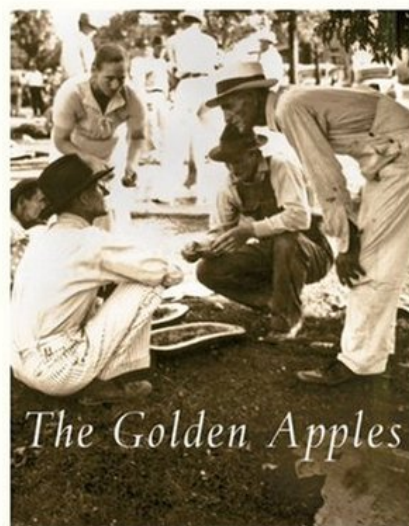




Eudora Welty

The Golden Apples

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The Golden Apples Eudora Welty

Welty is on home ground in the state of Mississippi in this collection of seven stories. She portrays the MacLains, the Starks, the Moodys, and other families of the fictitious town of Morgana. "I doubt that a better book about 'the South'-one that more completely gets the feel of the particular texture of Southern life and its special tone and pattern-has ever been written" (New Yorker).

The Golden Apples Details

Date : Published September 14th 1956 by Mariner Books (first published 1949)

ISBN : 9780156360906

Author : Eudora Welty

Format : Paperback 288 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction, Classics, American, Southern, Literature

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From Reader Review The Golden Apples for online ebook

Amber says

One of the most amazing, beautiful, and striking series of short stories I've ever read. The characters are so layered and messy and complicated. They become real people by the time you reach the end and you're left grieving for some and relieved and happy for others. The last of the stories is particularly beautiful and won't ever be forgotten.

Ashley says

The first time I read this book I absolutely hated it. Could not STAND it. I read it again recently, and whether it be time or age, I found the charm of Welty's writing that I missed the first time around.

What Welty does exceptionally well here is capture the feeling of small towns in the South. Everyone really DOES know everyone else's business, and lives are inextricably laced in _The Golden Apples_ as they are in real life. There are some stories in the book that I adore, and others that I could take or leave. However, if one were gone, the whole narrative would crumble. Welty masterfully strings out information and complicates characters through numerous stories, and I always smiled a bit when I saw an old face pop back up.

What I suspect turned me off the first time--and complicated my second reading--was the INTENSE amount of symbolic value within the narrative itself. Everyone stands for SOMETHING outside of themselves, and figuring out how all that fits together is not unlike doing one of those 10,000 piece jigsaw puzzles. Welty's delightful prose alleviates some of this, but I can't tell you how many "WTF" moments I had as I read along. I found this frustrating because it interrupted what was otherwise a delightful narrative. Also, there are just some characters in the book (I'm looking at you, King MacLain) that I loathed, which always leaves a sour taste in my mouth.

It's a shame there's not more work out there on Welty, and I fear that she doesn't have the place in American literature that she deserves. There is a TON of stuff floating around in _The Golden Apples_ that just begs to be analyzed.

Ben says

A lyrical and experimental novel told in short stories. Think Sherwood Anderson on acid.

Kelsea Dawn Hume says

I'm done! Finally! Beautiful writing & characters I couldn't bring myself to care about.

Sharon Barrow Wilfong says

I've enjoyed reading a number of Eudora Welty's work. This is not one of them.

The good: Once again, Welty does what she is best at. She immerses the reader into a rich Southern experience through her power of description. I am not reading about Southern people in Mississippi, I am vicariously in Mississippi, the invisible spectator of the players in this series of short stories and that all deal with a group of families in a small town.

It is a fictitious town as the characters are also fictitious, but they are also real because they could be any small Southern town and those of us that have lived in the South, like I do, recognize the people.

The bad: While I have never been one to demand a story line from my authors, preferring character studies, there is not a whole lot to study from these characters. They do not do a whole lot and their personalities are not very compelling.

Finally, Welty seems to write in a vague way that prevents the reader, at least this reader, from understanding what is going on. And not in the way Faulkner does it. Faulkner makes his stories types of puzzles that are fun to figure out like a crossword puzzle. Welty describes actions that could mean anything.

The stories develop through certain characters inner thoughts and their dialogues with other characters, but neither the thoughts nor the conversations yield up much information.

If one just enjoys reading about people in warm environments, small towns and mundane conversation, they would like this book, but Welty had done better.

Rachel Carpenter says

I admit I was confused half the time by the twists and turns in both dialogue and plot. But it was a pleasant kind of mental exercise.

