



Me-Time Tales: tea breaks for mature women and curious men

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“Intriguing and quirky” - Katie Fforde

Enjoyed Sue Townsend, Fay Weldon? Then look forward to these satirical tales.

This is a second and expanded edition with additional stories. Women of all ages feature together with their obsessions. There's tattooed Jess in her prime at 16, dismal Daryl, neurotic Mrs W., multi-mother Pru, Marian fighting middle-age, a loving mattress and a prosthesis, not to mention the lady who cannot admit to her name or her age.

Me-Time Tales: tea breaks for mature women and curious men Details

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From Reader Review Me-Time Tales: tea breaks for mature women and curious men for online ebook

Pamela says

I do not usually read short stories but I was pleased when Goodreads sent me this interesting collection of 9 short stories and 1 poem as they lived up to their billing as being quickly and enjoyably read in a tea break.

The author's professional background as a psychologist shines through as she observes the darker and less pleasant side of human nature. There was a distinct air of pathos in these largely suburban tales about women, even when laced with wit. The first story concerns a woman meeting a man with a dog in her local park. The twist at the end largely sets the scene for the rest of the collection of tales of various well-crafted characters who are cleverly depicted, if not in a way that induces sympathy in the reader, by Rosalind Minett.

Mine must have been an extended tea break as I found I had devoured the book in a greedy single sitting, and I would be really interested to read a full-length novel by this talented writer.

Grady says

'It is like a brilliant illustration from a book she's never seen.'

British author Rosalind Minett began her career in the arts as a dancer - in RADA (for those outside the UK, The Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) - but switched directions when she studied psychology at Birmingham, Sussex and Exeter universities and became a Psychologist. This combination of experience offers her the ability to crawl inside the psyches of her characters while creating a proscenium arch setting in intricate details for her chosen subject - whether writing comedy, historically influenced novels or crime tales - before enjoying a career as a chartered psychologist. She is successfully able to wear the twin masks of comedy/tragedy and still maintain a rather phenomenal sense of finding the humor in the worst of situations and the compensatory dark side of the best of incidents. She is a hell of a fine writer!

Rosalind takes a break from her usual foray and offers a collection of fourteen stories that as she states, 'I did enjoy writing these stories! They probably represent my irreverent side very clearly. Perhaps you'll recognize your girl-friend, neighbor, mother, mother-in-law, daughter or even yourself, and smile or cringe. My characters are truly fictional, but their obsessions are out there in the world and you'll have encountered more than one.'

Even the titles offer a hint of the perceptions of odd characters and odd life circumstances – UNDERWHELMED, BLIND DATE, A FITTING MATTER, FINDING OUT, STAYING PUT, FIRST FEAST, EATEN UP, LAMENT, A MEANS OF SUPPORT, A SLIGHT INVASION, THE REAL PRIZE, A MATERIAL TRIP, AS FOUND, and ANTI-DOTE

And a sample of her inimitable writing flair is suggested here- 'Marian took stock of her fifty-year-old self when she was only forty-five. It meant wearing support knickers and a suggestive smile. It meant thinking positive, just as she advised her sales colleagues every day. Cerise was her positive colour and she let collars or scarves of it peep out from behind her grey coat, navy mac or black fleecy. She kept her eyes wide open;

wide enough, she thought.’ (Marian encounters an eligible older man and his dog in the park and after hopes are raised for an affair Marian gets stuck with the dog instead) ‘It made something to look forward to after work, the walk. And there were other parks she could take the dog to. She bought a gentian blouse with pointed collars that poked invitingly out of her coat lapels. You never know. With a dog, life is full of possibilities.’

Funky little tales that offer immediate reminders of ourselves or people we have encountered – only rarely with the degree of quality humor and life lessons Rosalind creates. This is a treasure trove of fine short stories about being alive – at a certain age.

Marjorie says

I am a big fan of the short story and have read quite a few over the years, be they collections from various authors in one volume or in a single volume. There is something special about a perfectly formed short tale that makes the heart sing with satisfaction. Unfortunately, that is not the case with these 13 tales and 1 poem. The author has either forgotten that each story needs a beginning, middle and end or is so caught up with trying to provide allegory that the story suffers. There is, therefore an unresolved aspect to the majority of these tales; in fact I felt like they were either failed chapters for the start of a book or a precis for a book rather than a complete tale in its own right.

Underwhelmed - 2 Stars

Charming enough tale but told in abrupt sentences that distract you from the characters. Nice touches of whimsy but not quite enough to make it a good read. Loved the double cross at the end though and I have to say I do think Pete did the right thing by Marian.

Blind Date - 2 Stars

Told from the perspective of a 16 year old girl and there is a brave attempt made to emulate the speech and language of this contemporary age group. Sadly comes off as forced and the superficiality of the main character is rather unpleasant and not indicative of real people but rather a media friendly interpretation.

A Fitting Matter - 4 Star

By far the best story in the book and one of the longest. I loved the early portion dealing with the trials and tribulations of getting your first bra. Just the right amount of humour combined with the pathos of the family estrangement and the denouement tied everything up with a nice shiny bow.

