



The Best Short Stories

Guy de Maupassant

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This collection reflects Maupassant's remarkable diversity, with stories that vary in theme and tone, and range from tragedy and satire to comedy and farce. *Boule de Suife*, his most famous tale exposes the brutality and hypocrisy of war. His stories are linked by irony and the frailty of human nature.

17 stories:

Boule de Suif
Two Friends
Mme. Tellier's Establishment
Mlle. Fifi
Clair de Lune
Miss Harriet
The Necklace
Mlle. Pearl
The Piece of String
Mme. Husson's "Rosier"
That Pig of a Morin
Useless Beauty
The Olive Orchard
A Sale
Love
Two Little Soldiers
Happiness

The Best Short Stories Details

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loïc says

I have to admit; it took some time and a couple of stories to draw me in, but once I was 'enthralled' my love for Maupassant's writing only grew.

They way he portraits his characters and observes life and human nature, so "simple" but full of life and spot on... brilliant! good for a lot of smiles and pondering moments.

Actually stumbled on this book by accident in a second hand book shop, and it turned out to be the seed for a strong desire to delve into the classics in literature =>

cindy says

Kalau di kumcer O. Henry yg kubaca sebelumnya ada *The Gift of Magi*, maka di antologi ini ada *Diamond Neckless* yang sudah jadi favku sepanjang masa. Tapi setelah kubaca buku ini, semuanya, 8 cerpen dan 1 novela, masuk dalam seleraku. Tema kisahnya, karakterisasinya, juga twist di akhir cerita. Sedikit depresif dan pahit, tapi realis.

Selain cerpen Kalung Berlian tersebut, 2 cerita lainnya menarik perhatianku. Yang satu adalah *My Wife*, berkisah dengan jenaka tentang bagaimana Pierre Letoile muda mendapatkan istri istimewanya, yang lain adalah novela yang melambungkan nama de Maupassant di sastra dunia, *Boule de Suif*. Cerita ini pahit, penuh hipokrisme, dan memotret dengan sangat pas kemunafikan manusia. Endingnya... wah endingnya. Bahkan kaum agamis yang disimbolkan dengan 2 orang biarawati terlihat sangat sok suci dan sejatinya tak peduli.

Untuk edisi terbitan Serambi ini, yup judul2 cerpennya bbrp masih diterjemahkan secara sinetronis sekalee, plus cover yang berasa zadul. Ya gitu d. Tapi isi terjemahannya bagus kok.

Val says

Guy de Maupassant was very good at writing short stories. My O/A level French teacher loved them and so I read several in French. I loved them too.

This collection contains some of de Maupassant's best known short stories, in the original French and in translation. The translator's have tried to strike a balance between the flavour of the original and a direct translation of the actual words. They have generally succeeded and this is a good introduction to one of France's funniest, most observant and insightful authors.

Urenna Sander says

Best Short Stories is a dual-language book authored by Guy de Maupassant. Many of his stories were set in his homeland, Normandy, and, published between 1880 and 1887. Maupassant wrote with powerful verve and imagination. In reading the stories it is not unusual that he is known as 'the father of the modern short story.' Maupassant had an affinity for writing about strong women, especially filles de joie. He expressed some of his characters with comedic effect, especially male customers affected by the temporary closing in the Tellier Establishment, when Madame and her girls went to her niece's Holy Communion. The frenzied church scene is incredibly descriptive and humorous.

I read Boule de Suif—Ball of Fat several years ago. In re-reading, it's still an engaging story. The story took place during the Franco-Prussian War. It concerns a modest, kind-hearted, woman, thought as of easy virtue, who cheerfully shared her delectable foods during a stagecoach ride with nuns and three couples, considered blue bloods. The traveler's plans would be interrupted at an inn by a Prussian officer, who desired Boule de Suif. A French patriot, Boule de Suif refused to demean herself with the German officer's advances. Wanting to resume their travels, the elitist couples secretly called her every offensive name under the sun, and urged her to consider the Officer's demands.

Short story, Mademoiselle Fifi, shows the resilience, courage, and patriotism of Rachel. Prussian officers requested entertainment by courtesans that lived nearby. Rachel was paired with the violent, brutal officer, Second Lieutenant, Marquis von Eyrik, nicknamed Mademoiselle Fifi. His violence would prove his undoing. Rachel was not one to 'bend and squat' to any man.