Margarida says

É notável a criação das personagens e da pequena e fictícia localidade de Morgana, no Mississípi. As sete histórias contam as peripécias das personagens, ao longo de quarenta anos: 'Chuva de Ouro'; 'Recital de Junho'; 'Senhor Coelho'; 'Lago Lua'; 'Todo o Mundo Sabe'; 'Música de Espanha' e 'Os Viandantes'. O livro termina com o posfácio da tradutora (uma excelente tradução, refira-se), essencial à compreensão de cada conto. Um retrato fiel e intenso de uma comunidade do sul dos EUA, onde não faltam as questões políticas e raciais. Assim, entrecruzam-se os universos feminino e masculino, a memória colectiva, a pertença a um lugar, as raízes sulistas, a vida e a morte, numa narrativa intensa e carregada de referências mitológicas (a começar pelo título desta obra).

"(...) Nina cismava se seria a lentidão e a quase-imobilidade dos barcos na água que os tornava tão mágicos. Afinal de contas, o barquinho delas entre os juncos naquele dia não estivera longe desta maravilha. A água e

o céu, a Lua ou o Sol giravam sempre, e entre eles havia esta indecisão mágica, a de um barco. E mais do que um barco à deriva pelo mundo, era o mundo que, ao dar pelo barco, ficava à deriva, esquecido. A coisa sonhada trocava de lugar com o sonhador." - 4. Lago Lua, p. 157.

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"Entretanto, como se dispensassem o apoio das pernas, as cabeças dos dois homens continuavam a voltar-se calmamente para o largo, espreitando os olhos pela paisagem. Porém, como se escarnecesse também dessa postura, certa vez o hispânico, pondo os cotovelos para fora, uniu as mãos no topo da cabeça para segurar o chapéu. Era a pose proeminente de uma mulher, um «nu reclinado»." - 6. Música de Espanha, p. 247.

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## Sandy says

I don't care for short stories but Eudora Welty is such an interesting writer. Her stories have the subtle strangeness of Flannery O'Conner's stories. She makes us see mundane events for the peculiarness that exists within them.

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## Lowry says

I hope Eudora Welty, who died recently, is not being slowly forgotten, and I hope also she is not slipping into the category of "beloved regional author" or some such nonsense. Welty was a major American writer who wrote some highly challenging artworks. This, for my money, is her best book. It is of an unusual genre: it's not a collection of short stories nor is it a novel. It is a unified art work made up of connected stories, or maybe I should say "pieces," since some of them aren't really stories and would make little sense without the whole book surrounding them. This book is about some inhabitants of a small town called Morgana, Mississippi; it is also about the intense loneliness of the human condition and the stubborn effort to break through the wall between the self and the other. It is about how, as Welty said somewhere, "we are the breakers of our own hearts."

Don't be misled by imagining that the most often anthologized Welty stories -- "A Worn Path" and "Why I Live at the P.O." -- sum up the dimensions of her work. They do not. Nothing wrong with either one, but those are kind of the beginner's level of Welty's fiction. I recommend getting her *Collected Stories*, which includes *The Golden Apples*. Read the whole thing. More on her other stories in a separate entries on the *Collected Stories*.

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## Clare says

This book has been an albatross around my neck all freaking summer. I found it on a table of free books while out for a walk one day, and I thought, being a writer and a Southerner, perhaps I should read one of the most lauded Southern writers. There were a couple chapters of this book that I just loved, where I could see what all the fuss over Eudora Welty was about--she paints such a wonderful picture of small-town Southern life in the early 20th century that I could almost feel the shimmering heat of Morgana, Mississippi. (Or maybe that was just the heat of early 21st century Washington, D.C. right outside my door.) Unfortunately, I hated most of the rest of the book--some chapters relied too much on stream-of-consciousness narration for my taste, and it bounced around so much that I felt I never really got to know any of the inhabitants of Morgana. I'm glad I finally got to see what's so great (or not so great) about Eudora Welty, but it'll probably

be a while before I'm brave enough to pick up another one of her books.

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## Jamie says

The only piece of writing by Eudora Welty I had read prior to picking up "The Golden Apples" was a her book of autobiographical essays called "One Writer's Beginnings." I think this was a good place to start. In it she describes how she learned to listen for stories in every day life. Growing up in the South where story telling is part of the fabric of everyday life equipped her with the ability to see and hear stories that most of us might pass by without a second thought. In "One Writer's beginnings" she tells how she learned to see stories as through the lens of a camera:

"The frame through which I viewed the world changed too. Greater than scene, I came to see, is situation. Greater than situation is implication. Greater than all of these is a single, entire human being, who will never be confined to any frame."

