

Fascination: Stories

By William Boyd

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Fascination: Stories By William Boyd

One of the most beguiling storytellers on either side of the Atlantic delivers a luminous new collection whose 14 stories are a series of variations on the theme of love–and its shady cousin lust. A film director's journal becomes an unintended chronicle of his deepening and ruinous obsession with a leading lady ("Notebook No. 9"). While flying business class, a well-behaved English architect feels the chill onset of an otherworldly visitation that will shatter his family and career ("A Haunting"). An unhappy young boy, neglected by both his father and adulterous mother, finds an unexpected friend in an elderly painter ("Varengeville"). Wise, unsettling, humane, and endlessly surprising, *Fascination* lives up to its title on every page, while confirming William Boyd's stature as a writer of incandescent talent.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
Boyd (*Any Human Heart*, etc.) is difficult to pigeonhole. The 14 stories in this book include the supernaturally inflected ("A Haunting," "Visions Fugitives"), the Chekhovian bittersweet ("The Woman on the Beach with a Dog"), the PoMo urban spiel ("Beulah Berlin, an A-Z") and the comedy of dogged lechery. The last is represented by "Adult Video," which, in journal form, records the infidelity of one Edward, a cynical graduate student, and "Fascination," in which the same Edward, married to the girlfriend he cheated on, bungles a brief foray as a freelance journalist by making a pass at a young interviewee. "A Haunting" uses an old horror motif (a man is possessed by the spirit of another man) to illuminate the character of architect Alex Rief. While the story begins well, it concludes rather flatly with a pseudoscientific explanation. Dispossession is the more everyday horror that animates "The Ghost of a Bird," in which a Doctor Moran observes the brief recovery and sudden death of a young brain-damaged soldier, Gerald Gault. Gault, who published a short story shortly before being injured in 1944, has, in his brief recovery, confused his life with that story: "what became real to Gerald Gault was a consoling phantom, a dream, an urgent wish." Boyd's characters are, as a general rule, seeking—and mostly failing—to attain the intensity of some similar imaginative act.
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From Bookmarks Magazine
All but the most diehard fans of postmodernism will likely find Boyd’s formal idiosyncrasies jarring. His abrupt changes in style and experimental narrative techniques prompted some critics to hail him as a virtuoso. Others felt that *Fascination* lacked the conventional pleasures of plot and character-more than one reader found these tales of anguished artists tiresome. This collection is more likely to satisfy on an intellectual level than an emotional one; readers bothered by gimmicks would do well to stay away. For those interested in stretching the limits of the short story form, however, *Fascination* may live up to the promise of its title. For those who want to play it safe, check out Boyd’s *Any Human Heart* (**** May/June 2003).

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From Booklist
Prizewinning author Boyd follows up his acclaimed novel *Any Human Heart* [BKL Ja 1 & 15 03] with a collection of 14 short stories, many of which feature artists, musicians, and writers as the central characters. In "Notebook No. 9," a film director going through a bad patch in his career reveals his obsession with the leading lady in his recently completed film. Although the director is uncommonly astute in his critical comments on the technical aspects of filmmaking, he seems blind (depressingly so) to much larger issues, such as the fact that the actress has lost all interest in him. Some of these stories are experimental in form, such as "Adult Video," in which perennial student Edward Scully, frustrated and self-absorbed, uses the cues of a video recorder (play, fast-forward, pause) to juxtapose his real life with an imagined one. The strongest story in the collection, "Incandescence," employs four narrators to tell the story of an ultrawealthy businessman reconnecting with his former flame and her new husband, a charming if oily con man who has drained the family coffers. *Joanne Wilkinson*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Marcia Eberhart:

Here thing why this Fascination: Stories are different and dependable to be yours. First of all examining a book is good but it depends in the content of it which is the content is as yummy as food or not. Fascination: Stories giving you information deeper since different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no publication that similar with Fascination: Stories. It gives you thrill reading through journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing which happened in the world which is perhaps can be happened around you. You can easily bring everywhere like in park your car, café, or even in your way home by train. If you are having difficulties in bringing the paper book maybe the form of Fascination: Stories in e-book can be your alternative.

William Petterson:

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