The Necklace concerns a wife dissatisfied with she and her husband's meager existence. When invited to a ball, her husband buys her a gown and, she borrows a wealthy friend's necklace, which she loses. The price and irony the couple pay to recover the necklace is notable.

Miss Harriet is the story told by Artist, Leon Chenal to friends of the unfortunate love of his life, an Englishwoman he met in his youth in the French countryside. Miss Harriet is revealed as nomadic, secretive, unhappy, and in total despair. At the end, I loved how Chenal displayed love and respect for Miss Harriet.

Horla revealed, I think, the prescient intuition touching on Maupassant's fate. I thought the story very depressing. He died at the young age of 43 in 1893.

The introduction states the stories were a patchwork of Maupassant's daily life. There are other short stories in the collection. I read them all, but commented on six.

Jennifer says

I finally finished this dual-language collection of short stories from late 19th C France. It started off very slowly, reading a sentence, or even a word, in French, then checking the opposite page for the translation. But, by the last story or two, I could practically read entire pages without translation. If anyone wants to brush up on French, read this out loud too, so you can develop a kind of "aural reference" for various words.

The stories themselves are great - all largely variations on themes of morality, social status and a person's

large capacity for hypocrisy. At the end of each story, he really guts you with a cruel twist that may seem a little gimmicky today, but still makes an impact.

Rachel says

Great stories so far...somewhat dark, but nice use of irony, and the dual-language aspect is great for people trying to increase their reading ability in French while still being able to see the way the text is translated into English.

Anna Sinova says

Guy de Maupassant's writing is so alive and descriptive that you can't help but feel and live inside the worlds he creates. He draws you completely into a whirl of french passions, emotions, desires and personalities.

Brian says

Somewhere between Twain and Dostoyevsky. Masterful stories that brim with humanity and teem with life.

Lai Lin says

I've finished this book one month back but summarising the stories into 12 pages, that's the part that took me an eternity. The author is famous for his short satirical stories, and the one that I read back in school was "Necklace", the story about how a misunderstanding cost a couple 10 years of their life and youth. GDMF (the author) wrote various stories about people in this one, several of them with the background of the Prussian (Germans) invasion of France, and how normal civilians shown astounding bravery and patriotism during those trying times. My favorite is "Two friends", the shortest but the most powerful piece. There were also several stories describing the hypocrisy of people, such as 'Boule de Suif', "Madame Husson's 'Rosier'" and "The piece of string". One of the stories "The Olive Orchard" reminded me of scenes in The Count of Monte Cristo, the vile people that schemed and committed heinous crimes. Overall it was a satisfying read and I was glad I bought this book without knowing at all what it was about.

Bob says

worth buying for "the neckless" alone

Celeste Chia says

The Necklace is a beloved classic retold countless times in many varieties. I enjoyed the story of Love

through the use of hunted birds, Boule de Sif, and many others. The variety of perspectives and themes curated in this edition made for easy reading; at the same time, one is amazed at how deeply Maupassant understands human nature, penetrating through the melancholy and the effects of love with his incisive words. His sympathetic and explorative portrayal of women was also refreshing.

Pamela says

A diverse and brilliantly written selection of short stories. Maupassant has a mastery of tone that enables him to produce both tragedy and comedy, stories of crafty peasants and brutal soldiers, varied themes such as love, passion, avarice and cruelty. His sharp powers of observation combine with an amused and humane view of human vices and virtues, so that every tale contains a grain of truth, an element of surprise and something to make the reader stop and think, even to shock them on occasions.

There are 17 stories in this little collection and I enjoyed all of them. My favourites were those with a sadness at their heart, but there are also some very funny comic scenes. I particularly liked *Two Friends*, *The Necklace* and *Love*, but every one of these stories has something to offer and admire.

Diana Sandberg says

My command of French barely reaches the level of "fair". I had never read a dual-language book before, and I must say it was a great help. I was/am a little concerned that I would be learning an antique style of French, but, honestly, if my French ever got to the point that the worst someone could say was that my wording is old-fashioned, I'd be thrilled. I intend to re-read this frequently enough that the unfamiliar words and phrases that I have underlined will eventually join my usable vocabulary. And on that score, how much more pleasant to re-read a work of great literature, rather than a dull textbook. The stories are very engaging, his descriptions of place and character sometimes poetic, sometimes startling, and his sarcasm often trenchant.