This understanding of Eudora Welty's way of seeing people really enhanced my experience of reading "The Golden Apples." None of the characters she has created are insignificant. She never judges them. She simply tells you their story. "They" are the inhabitants of the small southern town of Morgana, Mississippi. Each story in this collection could be a stand-alone story. Taken together, however, these seven short stories weave a tapestry of life in this town over the first 50 odd years of the twentieth century. Stories of individuals are told but as you progress through the collection you can see how characters move in and out of each others' lives, how they touch each other and effect each other, some effecting others' lives while not being present or even having knowledge that their actions are resonating with others over time and space. Eudora Welty manages to capture life on a personal, internal level as well as over a physical, geographical space.

To me her writing exhibits the honest storytelling tradition of the American south with well-executed moments of stream-of-consciousness style narrative.

Not all of the short stories in this volume were to my taste. However, taken as a whole "The Golden Apples" is a stunning, well-executed, and thought-provoking piece of literature.

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## Charlie L says

Eudora Welty's *The Golden Apples* is in some sense *beyond* the human mind; beyond what fiction addresses. Welty's fiction is poetry, but beyond poetry. It is complex in not supernatural ways, but maybe in superhuman ways: in ways that are real but that are beyond the human mind. Virgie, in the collection's closing story, "The Wanderers," is a fine example of this:

She knew that now at the river, where she had been before on moonlit nights in autumn, drunken and sleepless, mist lay on the water and filled the trees, and from the eyes to the moon would be a cone, a long silent horn, of white light. It was a connection visible as the hair is in air, between the self and the moon, to make the self feel the child, a daughter far, far back. Then the water, warmer than the night air or the self that might be suddenly cold, like any other arms, took the body under too, running without visibility into the mouth. As she would drift in the river, too alert, too insolent in her heart in those days, the mist might thin momentarily and brilliant jewel eyes would look out from the water-line and the bank. Sometimes in the weeds a lightning bug would lighten, on and off, on and off, for as long in the night as she was there to see. (454\*)

Nothing about the preceding paragraph is beyond reality, but it is indeed beyond normal human consciousness. It is like the book's characters are constantly within meditation, absorbing every detail around

themselves: making even the minuscule "visible as the hair is in air."

Meditation extends well beyond the natural world but to all people in Welty's Morgana, Mississippi: from bubbly socialites not quite like Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway to introverted men like Ran MacLain of "The Whole World Knows," these characters are subjects of Welty's meditation and are as lovely and clear to her as, "in the weeds a lightning bug [that] would lighten, on and off, on and off, for as long in the night as she was there to see."

\*Page numbers are from *The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty*.

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## **Deborah Pickstone says**

Beautifully written short stories about a fictional Mississippi town and its inhabitants.

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## **Silas oliveira says**

As Maçãs Douradas do Eudora Welty é de certa forma além da mente humana; além do que endereços ficção. A ficção de Welty é poesia , mas, além da poesia. É complexo de formas não sobrenaturais , mas talvez de forma sobre-humanos : de formas que são , mas real, que estão além da mente humana. Virgie , na história de encerramento da coleção, " The Wanderers ", é um bom exemplo disso:

Ela sabia que agora no rio, onde tinha estado antes em noites de luar no outono, bêbado e sem sono , névoa estava na água e encheram as árvores, e para os olhos para a lua seria um cone, um chifre longo silêncio, de luz branca. Era uma conexão visível como o cabelo está no ar , entre o eu ea lua , para fazer o auto sentir o filho, uma filha muito, muito para trás . Em seguida, a água, mais quente do que o ar da noite ou o eu que pode ser de repente frio, como todos os outros braços, levaram o corpo em muito , correndo sem visibilidade para a boca . Como ela deriva no rio, muito alerta , muito insolente em seu coração naqueles dias , a névoa fina pode momentaneamente e jóias brilhantes olhos ficaria fora da linha de água eo banco. Às vezes, no mato um vaga-lume que clarear , dentro e fora , dentro e fora , por tanto tempo no meio da noite , enquanto ela estava lá para ver . ( 454 \* )

Nada sobre o número anterior, é além da realidade , mas é na verdade além da consciência humana normal. É como personagens do livro são constantemente dentro de meditação , absorvendo todos os detalhes em torno de si : fazer até mesmo o minúsculo " visível como o cabelo está no ar . "

