousand white elephants were collected for me; I lived for a thousand years and my kingdom covered both east and west, but when death came to me nothing of all that I had gathered was of any avail. You who see me take heed: for Time is not to be trusted.’*

Dating from at least a millennium ago, these are the earliest known Arabic short stories, surviving in a single, ragged manuscript in a library in Istanbul. Some found their way into *The Arabian Nights*but most have never been read in English before. *Tales of the Marvellous and News of the Strange*has monsters, lost princes, jewels beyond price, a princess turned into a gazelle, sword-wielding statues and shocking reversals of fortune.

**Acknowledgements : Bertrams and Neilsen BookData**