



Voodoo Heart

Scott Snyder

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Scott Snyder's protagonists inhabit a playfully deranged fictional world in which a Wall Street trader can find himself armed with a speargun, guarding a Dumpster outside a pawnshop in Florida; or an employee at Niagara Falls (his job: watching for jumpers) will take off in a car after a blimp in which his girlfriend has escaped. But in Snyder's wondrous imagination there's a thin membrane between the whimsical and the disturbing: the unlikely affair between a famous actress—in hiding after surgery—and a sporting goods salesman takes an ominous turn just as she begins to heal; an engaged couple's relationship is fractured when one of them becomes obsessed with an inmate at the women's prison next door.

Dark, funny, powerful, this debut collection underscores the remarkable gifts of a fiercely original young writer.

From the Hardcover edition.

Voodoo Heart Details

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From Reader Review Voodoo Heart for online ebook

David M says

I previously read Scott Snyder's recent work for Batman and American Vampire, and I always enjoyed his narration, even though it can be overwhelming at times. Which is why I'm reading his Voodoo Heart book, which he wrote a few years before he started working with DC Comics.

I normally don't write reviews, but I figured I should do it since I'm reading an anthology book, and each story can vary in quality.

Blue Yodel: In 1918, a man goes on a cross country trip, chasing a blimp that supposedly has his fiance. The couple's odd jobs seem to foreshadow their actions in the story: Preston works as a rescuer of sorts at Niagara Falls, Claire is a fake model at a wax museum. I liked the parallels in the hypnotic trances between the people watching the blimp construction and the people watching Niagara falls; both groups do actions they may regret. The ending seemed abrupt (a common criticism I have with Snyder for some of his comic stories), and left ambiguous.

Happy Fish, Plus Coin: A young man, hiding from his rich family, befriends a disabled motivational speaker while staying in a rundown Florida town. The dynamic between the cautious unnamed narrator and the optimistic Gay Isabelle showcases more similarities between the two, including how they tell their life stories.

About Face: A man has to perform community service, working at a delinquent boot camp, and befriends the sergeant's daughter. There is the underlying theme that Fergus wants to be a hero (in his head) but in reality, his nature only causes problems, hence the community service sentence. His almost one-sided relationship with Lex is another example, as he imagines himself as a knight in shining armor to her.

Voodoo Heart: A young couple buys a broken down mansion near a women's minimum security jail. Given how prevalent it is in the story, the major theme is "what lies beneath": the sea monsters from the deep waters, the pristine muscle car in a junkyard, the new homeowner himself. There is a certain darkness everywhere, and one can either let it fester or control it. As the main attraction story, it is certainly the darkest story of the book.

Wreck: A hunter dates a Hollywood starlet as she recovers from an injury. A more bittersweet tale, with Wade hopelessly waiting for the day Grace has to return to California. The story examines how to tell if someone or something is purposely abandoned or lost in the chaos.

Dumpster Tuesday: A corporate employee travels to Florida to find his fiance, who ran off to see a brain damaged country singer. One of the more weaker stories, it was reminiscent to the first story Blue Yodel and the second Happy Fish Plus Coin when it came to the singer.

The Star Attraction of 1919: A stunt pilot travels across the US Heartland with a unwanted passenger. The beginning of story was hilarious, as it contrasts the pilot's desires with reality. Like the other stories, it ends with a not so happy ending.

The central theme of all the stories revolves around relationships with friends and loved ones. Honesty is needed to build solid bonds, otherwise relationships withered slowly but surely. All the stories feature

tangents and flashbacks, like the history of early man and childhood memories, that foreshadows the outcomes of each story. Snyder later uses that technique in his comic book narration. In short, this collection provides odd tales set in America across the past century, in order to present how human nature affects relationships.

Mia says

Not really a review, more an anecdote about this book and my stupidity.

My cousin's husband had long been urging me to read the new Batman comics. At NYCC last year, I went to a Midtown Comics booth to get a Batman issue for Snyder to sign. Voodoo Heart was beside the Batman comics. I read VH about 3 years ago and never connected it to the guy writing the comics.

When I came up to him, I told him I read his book but didn't have it with me because it never occurred to me he was the very same guy. He was very nice, thanked me for reading it and (I imagine) admirably stopped himself from calling me an idiot.

I will have this book in tow with me this year to correct this oversight. Along with some more recently acquired Batman issues.

Scott Foley says

I picked up Voodoo Heart because I admire Snyder's work on American Vampire. I was interested to see Snyder's prose stand alone without a team of artists' aid. For the most part, I found myself quite pleased.