Finding Out - 3 Star

This one is a ghost story with a little bit of witchcraft thrown in and is one of the longer tales. This length gives the characters - Sara and James - time to develop and for the background of the haunting to be explained. Their experiences with the apparition are vastly different but Sara's is told in compelling detail. This is where it then falls apart unfortunately as the ending is rushed and feels tacked on just to close the tale off.

Staying Put - 1 Star

I can see what the author is trying to achieve with this claustrophobic little tale but sadly she does not pull it off. Left me feeling confused and disappointed.

Eaten Up - 2 Star

Moments of fun in this tale of mother's words warping a child's view - If you don't eat up you won't have babies! Unfortunately mother was wrong and now we have 6 under the age of 5 to cope with. Good description of the agony and ecstasy of child rearing but again felt rushed.

Lament - 2 Star

Traditional poem in rhyming lines, not bad but not great either.

First Feast - 3 Star

This one in particular felt like the synopsis for a longer form story which then failed to materialise from the author's imagination. Wonderful description of the boarding school and the first glimpse of plentiful food after the end of World War II but that is by far the best bit of the story.

A Slight Invasion - 3 Star

What do you do when the babies don't come? She submits herself to interminable rounds of IVF, he decides to be unfaithful. Quirky story but unresolved in the end; I am sure the Book Clubs will love this one as there is much to discuss about motivation and where the tale may have gone but it does leave you feeling a little cheated.

The Real Prize - 2 Star

This one is all about how the love of a good woman bettered one man and his former friend and colleague's decline in the same time period. The narrator is unlikeable and although this perhaps feels like one of the closest to an intended short story it still has, that word again, a rushed feeling to the prose.

A Change Of Support - 2 Star

Great description of a controlling relationship and how one person can strip everything from you whilst making you believe it is for the best, Matt does everything that the Mental Health websites tell us to check to see if our partner is a narcissist. The author has clearly watched one too many Infomercials (that Insomnia can be a right pain can't it) as the mattress Matt buys for her has all the blurb from one and from the tale of trying to unpack it I am sure the author either caved in and purchased or knows someone who did. The early half of the story is the best bit and it rapidly becomes strangely surreal and unappealing.

A Material Trip - 2 Star

I cannot remember one single thing about this story so maybe I should downgrade it to 1 Star. However, I have marked it in my trusty notebook as a 2 so it will stay that way.

Well Woman - 3 Star

We all know how important it is to keep an eye on our health and one of the oft purposed ways is to have a Well Woman check annually (or a Well Man if you are, you know, well male). This is a fun tale told with a tongue in cheek knowing nod to all ladies about the horrors of that back opening gown and the intrusive poking and prodding. I now find myself wanting my own little prosthesis for a stress ball.

Anti-Dote - 3 Star

Odd little tale of aging and how it creeps up on us as our memory of being young and attractive as only youth can render us is how we eternally see ourselves. Quite heart wrenching actually when she realises that the beige blur in the mirror is not a fault in the glass but a problem with her age and gravity and time's deleterious effects on the human form.

There is a good range of tales here to cater for most tastes but it is the execution that, in my opinion, lets them down. Passed a rather boring Saturday afternoon well enough but I do feel my time could have been

better spent with another author.

Morgen Bailey says

"clever weaving", "stunning endings"

I reviewed this collection for my blog and you can find the review in full at <http://morgenbailey.wordpress.com/201...>

Sam says

This is quite a mixed collection although all of the stories link together in that they are reflective of different moments during the lives of women, dealing with aspects of life that the male identifying side of humanity may not be all that familiar with. Some of the stories are very much snap shots of life moments with no real beginning or end, while others are traditional stories with start and end points, although even these don't always wrap themselves up neatly (let's be honest, life is rarely neat so it works). A couple of the stories really stuck in mind, particularly A Fitting Matter which is all about the trials of getting your first bra when your parents are rather reserved and yet their own pasts turn out to be not so innocent either. I also loved Finding Out, which starts as a folklore/ghost story but quickly turns into something more sinister and disturbing as past attitudes are shown in all the discriminative glory.

Roxy says

Cute short stories.

Loved dipping into these as and when I had the time. Each tale is unique and gripping. Decisions decisions decisions....

Gwen Schwartz says

Different

I really appreciated each different story. A few grammatical errors, but not enough to get in the way. A very fast read.

Awesome Indies Reviewers says

Put the kettle on!

Me-Time Tales is a book of ten short stories described as 'tea breaks for mature women and curious men'.

Each story has a female protagonist with a particular set of circumstances to deal with.

Yet, this book should appeal to a much wider audience, as the ages of the women in the stories vary from teenager to pensioner. We see women at all stages of their life, the unexpected changes that happen in their lives, and how the women deal with them. Their expectations of life, marriage, and family feature in the stories, and Minett skilfully juggles time, covering those years of life within a few pages.

