



Short Cuts: Selected Stories

Raymond Carver , Robert Altman (Introduction by)

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The nine stories and one poem collected in this volume formed the basis for the astonishingly original film “Short Cuts” directed by Robert Altman. Collected altogether in this volume, these stories form a searing and indelible portrait of American innocence and loss. From the collections *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*, *Where I’m Calling From*, *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love*, and *A New Path to the Waterfall*; including an introduction by Robert Altman. With deadpan humor and enormous tenderness, this is the work of “one of the true contemporary masters” (*The New York Review of Books*).

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Short Cuts: Selected Stories Details

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If I could give this book ten stars, I would. I LOVE Ray Carver's book(s) so freaking much. I remember reading stories from this collection before I really decided to become an author, and his scope of storytelling made me write in my journal, even as an undergrad: I wish I wrote that sentence. About 100 times! I can't even remember how many times I have read just this one book of his, let alone other Carver books, also.

Ava says

???

????? 96

Kendare Blake says

Carver can take the everyday and charge it with the profound. He's got the knack for taking normal life and tearing it up into ragged pieces. There is drama and nuance, and MENACE. And he does it all in this fantastic minimalist voice. If you like him, check out Andre Dubus.

George K. says

Ο Ρίμοντ Κέρβερ, γνάς απ' τους μαιτρ του "βρ?μικου ρεαλισμο?" αλλ? και της μικρ?ς φ?ρμας, γράψε δεκ?δες διηγ?ματα που μπορε? να βρει κανε?ς σε δι?φορες συλλογ?ς. Τα περισσ?τερα απ' αυτ? ?χουν μεταφραστε? και στα ελληνικ? (απ' τις εκδ?σεις Μετα?χμιο κυκλοφορε? πλ?ον ?νας συγκεντρωτικ?ς τ?μος με πολλ? διηγ?ματα). Το συγκεκριμ?νο βιβλ?ο περι?χει ενν?α διηγ?ματα και ?να (κ?τι σαν) πο?ημα, π?νω στα οπο?α βασ?στηκε και η πασ?γνωστη ομ?τιτλη ταιν?α του 1993, σε σκηνοθεσ?α Ρ?μπερτ ?λτμαν.

Ε?ναι η πρ?τη μου επαφ? με το ?ργο και την γραφ? του Ρίμοντ Κέρβερ και μπορ? να πω ?τι ?μεινα απ?λυστα ικανοποιημ?νος. Δεν ?μουν και εκατ? τοις εκατ? σ?γουρος ?τι θα μου ?ρεσε το ?φος της γραφ?ς του ? το περιεχ?μενο των ιστορι?ν του, αλλ? αφο? δι?βασα τις πρ?τες ιστορ?ες της παρο?σας συλλογ?ς, κατ?λαβα ?τι θα μου ?ρεσε σαν συγγραφ?ας. Γενικ? μου αρ?σουν τ?τοιου ε?δους ιστορ?ες, που αναδεικν?ουν δι?φορα κοινωνικ? προβλ?ματα και δεν ωραιοποιο?ν καταστ?σεις. Η γραφ? του Κέρβερ, με την λακωνικ?τητα και την λιτ?τητα στις περιγραφ?ς και τους φυσικο?ς διαλ?γους, ?ταν ?τι ?πρεπε για το συγκεκριμ?νο ε?δος. ?σο, ?λλωστε, και η ?λη μελαγχολικ? ατμ?σφαιρα.

Οπωςδ?ποτε δεν ε?ναι για ?λα τα γο?στα: Ουσιαστικ? οι ιστορ?ες αυτ?ς δεν ?χουν κ?ποια πλοκ?, απλ?ς μας παρουσι?ζονται κ?ποιοι χαρακτ?ρες και βλ?πουμε στιγμ?ς απ' τα καθημεριν? τους προβλ?ματα. Ε, δεν αρ?σει σε ?λους αυτ? το πρ?γμα, ?πως και να το κ?νουμε. Π?ντως εγ? θ?λω να διαβ?ζω τ?τοιου ε?δους ιστορ?ες, αρκε? να μου κρατ?νε το ελ?χιστο ενδιαφ?ρον απ' την αρχ? μ?χρι το τ?λος. Και αυτ? συν?βη με ?λες τις ιστορ?ες της συλλογ?ς. Οπ?τε, το μ?νο σ?γουρο ε?ναι ?τι θα αγορ?σω τον συγκεντρωτικ? τ?μο των εκδ?σεων Μετα?χμιο και, φυσικ?, ?τι θα δω την ομ?τιτλη ταιν?α του Ρ?μπερτ ?λτμαν.