Teguh Affandi says

Membaca ini memang terasa sangat sederhana (dari kisah-kisah di sekitar kita) tetapi dituturkan dengan apik oleh Guy de Maupassant.

Cinta Sejati cerita tentang seorang wanita miskin tukang tambal kursi yang mencintai seorang Chouquet sejak lelaki itu masih kecil. Bermula karena Chouquet kehilangan uang, dan si tukang tambal kursi memberinya uang. Dari sanalah cinta bermula. Hingga Chouquet menjadi dewasa dan menajdi dokter. Si tukang kursi meninggal. Saat diberi tahu bahwa ada seorang miskin yang mencintainya, Chouquet marah karena kehormatannya dilecehkan. Tetapi saat diberi tahu bahwa tukang kursi itu memariskan beberapa ribu franc dan sebuah kereta untuknya, ia tetap menerima. Tanpa pernah membalas cinta.

Dan kisah-kisah lainnya sederhana.

Amaya says

Seorang wanita tukang reparasi kursi telah jatuh cinta setengah mati, dengan sangat mendalam, kepada seorang ahli obat bernama Monsieur Choquet. Wanita itu sudah mencintai sang Monsieur sejak mereka masih kecil dan terlalu muda untuk memahami cinta. Dia biasa memberikan uangnya kepada si Choquet kecil dan dia akan mendapatkan ciuman anak laki-laki itu. sejak saat itu, sang Wanita menghabiskan hidupnya dengan memikirkan cara agar dia selalu bisa bertemu dan berdekatan dengan Monsieur Choquet. Tetapi dia tetaplah seorang wanita penambal kursi miskin yang tidak memiliki daya tarik apa-apa. Sebuah kebalikan mahatajam dari Monsieur Choquet—yang tampan, kaya, dan beruntung dalam hidupnya. Maka di akhir hidupnya, bahkan setelah memberika keseluruhan tabungannya selama hidupnya kepada Monsieur Choquet, dia masihlah tidak layak mendapatkan sekadar penghormatan.

Demikianlah cerita pendek berjudul Cinta Sejati, yang dipilih untuk mewakili kesembilan buah cerita pendek terbaik karya Guy De Maupassant dalam kumpulan cerita pendek ini. Cinta Sejati memiliki elemen yang lebih kompleks sebagai sebuah cerita cinta. Di samping itu, judul ini juga merangkum tema besar yang dilukiskan Maupassant dalam delapan cerita pendeknya yang lain dalam buku ini, yang sekaligus harapan agar kisah-kisah cinta ini kelak menyejati dalam kesusasteraan.

Cinta Sejati mengungkap ironi jatuh cinta yang seringkali tidak masuk akal, penuh penderitaan, dan terasa berbahaya. Maupassant juga mengetengahkan isu kelas sosial masyarakat Perancis abad ke-18 dalam kisah cinta wanita penambal kursi dengan lelaki terhormat dalam cerita ini. Betapa sang wanita harus merasakan penghinaan, bahkan setelah kematiannya, hanya karena menjatuhcintai lelaki yang tidak pantas berdasarkan anatomi kelas sosial di masyarakat yang melingkunginya ketika itu.

Delapan cerita pendek Maupassant yang lain juga tidak kalah unik dari Cinta Sejati. Maupassant selalu menyembunyikan satu elemen pengecoh di setiap ceritanya, lalu mengeluarkannya di waktu yang tepat untuk menimbulkan efek kejut tertentu. Dalam cerita kedua, misalnya, berjudul Seorang Janda. Berkisah tentang seorang wanita tua yang mengisahkan cerita cinta masa mudanya. Ketika seorang anak laki-laki yang baru beranjak remaja yang begitu mencintainya dan rela bunuh diri demi dirinya. Seorang anak laki-laki dengan kondisi kejiwaan yang, secara mengejutkan, sangat rapuh dan memiliki obsesi cinta yang aneh.

Suatu malam di taman dia berlutut di kakiku dan, sambil menggebu-gebu menciumi ujung gaunku, dia mengatakan berkali-kali, 'Aku cinta kepadamu! Aku cinta kepadamu! Aku cinta kepadamu! Jika sampai kau menipuku, jika sampai kau meninggalkanku demi pria lain, aku akan melakukan apa yang dilakukan ayahku.' Lalu dia menambahkan dengan suara serak, yang membuatku merinding, 'Kau tahu apa yang dilakukannya!' (hal. 23).

