



Presence: Stories

Arthur Miller

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Presence: Stories Arthur Miller

A moving, final collection of stories by Arthur Miller

Throughout his career as one of the foremost playwrights of the twentieth century, Arthur Miller wrote a remarkable series of highly regarded short stories, pieces that reveal the same profound insight, humanism, and empathy that are the hallmarks of his great dramatic works. *Presence* is a posthumous gathering of Miller's last published fiction, a group of stories that appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Esquire*, and elsewhere. "Bulldog" describes a young teenager's surprising first sexual experience while "Presence" relates a man's encounter with a woman he has just seen making love on a beach. "Beavers" tells a haunting tale of nature, creation, and destruction. In "The Performance," a Jewish tap dancer entralls Hitler. "The Bare Manuscript" reveals a writer's unusual methods to revive his muse, and, finally, "The Turpentine Still" presents a portrait of a man examining his legacy. Displaying the sureness of an artist in his autumnal prime, *Presence* is a gift that all fans of Miller's work, as well as readers of contemporary fiction, will welcome.

Presence: Stories Details

Date : Published May 10th 2007 by Viking Adult (first published 2004)

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Author : Arthur Miller

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Mainon says

So, you've known that Arthur Miller was a bit of a genius at sad stories ever since Death of a Salesman. These stories are a little bit random -- I've rarely felt so melancholy as when contemplating his tale of beavers trying to build a dam while avoiding being shot by hunters -- but each packs a punch. And despite the broad range of settings and plots, many of these seem very real, as though I actually read them as long-form human interest stories in the New Yorker. Wait, was there really a guy who tried to distill turpentine from pine trees in Haiti in the wake of revolution, or was that just a story?

Keith Willcock says

Miller describes these short stories as accounts of things seen from various distances. I assume this means from various ages and stages of his life and indeed they encompass a wide range of themes including the original story of The Misfits.

Despite the diverse nature of the stories there is within each of them a sensuality, a power and yes, a spirituality that disturbs one's carefully constructed defenses. These are deeply moving accounts of the human drama viewed from inside the characters' minds and we are required to surrender our closely guarded secrets if we are to get the most out of the intimate thoughts and experiences that we have been invited to share.

I moved through the book slowly and uncertainly at first not sure where I was being taken and when I realized what the invitation required of me it was too late. I had already been seduced and felt a compelling urgency to know the truth. There were moments when I rebelled against the demand to stand naked before my own flawed nature but to do anything less would have been dishonest and a disservice to the vulnerability of the characters and the quality of the writing. No value is too sacred; no feeling too perverse; no desire too dishonorable to escape the light of self examination.

In the end we are reduced to the experience of The Fitter, the tough New York welder and mini mafioso who, having experienced perhaps the only truly honorable moment of his life, is described as "a lit face hung in an endless loneliness.

In the end I am relieved to have taken the journey. It is as if in the recognition of my own darkness something in me has dissolved and by its absence has left me more whole than I was before. The question is, now that my face is lit will the light continue to shine or will the darkness overcome it, leaving nothing more than a fading memory? To this question Miller offers no response. I suspect he did not have one. The truth is that whether he did or not he has taken me as far as he can. The rest is up to me.

Melissa says

Miller's stories drive home themes regarding the purpose of man. One in this collection seemed to take it one step further and actually question the purpose of nature. Great read for any Arthur Miller fan!

Dana says

Some of the stories were so beautiful, others were a little too dull for me. Overall a very coherent selection of short stories though.

Michelle says

Presence: Stories
Arthur Miller
Contempotry Fiction
164 pages
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An unforgettable collection of a master storyteller's final works

Throughout his life, Arthur Miller, one of the foremost dramatists of the twentieth century, wrote highly regarded fiction—from his early novel *Focus* to two collections, *I Don't Need You Anymore* and *Homely Girl*. In *Presence*, a posthumous gathering of his last published stories, he reveals the same profound insight, humanism, and empathy that characterized his great dramatic works. The six stories included here have all appeared in major publications and each displays all the assuredness of an artist in his autumnal prime. *Presence* is a gift that all fans of Miller's work, as well as readers of contemporary fiction, will applaud.