Each and every one of Snyder's stories in this collection is original and very well written. They all utilize well-rounded characters that instantly attach to the psyche and schema. My only complaint, however, is that nearly half of them ended with no real sense of resolution. I don't necessarily mind vague endings, but several of the works – specifically "Blue Yodel," "Happy Fish, Plus Coin," and "About Face" – simply stopped. I got no real sense of finality and I certainly felt no satisfaction, especially because each of those stories in particular was amazingly engaging. I wanted so much more because I cared about those characters' plights in these tales, and I felt cheated without a stronger sense of culmination.

With that being said, as much dissatisfaction as I suffered from the previous stories mentioned, other stories like "Wreck" and "Dumpster Tuesday" left me almost giddy they were so well constructed and resolved. And, for me, "The Star Attraction of 1919" was undoubtedly one of the most entertaining stories I've read in quite some time. These specific three stories truly blew me away they were so good. In fact, I keep thinking about them even though I finished the collection several days ago.

I realize that others' opinions about these stories may vary distinctly from mine. That's the wonderful thing about literature, isn't it? Rest assured, if you read this short story collection, you will experience prose written at its finest and plots that will rivet you.

Emmett Spain says

A very well written collection of 7 short stories, Snyder paints a whimsical, dark, absurd, and occasionally sad picture of men moving through their lives, generally nursing unhealthy obsessions. The prose is crisp and involving, the reveals perfectly paced. Snyder draws you in like a master - it's staggering to find out its a debut (though his quality has been shown with his American Vampire, Swamp Thing, and Batman comics work since). The only letdown to me were the endings of his stories, which seldom brought any sense of conclusion to the tales. Still, a solid read from a unique voice, and well worth your time.

Kevin Yee says

An excellent collection, the stories worked so well with each other. Snyder has a way with creating concrete details while at the same time writing off-the-kilter characters in a wack world. Something always happens to the characters that make them go awry, and it is fascinating with each story here.

Victor Giannini says

Before Scott Snyder exploded onto the comic scene, *Voodoo Heart* gripped me with its surreal stories. Most fell into the realm of magical realism, even if only in feeling, yet all felt like heart break, leaving the reader grasping for a lost love of some sort, a person, an ideal, a place, as their heals give way in the dirt and they spiral down. It's also quite funny, I swear!

If you're a fan of his comic writing, pick this book up right now.

Vincent says

To be honest, "Voodoo Heart" was my least favorite story in Scott Snyder's collection, *Voodoo Heart*.

Voodoo Heart is a very well organized collection of stories from the writer of one of my recent favorite comic books, *American Vampire*. The title story marks (though in my opinion, not well) the climax of a series of stories exploring the notions of "attachment" to places, people, and things in 1930s America. Not to belabor the point, while "Voodoo Heart" might have been a good story presented in isolation but sandwiched between stories like first story in the collection, "Blue Yodel" and the last, "The Star Attraction of 1919", it is a disappointing slice of salty bologna in between two warm, delicious slices of soft bread.

"Blue Yodel" and "The Star Attraction of 1919" make nice bookends to hold up and keep in place the stories in the middle. Where "Blue Yodel" ends with its protagonists dangling from a blimp, searching for his girl, "The Star Attraction of 1919" is about a pilot picking up a lost girl, falling for her, losing her, and ends with him proceeding on his own way.

Panagiotis says

Ο Σν?ιντερ ε?ναι ?νας απ? τους πιο γνωστο?ς, ν?ους συγγραφε?ς Αμερικ?νικων κ?μικς. Τον γν?ρισα μ?σα απ? τον καινο?ριο μπ?τμαν του, μετ? την επανεκκ?νηση που ?κανε η DC στο σ?μπαν της, καθ?ς και το δικ? του δημιο?ργημα, Wytches. Η γραφ? και η προσ?γγισ? του σε αυτ? τα κ?μικς ?δειχναν ?ναν ?νθρωπο ?ξυπνο, με φαντασ?α και μια δι?θεση να δ?σει στα πολ?χρωμα καρ? κ?τι διαφορετικ?, κ?τι πιο εκλεπτυσμ?νο. ?μως η φ?ρμα των κ?μικς ε?ναι συγκεκριμ?νη, ακολουθε? τις δικ?ς της συμβ?σεις και ?,τι κι αν ?ταν αυτ? που ?χει πραγματικ? μ?σα του ο Σν?ιντερ μ?νο αχνοφαιν?ταν στα καρ? των σελ?δων. Δεν ?μουν προετοιμασμ?νος για ?να απ? τα καλ?τερα βιβλ?α που ?χω διαβ?σει φ?τος.