Betsy Robinson says

I'd never read Carver before and probably won't read more even though I admired and liked his pithy "just-telling-what-happened" style. Most of these stories are slices of life: drinking men's dark nights of the soul, the unhappy women in their lives (even if the narrator is a woman), male violence, and the ultimate futility of existence. But then there was one story called "A Small Good Thing" about the death of a child, and it knocked the wind out of me. It was dark as well, but a lot more—worth reading the book.

Rafa says

Me estoy aficionando a este estilo amargo.

Andrew says

At my birthday party, I mentioned to someone that I had recently read these stories, and two other people, seperate from each other and from me, started raving about how good Carver is. It's true.

All I want to do after reading this guy's stories is drink and beat my wife. Except beautifully.

Sample quote, from "Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?":

"For their honeymoon they drove to Guadalajara, and while they both enjoyed visiting the decayed churches and the poorly lighted museums and the afternoons they spent shopping and exploring in the marketplace, Ralph was secretly appalled by the squalor and open lust he saw and he was anxious to return to the safety of California. But the one vision he would always remember and which disturbed him most of all had nothing to do with Mexico. It was late afternoon, almost evening, and Marian was leaning motionless on her arms over the ironwork balustrade of their rented casita as Ralph came up the dusty road below. Her hair was long and hung down in front over her shoulders, and she was looking away from him, staring at something in the distance. She wore a white blouse with a red scarf at her throat, and he could see her breasts pushing against the white cloth. He had a bottle of dark, unlabeled wine under his arm, and the whole incident put Ralph in mind of something from a film, an intensely dramatic moment into which Marian could be fitted but he could not."

Pixie Dust says

Finally got round to reading some Raymond Carver. I didn't realise initially that this compilation was taken from various collections, selected by a filmmaker who made a movie out of these stories woven loosely together. I would have preferred to read a collection of stories as originally intended by the author himself, so that I can try to make sense of the connections between the stories myself, rather than through the intermediary of a movie director. Oh well.

Anyway, I did enjoy these stories of ordinary people at the edge of some personal, internal hysteria. The characters are often emotionally isolated from their partners, and the small incidents explored by Carver in each story reveal as much about the characters' relationships with their spouses as of the characters themselves. There is seldom true communion of spirit between Carver's couples, and many stories explore how the characters try to find their equilibrium within the structure of marriage. Although not all the stories end badly for the characters, there seems to be a pessimism in the way Carver views marriage, and the resolutions at the end of the stories are often of some form of compromise rather than true reconciliation.

Amy says

It's interesting to read what a filmmaker chose from Carver's stories. These are the most dramatic Carver stories I know, full of death, adultery, bar fights, rape, murder, abandoned dogs.... Nobody, say, sits around a table getting drunk for a really long time and talking about love. But they're great. And it's been long enough since I've seen the movie that I didn't recall who played which character, or get frustrated with liberties that were taken. A hint, perhaps, of Lyle Lovett in the baker who keeps calling the bereaved parents of the birthday boy, but I won't complain about that.

Margaret Madden says

One horrific character after another. The darkness within these men is written with mind-blowing simplicity.

The American Dream gone bad. Love this collection!

Lindsay says

This has been sitting on my DVD shelf for a few years now as the Criterion companion to the movie. While I really enjoy the movie, I think I ended up buying it just because there was a book included in the packaging. And thank goodness...Carver might have continued to go undetected by me as--for the most part--all I've ever heard him discussed is a one sentence nod of approval in passing. Not that I could have predicted it, but I'm glad I've waited to read his work because I might not have appreciated it as much had I read it before this particular moment of my life...whatever that is.