Jacob says

February 2009

A fine collection of stories. I'll admit, I didn't expect much from this at first: I am not very familiar with Arthur Miller (I've read two of his plays at most) and I suppose, looking at his vast collection of works, I expected something...overblown? Old and tired? Pretentious, perhaps? Well, shows how little I know of Arthur Miller. The stories in this posthumous collection--his last works--are oddly comforting, in a way. There is a quiet and dignified feeling to them, almost humble. I'm sure readers who are more familiar with Arthur Miller would appreciate these stories in respect to their place in his works; as for me, I'll have to appreciate these stories for what they are: a perfect introduction, albeit a late one, to Miller and his craft.

Nikos Tsentemeidis says

Ξεχ?ρισα το γυμν? χειρ?γραφο.

Bee Halton says

Arthur Miller is more known for his plays like "Death of a Salesman" which I had to read in school. I really liked it. I think he had a wonderful knowledge about human life in all its glory but also its lowness and a brilliant way of bringing it on stage.

When I saw this collection of short stories in the library I just had to read it. And I did not regret it.

Stories so full of pain, love, frustration and hope not many every had the talent to describe those as close to life as he does. Certainly one to read.

George K. says

Απ? ?ρθουρ Μ?λερ ?χω διαβ?σει τρ?α πολ? καλ? και ιδια?τερα θεατρικ? ?ργα, τα "Ο Θ?νατος του εμπορ?κου" και "Ψηλ? απ?τη γ?φυρα" π?ρυσι και το "Το τ?μημα" φ?τος, οπ?τε αυτ? ε?ναι η πρ?τη φορ? που διαβ?ζω κ?τι μη θεατρικ? αυτο? του συγγραφ?α. Πρ?κειται για μια πολ? καλ? συλλογ? ?ξι διηγημ?των -τα τελευτα?α του που δημοσιε?τηκαν-, τα οπο?α ?χουν ?λα αυτ? τα στοιχε?α που χαρακτηρ?ζουν τα θεατρικ? του ?ργα. Η γραφ? ε?ναι πραγματικ? πολ? καλ?, σ?γουρη και οξυδερκ?ς, με βαθ?τερα νο?ματα στις περιγραφ?ς και τις σκ?ψεις των χαρακτ?ρων. Λ?γο ?ως πολ? απ?λαυσσα ?λα τα διηγ?ματα, ?λο και κ?ποια πρ?γματα ε?χαν να πουν, ?λο και κ?ποια σημαντικ? ζητ?ματα ?θιξε ο συγγραφ?ας μ?σω της πλοκ?ς και της θεματολογ?ας τους. Ο τρ?πος γραφ?ς και σκ?ψης του ?ρθουρ Μ?λερ ?σως να μην ταιρι?ζει με ?λα τα γο?στα, π?ντως μπορ? να πω ?τι ταιρι?ζει αρκετ? με τα δικ? μου.

Comfortably says

Με κο?ρασε αφ?ρητα. Ξεχ?ρισα το Γυμν? χειρ?γραφο και το ομ?νυμο.!.

Siv30 says

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Lsilberman says

Short-story anthology. Strangest, perhaps: The Performance, in which a professional tap-dancer is commissioned to do a special command performance before an audience that turns out to be Hitler, then has to flee Germany before Hitler realizes that he's Jewish.

Gerard says

Conjunt de contes força irregular. En general, les històries i, sobretot, els desenllaços, no m'han fet el pes. No obstant, l'Arthur Miller gaudeix d'un estil fluid, precís i proper, d'una sensibilitat excepcional per la psicologia dels seus personatges, com evidencia al millor dels relats, el del destil·lador de trementina.

Mateo says

These stories have revived a faith in the good old fashioned short story I haven't felt for a decade. Though recently published, they read like contemporaries with Salinger, early Roth, or other powerfully controlled voices. Each situation takes on mythic proportions within the shadowy poetics of reality. You are really going to like these stories.

Infada Spain says

?να κι ?να ?λα τα διηγ?ματα του Arthur Miller, που ε?ναι και τα τελευτα?α της ζω?ς του. Αν ?πρεπε να επιλ?ξω ?να απ? αυτ? τα μικρ? διαμαντ?κια ως το πιο αγαπημ?νο μου, θα δυσκολευ?μουν πολ?, μα νομ?ζω θα επ?λεγα το ομ?τιτλο...? ?σως το προτελευτα?ο...? μ?λλον...αδυνατ? να διαλ?ξω :)
