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Short story review sample

The best short story can be as engaging and enthralling as a novel. Though many writers set their sites on the novel, selling short stories can be a way for a writer to get his feet wet and gain exposure. The process of pitching a short story is similar to that of pitching an article or approaching a publisher with an idea for a novel. Literary journals, magazines and online publications publish short stories. It pays to do your research before you submit a story. If a magazine interests you and seems to fit with your style, read several issues of the magazine before you send in your story. For example, if your genre is fantasy, read a few issues of your fantasy magazine of choice. You will learn the general style and length of stories that the magazine publishes. You'll also figure out if the magazine has previously published a story similar to yours, in which case, it might not want your story. Before you submit a story to a publisher or magazine, ask for the company's guidelines. The e-book market can be a boon to short story writers. According to David Coe of "Science Fiction and Fantasy Novelists," the earnings from publishing an e-book version of a short story are similar to those from a traditional market. Coe also notes, however, that self-publishing might not advance a writer's career as much as pursuing sales through traditional markets or publishers. If your goal is to earn money rather than pursue an agent or publication with a larger publishing house, self-publishing e-book versions of your stories might be the route to take. You can self-publish through a number of online publishing companies. Once you've determined where you want your story to go, focus on the meat and bones of the story itself. Ask people you trust to read the story and provide feedback. Consider joining a writer's group or workshop to get feedback from other short story writers. Make sure your story fits the guidelines of the publication. Don't try to submit a piece that is over the word limit or considerably shorter than the requirements. Always include a cover letter when you submit your story to a magazine or website. The cover letter should tell the editor what you are submitting and its length. You don't need to include much else in the letter. For example, you don't need to include a synopsis of the story or share its submission history, especially if the story has been turned down by other publishers, according to C.M. Clifton of FreelanceWriting.com. If you are sending the story via email, make sure to attach the file to your letter and use the proper file format. Once upon a time, I didn't "do" short stories. The only time I read them was for class, and even then, I loathed the assignments. I, like a lot of people who claim they don't like short stories, found them too abrupt. Once I started getting into a story, it ended, and I was too quickly ushered into a new one. I felt robbed, like I was only getting a piece of a whole, and that the author was holding out. That was, of course, until I found a short story collection I liked.When a friend handed me Jhumpa Lahiri's Interpreter of Maladies , I rolled my eyes and tried to resist, telling her I really wasn't into short fiction. "Trust me, you'll like this," she said. Her knowing smile should have told me everything I needed to know, because once I read Lahiri's outstanding collection — which I finished in one sitting — I was hooked. Now, I'm a short story junkie.The truth is, there are so many amazing short story collections out there that are just as good as the novels you're so fond of reading, you just have to give them a chance. Despite their brevity, short stories are rich and powerful, and they have the capacity to fully engage you, no matter what their page count is. But if you're still skeptical — I don't blame you, I was too — then here are 13 collections you should try, even if you think you hate short stories.Runaway by Alice MunroClick Here To Buy A modern master of short stories, Alice Munro weaves captivating tales about relationships, identity, and womanhood in Runaway , a breathtaking and emotional collection from the Pulitzer Prize-winning author. Each story is rich in detail and bursting with raw emotion, featuring characters who are as relatable as they are unforgettable. If your woes about short stories include the fact they aren't long enough, you'll appreciate the interconnectedness of many of these tales.Trigger Warning by Neil GaimanClick Here To BuyMonsters and witches and beasts, oh my! Enter the fantastical mind of Neil Gaiman through his newest short story collection, Trigger Warning , which features familiar worlds (including that of American Gods) and brand new nightmares. Imaginative, wonderous, and sometimes disturbing, this collection, which is part sci-fi, part mythology, and all original, will change the way you look at short stories.Barbara the Slut and Other People by Lauren HolmesClick Here To BuyIn this case, you can tell a lot about a book by its cover. Blunt, humorous, and unapologetic, Barbara the Slut and Other People will have you actually LOLing. A brazen look at love, sex, relationships, and figuring it all out, Lauren Holmes's debut collection of stories is not for the bashful reader, but it is for anyone who claims they hate short stories. Because these are the kind that stay with you and make you want to talk to everyone you know about them when you've finished — yeah, they are that interesting.Flings: Stories by Justin TaylorClick Here To BuyYour 20s and 30s are unsure times, and Justin Taylor's phenomenal collection Flings captures those feelings of uncertainty and doubt with honesty and heart — and a whole lot of humor, too. Chock-full of zany characters, bizarre situations, and pop culture references to boot, there is no way, short story lover or not, that you won't revel in the genius and wit of this laugh-out-loud collection.Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits by Laila LalamClick Here To BuyLaila Lalam chronicles the Muslim immigrant experience of four Moroccans in her stirring collection Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits . Not quite short stories and not quite a novel, Lalam presents a series of fictional profiles of characters who are all connected, and who are all fighting for their freedom, their futures, and their lives. Poignant and moving, this hybrid is perfect for those who crave an overarching story in their collections.Praying Drunk by Kyle MinorClick Here To BuyA series of dazzling, surreal, and often thought-provoking interconnected stories make up Kyle Minor's tour de force, Praying Drunk . Although it is not a novel, Minor's collection is meant to be read in order. Recurring events, themes, and characters are played out in new and surprising ways throughout, each one commanding your full attention. Wildly entertaining and fully engrossing, Praying Drunk was written for the short story naysayers.Welcome to the Monkey House by Kurt VonnegutClick Here To BuySpeaking of interconnected stories, Kurt Vonnegut's masterful collection Welcome to the Monkey House is not only interconnected within itself, but has ties to Vonnegut's entire wonderful, mad fictional literary universe. Hilarious, satirical, and outrageous, the 25 stories in this collection take you from the battlefield of the past to the streets of the future, all with Vonnegut's signature biting humor and sharp prose. There is something in here for everyone, even those who think they hate this genre.Magic for Beginners by Kelly LinkClick Here To BuyMagic for Beginners , a brilliant combination of fantasy, surrealism, and emotion, is an unique collection that walks the line between dreams and reality. Like fairytales for adults, Magic for Beginners has a captivating power that grabs readers from the first story, the first sentence, even, and doesn't let go until the last page. If you don't think you like short stories, I dare you to try and find something about this collection that turns you away. It's simply remarkable storytelling, and who doesn't like that?Internal Medicine: A Doctor's Stories by Terrence HoltClick Here To BuyMaybe you don't think you like short stories, but I bet you can't get enough of medical dramas. Like Grey's Anatomy in book form — but with less on call room hook ups — Internal Medicine , based off of Terrence Holt's own experiences as a physician, chronicles a doctor's grueling, emotionally trying years as a resident. Life and death, as well as careers and personal lives, are in constant battle with one another, and Holt's unsparing prose captures the sadness, the wonder, and the beauty of it all in one gut-wrenching story after another.Shakespeare's Kitchen : Stories by Lore SegalClick Here To BuyLore Segal's Shakespeare's Kitchen features 13 stories that are all (surprise!) connected in one way or another. From the classroom to Sunday brunch, each story further explores the complexities of forging and maintaining meaningful relationships with one another, romantic or otherwise. While each can stand strongly on its own, thanks to superb writing, together, these mesmerizing stories are worthy of novel-like binge-reading.Almost Famous Women by Megan Mayhew BergmanClick Here To BuyInspired by real women who almost made it into the history books, Megan Mayhew Bergman's Almost Famous Women imagines the fiction lives of ladies like Lord Byron's illegitimate daughter and power boat racer and heiress Joe Carstairs. The robust characters and supreme storytelling make each of these fictional biographies a delight to read, but what's more is their ability to examine women's experiences, both universal and unique, with authenticity and tact. Even if you don't like short stories, you will fall in love with each of these remarkable women.The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories by H. P. LovecraftClick Here To BuyIf you love horror but think you hate short stories, then The Call of Cthulhu and Other Stories just may convince you of the form's merits. Each of Lovecraft's 30 stories are gripping and spine-tingling, some even terrifying enough to make you thankful that they're only a few pages, lest your heart couldn't take it anymore.A Taste of Honey: Stories by Jabari AsimClick Here To BuyThrough 16 linked stories of the Midwest in the late 1960s, Jabari Asim paints a vivid picture of one of the most tumultuous times in recent history. A Taste of Honey brings to life the interconnected journeys of several African Americans in a tight-knit community overwhelmed with unrest and threatened with violence. Incisive and affecting, Asim's collection is a power work of fiction that will hold your attention story after story, until you find yourself exhausted and heartbroken... and completely in love with short stories.Image: Christopher Michel/flickr These are some of the best short stories around, and what makes them even more delightful is the fact that every one is absolutely free. If you love to read this article is just right for you.1. "The Zero Meter Diving Team," by Jim Shepard Mikhail lived a large portion of his life in that state of mind in which you take a risk and deny the risk at the same time, out of rage. "This story is about three brothers caught up in the horrific disaster that happened at Chernobyl on April 26, 1986. The startling consequences of the disaster make for a dramatic backdrop, as the brothers deal with the aftermath of the nuclear meltdown. "The Zero Meter Diving Team" is available for free, from BOMB magazine.2. "A Tiny Feast," by Chris Adrian "Titania was the only one among them ever to have ridden on a roller coaster, but she didn't offer up the experience as an analogy, because it seemed insufficient to describe a process that to her felt less like a violent unpredictable ride than like someone ripping your heart out one day and then stuffing it back in your chest the next." "A Tiny Feast" is for those who love fairy folk. In the story, a toddler is exchanged for a hobgoblin, but the tiny child has a very serious illness. The story is available for free from The New Yorker.3. "Lorry Raja," by Madhuri Vijay "He taunted me about playing in the mud, as he called it, breaking chunks of iron ore with my hammer." "Lorry Raja" is a short story about children and families in India. These families were coerced into forced labor to mine for iron to build the Olympic stadium in China. It is available to read from The Narrative Magazine. You will be required to submit an email address to access the full story.4. "Bluebell Meadow," by Benedict Kiely "She spread the bullets on the table and moved them about, making designs and shapes and patterns with them, playing with them as if they were draughts or dominoes or precious stones." "The "Bluebell Meadow" is set during the Troubles in Ireland. It is about two teenagers that although in love have the chasm of religious ideals between them. It is available for free from Google Books. 