

The Shell Collector: Stories

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A debut collection of evocative short fiction explores the complex mysteries of the human condition--grief, transformation, fractured relationships, and mending hearts--in a volume that includes the title story, "The Hunter's Wife," and "For a Long Time This Was Griselda's Story," about two Idaho sisters struggling to come to terms with their diverse paths in life. 12,500 first printing.

The whorls, chambers, and ribs of the seashell are an elegance unto themselves, but if man-made beauty can come anywhere close to this, Anthony Doerr's short stories would be perfect candidates. His debut collection, *The Shell Collector*, sets such high standards, sentence to sentence, that it is more like the private architecture of shells than like the random borrowings, sexual details, and flashes of insight that make up the bulk of contemporary fiction. The title story is about a blind man of 58, a scholar of shells (malacology), who retires to an isolated beach-side hut in Kenya, but then accidentally discovers a cure for a major illness in the often-deadly stings of the cone snail. "The Hunter's Wife," a second small masterpiece, describes the marriage of a Montana hunter and his much younger, psychically gifted wife. There are more conventional pieces here; well-written, resonating stories that do not attempt the sweep or descriptive wealth of "The Shell Collector," although they are still at the level of the best realistic fiction that is being published now in America. --Regina MarlerOriginally from Cleveland, Ohio, Anthony Doerr has lived in Africa and New Zealand. His stories have appeared in numerous publications, including *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Paris Review*, *The North American Review*, and *The Black Warrior Review*. He is twenty-eight years old and lives in Boise, Idaho.

Other Books

Wilderness Tales. A dazzling collection of short stories about North American outdoor life--both classic and contemporary--from James Fenimore Cooper and Jack London to Margaret Atwood and Anthony Doerr and many more. The North American landscape, in its rich and rugged variety, has inspired an equally wide and deep range of fiction over the past centuries. Diana Fuss has gathered a rich collection of timeless classics and contemporary discoveries summoning up our close and imagined encounters with all things wild. From the nineteenth century's Washington Irving ("Rip Van Winkle") to the twenty-first century's Ted Chiang ("The Great Silence")--a panoramic view of wilderness fiction, from Gothic tales of mystery and suspense ("The Heroic Slave" by Frederick Douglass), to tales of danger and survival ("Walking Out" by David Quammen); from modern tales of retreat and solitude ("Happiness" by Ron Carlson), to never-before-told tales of our new reality--of environment and extinction ("the river" by adrienne maree brown): these are stories that reveal the many ways in which the American literary landscape has shaped--and is shaped by--our conceptions of the wild. Diana Fuss nimbly shows, in her introductory text and commentary throughout, the development of the wilderness story, from its emergence in the work of Nathaniel Hawthorne ("Young Goodman Brown") and James Fenimore Cooper ("A Panther Tale"), to the height of its popularity in the stories of Jack London ("To Build a Fire"), to the environmentally conscious writing of T. C. Boyle ("After the Plague") and Karen Russell ("St. Lucy's Home for Girls Raised by Wolves"). Among those whose work appears in the collection: Wallace Stegner, Annie Proulx, Ambrose Bierce, Ernest Hemingway, William Faulkner, L. Frank Baum, Margaret Atwood, Tommy Orange, Walter Van Tilburg Clark, and Ray Bradbury.

His individual essays and stories to date have won five O. Henry Prizes and four Pushcart Prizes; his first short-story collection, *The Shell Collector* (2002), received the

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