Dalam cerita ini, Maupassant menyingkap sisi tidak terbayangkan dari seorang anak.

Cerita lain yang juga menarik perhatian saya adalah kisah berjudul Perhiasan Palsu. Berkisah tentang seorang pegawai pemerintah kecil bernama Monsieur Lantin yang menikahi seorang gadis putri seorang petugas pajak propinsi, yang sederhana, terhormat, baik hati, dan tenang.

Gadis muda itu merupakan gmbaran sempurna wanita baik-baik yang membuat pria-pria muda ingin memercayakan kebahagiaan mereka di tangannya suatu hari nanti. Kecantikannya yang sederhana memancarkan pesona keanggunan memikat, dan senyum misterius yang selalu tersungging di bibirnya menggambarkan jiwanya yang murnu dan menawan (hal. 38).

Monsieur Lantin dan istrinya hidup bahagia. Namun, bagaimanapun juga, ada juga hal yang tidak disukai Monsieur Lantin dari istrinya: kegemarannya menonton teater dan membeli perhiasan palsu. Tampaknya, kegemaran istrinya pada teater membuatnya memperhatikan perhiasan seperti yang dilihatnya pada perempuan-perempuan berperhiasan dalam drama. Kebiasaan itu terus berlanjut hingga ketika Nyonya Lantin jatuh sakit dan meninggal dunia. Monsieur Lantin menjadi sangat berduka. Pendapatannya yang pas-pasan—yang biasanya selalu cukup dalam pengaturan istrinya—tidak lagi cukup dalam pengaturannya sendiri. Dia mulai berutang dan lambat laun jatuh miskin. Karena terdesak kebutuhan ekonomi, Monsieur Lantin memutuskan menjual perhiasan-perhiasan imitasi peninggalan istrinya. Tapi ternyata, perhiasan-perhiasan tersebut berharga sangat mahal. Sehingga Monsieur Lantin berubah menjadi orang kaya dalam sekejap.

Ini adalah sebuah cerita pendek yang menarik bagi saya, yang berakhir dengan sebuah awal yang baru—dengan teka-teki tentang istri Monsieur Lantin. Saya menyukai cara Maupassant menciptakan riak dari satu ketenangan yang wajar. Dan, misteri di akhir cerita menjadi terasa menyenangkan untuk diterka dengan segala ragam kemungkinan tentang apa-yang-sebenarnya-terjadi.

Masih tentang perhiasan palsu, ada satu cerita pendek yang mirip dengan Perhiasan Palsu, yang juga menarik perhatian saya, berjudul Kalung Berlian. Cerita ini berkisah tentang seorang wanita muda cantik dari keluarga sederhana, bernama Mathilde, yang menikah dengan seorang pegawai pemerintah biasa berpenghasilan rendah. Mathilde selalu merasa bahwa dia pantas untuk menikmati hidup yang mewah dan bukannya tinggal di rumah kumuh dengan dinding polos dan kursi reyot. Lalu suatu hari, suaminya pulang dari kantor dengan sebuah amplop besar untuk istrinya. Sebuah undangan terbatas yang tidak selalu diberikan kepada seorang pegawai rendah seperti Monsieur Georges Ramponneau. Mathilde memberi tahu suaminya bahwa dia tidak mungkin pergi ke perjamuan itu tanpa gaun baru dan perhiasan yang pantas. Maka Monsieur Ramponneau menguras tabungannya untuk membeli gaun baru dan tidak menyisakan nominal yang cukup untuk perhiasan. Mathilde akhirnya memutuskan untuk meminjam kalung berlian milik temannya yang kaya. Mathilde menikmati pesta itu. Dia menarik perhatian banyak orang. Tetapi dia kehilangan kalung mahal pinjamannya, dan akhirnya menghabiskan hampir seluruh hidupnya untuk mengganti kalung berlian mahal itu, yang ternyata, hanya kalung berlian imitasi.

Maupassant tampaknya tertarik mem-portrait sisi-sisi rumit dari perempuan muda di zamannya, dalam cerita-cerita pendek karangannya. Perempuan-perempuan cantik dengan keluguan yang berbahaya, dengan sisi-sisi tersembunyi yang selalu tidak bisa diraba, hanya dapat terkuak dengan mengejutkan, tanpa peringatan. Maupassant, menjabarkannya dengan sindiran dan ironi yang selalu dapat ditertawakan.

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