FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

General

The World's Shortest Stories of Love and Death
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Hard to believe at first, but it is possible to write a complete story—with plot, setting, and character—in exactly fifty-five words or less. Called “ss shorts,” these stories, narrated clearly and with a style and tone to match each story’s mood, prove Moss’ words of introduction that “compressing big ideas into small wonders” can be very effective.

To keep listeners focused the stories are categorized into seven sections, all of which deal with love and/or death: “Falling in Love,” “Living in Love,” “Death of Love,” “Love of Death,” “Death of Life,” “Life After Death,” and “Stories We Loved,” and “Were Dying to Include.” Intertwined in each section, certain topics can be identified. The easiest to spot are the humorous spoofs on real life and fictional situations—including the Clinton/Lewinsky affair, Dr. Kevorkian, the Donner Party, O. Henry’s The Gift, Superman’s x-ray vision and Mother Goose rhymes. Also quickly identified are those heartrending stories on the painful truths uncovered about compromised love and friendship as seen in “Airing Dirty Laundry,” “At the Hospital,” “Time and Money” and “Friendship,” or about injustices never corrected, reflected in “The Truth At Last” and “Hear No Evil,” wherein the criminal justice system has failed. There are also general topics dealing with suicide, murder, and, of course, sex.

Listeners should be aware that though these stories meet all of the requirements of a “55 Short” as they are called, they are not all of equal caliber. Some listeners will truly enjoy the stories that ride the raw edge between bawdiness and pornography or those stories which center around homosexuality while other listeners may take offense. Other readers may find the interpretations of Adam and Eve sacrilegious and yet others may find stories such as “Torture Session” and “Red Beans and Rice” too graphic and horrifyingly real to want to hear them.

There are, however, 136 different stories to listen to—enough to have at least some appeal to even the most finicky listener. The one saving grace is that all of the stories are extremely short, allowing the listener to fast forward through offending stories and continue on with something more suitable to his own taste.

In conclusion, the editors also include the rules to write a “55 Short” and even tell where to send a story if anyone feels challenged to write one after listening to this diverse and potentially controversial collection.

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