So this is a collection of his stories (plus one poem) that Robert Altman used in his film, which added a whole other level to my reading that I enjoyed. I usually like to read the book before I see the movie, but in this case I'm glad it went the other way around. It was fascinating to find what elements Altman used and their point of departure, and really I can't say that I enjoyed one more than the other in its own right.

However, Carver's style really shines through...I love the open ends he leaves in his stories. In other authors' writing, this technique often seems to me like a cop out, a lazy solution for a plot they never quite thought out, but with Carver I feel a sense of certainty planted within what might seem ambiguous. Like this is where we close our eyes to go to sleep for the day, and even though the future likely will sling us every which way, at least we know tomorrow will come, even if maybe not for us...that much we may rely on.

I give this four stars because this is Altman's selection of Carver. Now I want to read Carver's selection of Carver, the way he intended. I am enamored. I have been wooed. I am prepared to blissfully writhe in his stories like a pup when he finds that funky patch of grass in the park. Yeah.

Maria Thomarey says

3,5,

Roger says

The big duh: Raymond Carver is one of the masters of the contemporary short story. The really great thing about Carver is that his stories are so *easy* -- you can blaze through them like a pop novel without missing a beat, and yet come out on the other end knowing you've read something tremendous. They are SIMPLE, but far from SIMPLISTIC.

This collection is actually a movie-to-book edition. In the 90s, Robert Altman (director of *M*A*S*H* and *Nashville*) created a film that put together 9 of Carver's short stories and one of his poems. He altered the characters slightly so that the stories would weave through one another smoothly. I've been wanting to see this movie for the longest time, but wanted to make sure I had read all of the correct stories first. But I didn't know which stories were in it, and didn't feel like picking through Carver's 6 or so collections to find the right ones. Luckily I found this little guy at the Gordon Street Library book sale. It puts the stories all in order. Perfect! Now time to see the movie!

Diletta says

Bello bello bello. Tra i miei preferiti "Vuoi star zitta, per favore?" e "Con tanta di quell'acqua a due passi da casa". Un uso delle sensazioni e delle persone incredibile.

Merilee says

I think I had probably read most of the stories before in other collections and also seen the Altman movie based on the stories. Carver's a brilliant writer, though very dark.

Brad says

My introduction to Carver; a Greatest Hits album of sorts. Going in I expected something similar to Bukowski - drunks and affairs and domestic violence. It certainly contained all of those things, but it had something Bukowski lacks - a humanity. A tenderness and an eye for life's little moments that can mean more than is expressible in words. Grieving parents sitting in a bakery eating cinnabuns or a woman attending a funeral of a girl she's never met.

That's not to say Carver is in anyway sappy or sweet. These stories are harsh and unforgiving, but they have a deep understanding of human nature. People can be cruel, selfish, and violent - but they can just as easily realize their mistakes and plead forgiveness. They can be seemingly moral at one moment and vicious killers and abusers at the next. We are sad, strange creatures.

Thais says

Avevo già letto "Cattedrale", e in quest'altra raccolta di racconti (scelti da Robert Altman, che vi si è ispirato per il film America Oggi) ho ritrovato il Carver che ricordavo. Pennellate di crudeltà, di quotidianità, di vite di estranei così umani e verosimili che potrebbero essere i nostri vicini di casa, o noi stessi.

In realtà lo stile asciutto di Carver e soprattutto i finali tronchi, taglienti e amari che lo caratterizzano sono in gran parte dovuti alla mano pesante del suo editor. Ma ciò non toglie che l'umanità descritta da Carver sia desolatamente realistica, proprio perché si tratta di personaggi umili e "normali", i cui pensieri sono perfettamente condivisibili.

Come in "Cattedrale", la vera forza di questi racconti sta nel non detto, nella fine mozzata dei racconti che lasciano al lettore il compito di riflettere su ciò di cui è appena stato testimone.