Αν κ?τι υποσχ?ταν την ?κπληξη που θα αποτελο?σε το βιβλ?ο ?ταν τα εξαιρετικ? σχ?λια απ? το ετερ?κλητο πλ?θος αναγνωστ?v: ?λλοι γν?ριζαν τον συγγραφ?α και π?ραν το βιβλ?ο απ? αναγνωστικ? συν?πεια και περι?ργεια, ?λλοι που δεν ε?χαν ιδ?α ποιος ε?ναι ο Σν?ιντερ το δ?χτηκαν σαν δ?ρο ? το δι?βασαν μετ? απ? σ?σταση. Αν δει κανε?ς τις κριτικ?ς του βιβλ?ου, θα καταλ?βει τι εννο??. Π?ντως το βιβλ?ο φα?νεται πως δεν προωθ?θηκε ο?τε καν παρουσι?στηκε μ?σα απ? τα καν?λια που σπρ?χνουν τις εκ?στοτε κυκλοφορ?ες. ?τσι, μ?νο του, εμφαν?στηκε μεσοπ?λαγχα.

Μα τι γρ?φει ο Σν?ιντερ εδ?:

Ας κ?νω ξεκ?θαρο πρ?τα πως κ?νω το εξ?ς, το οπο?ο θεωρ? πως κ?νει η πληθ?ρα αναγνωστ?v: τοποθετ? πριν και κατ? την δι?ρκεια της αν?γνωσης σε τρεις νοερ?ς κατηγορ?ες το βιβλ?ο: στα καθαρ? λογοτεχνικ? που π?φτεις π?νω τους στον ?γκριτο λογοτεχνικ? τ?πο, στα genre (φαντασ?α, τρ?μος, αστυνομικο κλπ) και στα καθαρ? εμπορικ?, που σπ?νια διαβ?ζω. Εννοε?ται εν?οτε π?φτω σε κ?τι που δεν εντ?σσεται κ?που ε?κολα και συν?θως τ?τοια βιβλ?α αποδεικν?ονται τα καλ?τερα. Ο Σν?ιντερ το μ?νο που ?χει να του προσδ?δει μια ταυτ?τητα ε?ναι η ενασχ?λησ? του με τα κ?μικς, πρ?γμα που δεν ε?μαι σ?γουρος σε τι βαθμ? προδ?δεται μ?σα απ? τις ιστορ?ες του. Κι ?μως μ?σα απ? τις ιστορ?ες εν?ς αφελο?ς νεαρο? που ακολουθε? για μ?νες το αερ?στατο στο οπο?ο νομ?ζει πως βρ?σκεται η αρραβωνιαστικ? του, του τριαντ?ρη που καταστρ?φηκε η Μητροπολ?τικ? ζω? του εξαιτ?ας εν?ς μουσικο? της κ?ντρι κι ?λλα τ?τοια ωρα?α, ο Σνα?ντερ φτι?χνει μια πραγματικ?τητα σαν παραμ?θι. Η γλ?σσα του ε?ναι απαλ?, επιδ?ξια και αναπ?ντεχα χιουμοριστικ? δ?χως ?χνος επιτ?δευσης. Προσεγγ?ζει τους ανθρ?πινους χαρακτ?ρες του και τις ?κρως καθημεριν?ς ιστορ?ες του απ? εκε? που πρ?ρχονται εκε?νοι οι λ?γοι χαρισματικο? ?νθρωποι. Δεν βλ?πει την ζω? μ?σα απ? τα βιβλ?α, ο?τε ?μως μ?σα απ? το θολωμ?νο πρ?σμα της ρουτ?νας, αλλ? ?τσι ?πως ε?ναι: μια ?μορφη περιπ?τεια.

Σ?γουρα ε?ναι η καλ?τερη συλλογ? διηγημ?των που δι?βασα φ?τος και ?να απ? τα καλ?τερα βιβλ?α που ?χω διαβ?σει εδ? και π?ρα πολ? καιρ??. Ο Σν?ιντερ ε?ναι ?να τερ?στιο ταλ?ντο. Πρ?πει να βρε? χρ?νο αν?μεσα στο κ?μικς να γρ?ψει κ?τι π?λι. Η λογοτεχν?α χρει?ζεται τ?τοιες ιστορ?ες, ωρα?α καμωμ?νες χωρ?ς πολλ? φτιασ?δια!