5. "A Beneficiary," Nadine Gordimer "That Saturday: it landed in the apartment looted by the present and filled it with blasting amazement, the presence of a shocking secret about her mother in "The Beneficiary." The story is available for free from The New Yorker.6. "The Man On The Stairs," by Miranda July "That is my problem with life, I just rush through it, like I'm being chased." "This is a creepy and very short tale. It is available for free from Scrib.7. "Bullet in the Brain," by Tobias Wolff "He was never in the best of tempers anyway, Anders—a book critic known for the weary, elegant savagery with which he dispatched almost everything he reviewed." A normal day in a bank turns to terror very quickly. You can find on the bottle of lacquer and, standing up, passed her left—the wet—hand back and forth through the air." This is a story about an atypical day at the beach. The entire book can be downloaded for free here.16. "Tiny Smiling Daddy," by Mary Gaitskill "Unless it was Kitty's coldness, her always turning away, her sarcastic voice. But she was a teenager, and that's what teenagers did." The story revolves around the tumultuous teen years, although the child in the story is in her late twenties. The father reminisces about his daughter's adolescent years. The story can be read for free here.17. "They're Made Out Of Meat," Terry Bisson "And why not? Imagine how unbearably, how unutterably cold the Universe would be if one were all alone ... "Aliens make a hilarious discovery. The story was nominated for the Nebula award in 1991. The story can be read for free here.18. "The Yellow Wallpaper," by Charlotte Perkins Gilman "If a physician of high standing, and one's own husband, assures friends and relatives that there is really nothing the matter with one but temporary nervous depression—a slight hysterical tendency—what is one to do?" A story of a young woman's descent into madness after the birth of her child. The user can choose which format to download. Available for free here.19. "All at One Point," by Italo Calvino "We say hello—at times somebody recognizes me, at other times I recognize somebody—and we promptly start asking about this one and that one (even if each remembers only a few of those remembered by the others), and so we start in again on the old disputes, the slanders, the denigrations." This is a very short story that revolves around the very beginning of the universe. The story is available for free.20. "Italy," by Antonio Elefano "I could only focus on you: your syncope'd step, your forward lean, the way your legs seemed to disappear amidst the tables as you glided across the room." "Italy" is a bittersweet tale about a couple during many years of marriage. The story can be read for free here. "Well, we had all these children out planting trees, see, because we figured that... that was part of their education, to see how, you know, the root systems ... and also the sense of responsibility, taking care of things, being individually responsible." A story about an unusual school dealing with a rather mundane subject. The story can be read for free.22. "In the Penal Colony" by Franz Kafka "The Condemned Man, incidentally, had an expression of such dog-like resignation that it looked as if one could set him free to roam around the slopes and would only have to whistle at the start of the execution for him to return." A man is condemned to die in a most unusual manner. Read the story for free.23. "Symbols and Signs," by Vladimir Nabokov "After eliminating a number of articles that might offend him or frighten him (anything in the gadget line, for instance, was taboo), his parents chose a dainty and innocent trifle—a basket with ten different fruit jellies in ten little jars." A couple goes to visit their son in a mental institution only to be turned away. The story is available from The New Yorker.24. "Gooseberries," by Anton Chekhov "But surely a corpse wants that, not a man. And I hear that our intellectuals have a longing for the land and want to acquire farms. But it all comes down to the six feet of land." A story about two brothers reestablishing themselves after their father's death. The story is available here.25. "Sea Oak," by George Saunders "But she's not bitter. Sometimes she's so nonbitter it gets on my nerves." A story about an aunt who refuses to stay dead. The story is available for free.26. "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas," by Ursula K. Le Guin "But we do not say the words of cheer much any more. All smiles have become archaic." A story about the price of utopia. The story is available for free here.27. "The Veldt," by Ray Bradbury A shadow flickered over Mr. McClean's hot face." The story is about a murderous room. You can read it for free here.28. "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," by Alice Munro "Her hair that was as light as milkweed fluff had gone from pale blond to white somehow without Grant's noticing exactly when, and she still wore it down to her shoulders, as her mother had done" The story is about a professor's wife losing her memory. It was later adapted into a film, Away From Her. The story can be found in The New Yorker. 29. "The Nose," by Nikolai Gogol "Ivan Yakovlevitch donned a jacket over his shirt for politeness' sake, and, seating himself at the table, poured out salt, got a couple of onions ready, took a knife into his hand, assumed an air of importance, and cut the roll open. Then he glanced into the roll's middle. To his intense surprise he saw something glimmering there. He probed it cautiously with the knife — then poked at it with a finger. "Two men awake to a very distressing morning. The story can be found here.30. "Drown," by Junot Diaz "Days we spent in the mall or out in the parking lot playing stickball, but nights were what we waited for." A young man returns home from college only to find many things have changed. Read for free.

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