While the opening story 'Underwhelmed', about a woman in her fifties on the lookout for a partner, seemed to be dragged out with slightly flat prose, the next one was both sharper and shorter. 'Blind Date' followed the same theme, but this time we have a teenager looking for a boyfriend. However, in less than a handful of pages, Minett successfully conveys the shallowness and cruelty of our emotions and behaviour regarding appearance and deformity. It was a powerful story, darkly funny, light, but with an underlying pathos.

And that sums up many of the stories in this book. Minett has, for the most part, a flowing readable style, uses humour well in a slightly flippant way, which contrasts and softens the harsher moments in some of her stories, leaving the reader with an overall bittersweet experience. The stories are enjoyable, but often with a message, or an unexpected twist.

Stories range from a just a few pages to around a dozen, and Minett varies the level of intensity of the different stories. Some leave the reader with a smile at the end, others evoke a more reflective feeling. The last story in the book certainly leaves the reader thinking and was a good choice for the final story.

Each story would be ideal for a tea (or coffee) break, a quick read before bed, or a commute to work. The book is also short enough to read in one sitting. 4 stars.

Cherie Mitchell says

A Fun Read

Enjoyable collection of short stories about women, where the author investigates every day things and gives them an interesting spin.

jacqui jeromson says

Ingenious

A collection of very different stories, very satisfying to read, left me wanting more! Very keen to read more of the same.

Karen Perkins says

A wonderful collection of amusing and pertinent short stories, with expertly-crafted characters – you will definitely find (at least one if not many) favourites amongst them. From Marion, a woman who knows what she wants and how to get it, or so she thinks, in Underwhelmed – a delightful take on middle-aged loneliness

and the perils of miscommunication, told with a clever wit that had me laughing out loud.

Then there's Blind Date, a clever poke at today's shallow and image-obsessed society. Or the problems choosing a first bra can evoke in Fitting Matter. One of my favourites, One Too Many, takes a humorous look at society's attitudes towards family and virility – maybe Mum doesn't always know best! In First Feast, a young tragic bereaved and inhibited girl is transformed by a teacher's good intentions.

This is just a sprinkling of the treats in Me-Time Tales, which will have you alternately laughing, crying and sagely nodding your head – J.R. Minett is an extremely talented writer, and I'm eagerly looking forward to reading more of her work.

Fontaine says

This is an amazing collection of stories, taking us into the worlds of various women. There is terrific variety, here, and something for everyone to enjoy. All the pieces are strong and well crafted, but I especially enjoyed 'A Slight Invasion' with the arrival of results from the fertility clinic, on the same day as another event is revealed.

First Feast is a different take on eating disorders and body image. I liked the phrase 'her daughter's pencil box body'.

The women in the stories are strong, unique, recognisable.

The theme of fertility running through these stories gives a very strong impression of babies as a force of nature, especially in the story Eaten Up.

I don't have a favourite in this collection, as they are so individual and take the reader to unexpected places.

I think that these tales will be enjoyed by many (men as well as women) who will recognise themselves, their neighbours, their parents in some of these stories.

Ms Minett holds up an unforgiving mirror to her readers, but the gentle humour in many of the stories, saves this collection from being too harrowing and dark.

I congratulate Ms Minett and thank her for an extraordinarily good read.

Heather says

It was alright. I found the stories to be a bit weird. Not what I was expecting.

Katherine Holmes says

Me-Tales is a delight. I could envision its women characters, some tongue-in-cheek at the surface while underneath, these protagonists retain and sift life's details. The tales presented are balanced with working and

career women, women concerned with fertility and motherhood, women that struggle with men. Most exhibit the ability to adjust, to survive. Each story is written with edge, usually humorous, most with realizations that are arrived at through colorful particulars.

My favorites: The first tale of a business woman forming a relationship in a park with a man and his dog. Then the schoolgirl buying her first bras at Selfridge's, not knowing about her connection to an American relative. A wife that hates the smell of fish confronting her pregnancy and her husband's preferences at the fish market. A woman given everything from an adoring, affluent husband, and how that wears off.

I enjoyed these tales for the piquant writing, the skill in setting and character that heightened and made the tales real. They were stories with believable issues, much enhanced by the lively style and perspective that gave strong reading moments.

Fran Macilvey says

'Me-Time Tales' by Rosalind Minett

This is an interesting collection of short stories written with confident, accessible style.

A writer concerned with observing the human condition (in this case, of mostly mature ladies) would, I think, tread a very careful line between well-observed narrative and coldness; and in this the author succeeds, though for some reason, I find myself warming more to the stories in the second half of this volume.

There are some lovely passages and tender touches which bring into sharp relief the dilemmas of wifedom and motherhood, without offering easy answers. For this I am grateful: careful, watchful writing of this sort makes a welcome change from much of the frothy literature that women are expected to enjoy. This is definitely writing for grown-ups.

All the best with this.

Fran Macilvey, author, 'Trapped: My Life With Cerebral Palsy'