Chris says

I've been a fan of Snyder's graphic novel writing for years. He always has solid plots, interesting characters, and entertaining tales--even if some of them might be a bit too quickly paced. Still, I was curious about this

fiction writing.

Honestly, I'm surprised to say that his fiction is as good--if not better--than his graphic novels. He can turn a phrase better than most, and every story has at least one moment that I was completely jealous of its setup and delivery.

Many short story collections have a few duds, but I didn't find that here. True, each story didn't resonate in the same way as the others, which may bother some readers, but there is an odd cohesion of longing here that's explored in both human and almost fantastic ways.

These are beautiful and heartbreaking and hilarious stories, and much as I've dug his graphic writing, I do hope he finds time to squeeze out a few more short works or a traditional novel, as I'll be first in line for more.

Rachel Cassandra says

the pages of this particular book (i'm not sure if it's true of all the copies) were especially smooth and soft, as if the paper had been polished.

the stories were engaging, quirky, and i loved them. My favorite was "Happy fish, plus coin", but almost all the stories have moments and aspects I will remember for a long time. I was also intrigued in the fact that the stories sometimes had small connections between them- mentions of the same song or similar situations. The imagery was offbeat and interesting- the sagging balloon of a healing throat that filled up and drained, or a vine growing instantly, it's leaves thwapping open. The story I was least interested in was the first one, "Blue Yodel," perhaps because of the distanced tone, so I was pleased when the other stories were vastly different. all my stars.

Ursula Villarreal-Moura says

Voodoo Heart was both instructive and entertaining. Scientifically speaking, I learned about the maladapted Paranthropus, the anatomy of synthetic plants, and various other nuggets of information. The strongest stories of the collection were the last four: Voodoo Heart, Wreck, Dumpster Tuesday and The Star Attraction 1919. The characters in these four stories were compelling, and so authentic I nearly believed they existed outside of Snyder's imagination. As a writer, I often can spot contrived stories or stories in which scenes or dialogue feel too sculpted, forced. Although the first three stories in this collection often veered in that direction, the last four felt like living, unpredictable organisms. In the first stories, Snyder's gorgeous language is so blinding that it detracts from the characters and their conflicts. The excessive use of simile and metaphors kept me on the surface of the story with the typed words as opposed to in the world of the characters. Throughout the collection the themes of hiding, running away, and changing into your own enemy emerge. Clearly Snyder is a talented writer and I eagerly anticipate his future prose.

Sean says

The current writer of DC Comics' Batman and Swamp Thing, Scott Snyder first wrote this taut collection of historical fiction short stories in '06. More literary than fantastic, most of the themes tackle 20-something

romance at its most vulnerable. No dialogue or plot element is wasted here - everything congeals into an astounding whole by narrative's end. Pretty damn great.

Melissa says

Please don't read this if you have a relationship with a significant other that is the slightest bit in question. My marriage is on pretty stable ground right now & this still depressed the heck out of me. While all the stories are lovely & extremely well-written, they're also all about relationships going horribly wrong & people being sad or making others sad. I didn't find a lot of the fancy here that most reviews allude to, but that doesn't make this a bad book, just a bummer. Have you ever had a dream where your boyfriend was a total jerk to you for no reason? There's a story in here like that. Did you ever have a dream that your girlfriend floated away on a blimp? Left you for a brain-damaged country singer? No? Well, these are in there too. If you've got a guy or a girl, go give them a hug when you're done.

Kurt Dinan says

Am reading this book of short stories now after reading a review of it by Stephen King.

Chris_P says

Recommended by Panagiotis

Blue yodel: ***

Happy fish, plus coin: ***

About face: ***

Voodoo heart: ****

Wreck: *****

Dumpster Tuesday: ***

The star attraction of 1919: ***

3.5

This collection of stories is Snyder's first effort in pure literature and it's certainly a successful one. Seven stories, all brimming with an abstract form of romantic loss and sadness. Snyder seems to be willing to explore the inner layers of human psyche when applied to romance and relationships. Of course not all of the stories are about that. There is *Happy fish, plus coin* for example, which is about a guy who runs away from his loaded family and meets a man who had two almost fatal accidents in his past and which concludes with an interesting and fun twist.

If I had to say in a few words what my impression was on the stories, I'd say they're good but I don't think they'll stick with me in the future. That goes for all except *Voodoo Heart* and *Wreck*, the former of which I found brilliant and the latter by all means perfect. In any case, Snyder's ability to create good stories is more than apparent and I'll be looking forward to more.

