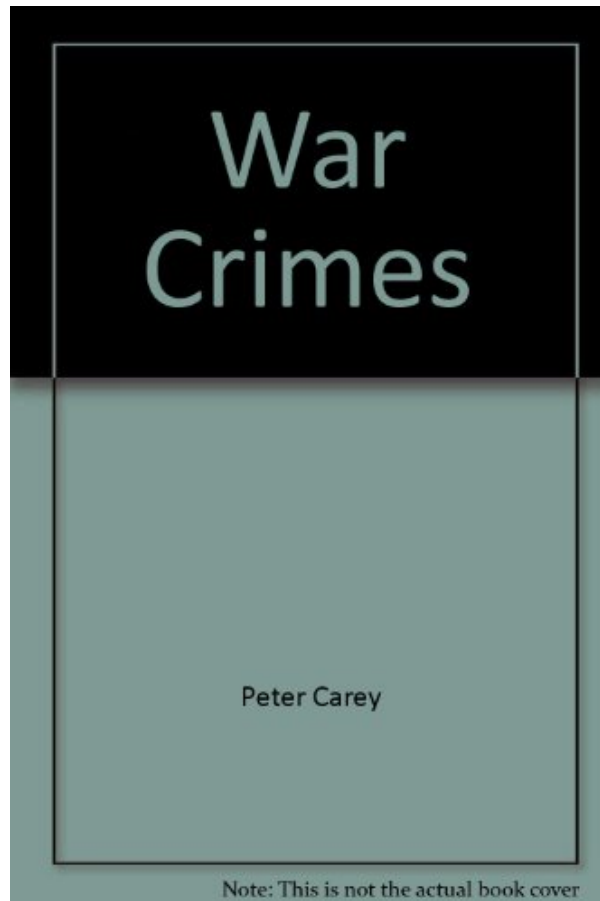


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War Crimes

Peter Carey

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Most helpful customer reviews

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Dark, confronting and very Carey

By A Customer

Before he won the booker prize for Oscar and Lucinda Peter Carey was writing short stories for journals and the like. Carey enjoyed success from his first short story collection, The Fat man in history, and then came out with the darker more broody War crimes. Highlights include "A Schoolboy Prank", a macarbe tale of revenge by a group of professionals on their old school teacher and "Kristu-Du" a story of the delusion of an architect (somewhat loosely taken from the story of Nazi architect Albert Speer). Macarbe, inventive and always a little funny Carey provides a collection worth reading over and over again

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Short stories by Peter Carey

By Joe Pierre

"War Crimes" collects but a few great stories by Peter Carey. After reading a few of these stories, you won't be satisfied knowing there are more out there -- therefore the preferred and complete collection to find is "Collected Stories." Check out my review of Carey's "Collected Stories" here which includes all of the stories found in "War Crimes."

"Collected Stories" by Peter Carey.

Here are the complete (26) short stories of Peter Carey in a single volume, including those collected in the books "The Fat Man in History" (Crabs, Peeling, Life & Death in the South Side Pavilion, Room No. 5 (Escribo), Happy Story, A Windmill in the West, Withdrawal, Report on the Shadow Industry, Conversations with Unicorns, American Dreams, and The Fat Man in History), "War Crimes" (The Journey of a Lifetime, Do You Love Me?, The Uses of Williamson Wood, The Last days of a Famous Mime, A Schoolboy Prank, The Chance, Fragrance of Roses, The Puzzling Nature of Blue, Kristu Du, He Found Her in Late Summer, Exotic Pleasures, and War Crimes), along with 3 previously unpublished works (Joe, Concerning the Greek Tyrant, and A Million Dollars Worth of Amphetamines).

Peter Carey has risen to fame as a novelist, having gained notoriety from such works as Oscar and Lucinda (which garnered him the Booker Prize), Jack Maggs, The True History of the Kelly Gang, and My Life as a Fake. However, like most writers, his debut publications were short story collections and "Collected Stories" finds his mini-masterpieces all in one place. I started reading Carey during a brief residence in Melbourne (I'm a short story fan and was looking for an Australian writer to compliment my travels -- I think it was a travel guide that pointed me to Peter Carey). I bought "The Fat Man in History," but after being blown away

by the first few stories, I returned it for the complete "Collected Stories" and never looked back.

Many of the stories have a surrealistic plot, such as "Do You Love Me?" in which the work of cartographers plays a role in the dematerialization of places and people, "Life and Death in the South Side Pavilion" in which a man attempts to shepherd a group of horses that keep dying by falling into a pool of water, "Peeling" in which a man's lover unravels into nothingness, or "Exotic Pleasures" in which captivatingly beautiful birds murderously overwhelm the world. Others center on human relationships, such as "Room No. 5 (Escribo)" in which a couple traveling in a foreign land fall in love in the midst of a military coup, "Happy Story" in which a man balances his love for his girlfriend with his passion for flying, "The Uses of Williamson Wood" in which a woman confronts her abuser, and "He Found Her in Late Summer" in which a man sacrifices himself for his lover. The stories are difficult to describe further because they're not really "like" many other authors I can think of. The language and character interaction are spare but powerful (reminiscent of Joe Frank -- see joe frank.com), the stories are brief, often divided into terse sections/chapters and focusing on the bizarre or fantastic (like Vonnegut), and there is a recurring theme of futility in impossible situations and suggesting a larger metaphorical meaning (evoking Kafka). Each tale leaves a strong emotional impression -- I found myself eager to read the next, but not wanting to finish too soon and exhaust the supply either.

Although "Collected Stories" is the complete collection of Carey's short works, it isn't as available (in the U.S.) as is "The Fat Man in History." But trust me, after reading a few of these stories, you won't be satisfied knowing there are more out there.

After reading this short story collection, I tried a few of Carey's novels. None ever matched the power of these short works. There have only been a few other authors whose stories made such a mark. I also happened to read "Letter to Our Son" by Carey while browsing in a bookstore -- a very short tribute to his son's birth, but also great little story that sticks in my memory.

See all 2 customer reviews...

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