Meditação se estende bem além do mundo natural, mas a todas as pessoas de Welty Morgana , Mississippi : de socialites borbulhantes não exatamente como a de Virginia Woolf Mrs. Dalloway aos homens introvertidos como Ran MacLain de " todo o mundo sabe ", esses personagens são temas de meditação de Welty e são tão adorável e claro para ela que , " no mato um vaga-lume [ que ] iria clarear , dentro e fora , dentro e fora , por tanto tempo no meio da noite , enquanto ela estava lá para ver . "

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## **Amy Talluto says**

Welty is a titan. Ok, now that that's out of the way, this book is a collection of short stories that all relate to the same town "Morgana" and its townspeople...making it more novel-like than short-story-collection-like. I read in an interview with Welty that the town's name is based on the sea horizon mirage phenomenon "fata morgana." This hazy, dream-like misting in-and-out of mirage and reality perfectly characterizes the tone

and structure of the book. It became a little bit my "white whale" to finish truthfully because the density of the prose was a stumbling block for me. Her narrative is sprinkled in between long lists of character names and dream like sequences, making it very slow to digest. I finally gave in to the book by letting the language wash over me and by paying less attention to who was who. Some of her descriptive passages are so exquisite and use such unique unexpected metaphors, that they take your breath away. She was an amazing literary mind and this book is a clear testament to that fact.

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## Elizabeth Urello says

Why did it take me so long to read more Eudora Welty? We should all just be reading Eudora Welty all the time.

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## Caterina says

Virgie walked down the hill too, crossed the road, and made her way through the old MacLain place and the pasture down to the river. She stood on the willow bank. It was bright as mid-afternoon in the openness of the water, quiet and peaceful. She took off her clothes and let herself into the river.

She saw her waist disappear into reflection less water; it was like walking into sky, some impurity of skies. All seemed one weight, one matter -- until she put down her head and closed her eyes and the light slipped under her lids, she felt this matter a translucent one, the river, herself, the sky all vessels which the sun filled. She began to swim in the river, forcing it gently, as she would wish for gentleness to her body. Her breasts around which she felt the water curving were as sensitive at that moment as the tips of wings must feel to birds, or antennae to insects. She felt the sand, grains intricate as little cogged wheels, minute shells of old seas, and the many dark ribbons of grass and mud touch her and leave her, like suggestions and withdrawals of some bondage that might have been dear, now dismembering and losing itself. She moved but like a cloud in skies, aware but only of the nebulous edges of her feeling and the vanishing opacity of her will, the carelessness for the water of the river through which her body had already passed as well as for what was ahead. The bank was all one, where out of the faded September world the little ripening plums started. Memory dappled her like no more than a paler light, which in slight agitations came through leaves, not darkening her for more than an instant. the iron taste of the old river was sweet to her, though. If she opened her eyes she looked at blue bottles, the skating waterbugs. If she trembled, it was at the smoothness of a fish or a snake that crossed her knees.

In the middle of the river, whose downstream or upstream could not be told by a current, she lay on her stretched arm, not breathing, floating. Virgie had reached the point where in the next moment she might turn into something without feeling it shock her. She hung suspended in the Big Black River as she would know how to hang suspended in felicity. Far to the west, a cloud running fingerlike over the sun made her splash the water. She stood, walked along the soft mud of the bottom, and pulled herself out of the water by a willow branch, which like a warm rain brushed her back with its leaves.

The moon, while she looked into the high sky, took its own light between one moment and the next. A wood thrush, which had begun to sing, hushed its long moment and began again. Virgie put her clothes back on. She would have given much for a cigarette, always wishing for a little more of what had just been.

--from "The Wanderers" by Eudora Welty, in *The Golden Apples*.

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Unexpected! - very subtle, complex, intense stories, with lushly descriptive, poetic language. Another reviewer called them "beyond the human mind" and I had a similar sense, when I finished the last story: these stories are over my head - there's more here that I'm not getting yet. Stories to dwell on, almost to luxuriate in - except that some of them deal - subtly - with extreme interior suffering. But also relief, release, even moments of bliss, as in that passage from the Wanderers which I think might be the most beautiful passage I've read in any book, ever.

Whenever I've spent time in Mississippi, visiting my husband's relatives, I felt I could almost pass out and die from the overpoweringly intoxicating scents of flowers blooming everywhere, and Eudora captures not only that, but the similar overpowering social situations in her fictional small town where everyone knows everybody's business, but hardly anyone is truly kind. But there are also these most transcendent moments and passages.

The first story, "Shower of Gold," introduces the nearly mythical King MacLain, a man who wanders away from and back to his wife Snowdie, is "sighted" all over the country (like the dead Elvis) and rumored to be the father of many - but never really wants to know his twin legitimate sons Ran and Eugene - each of whom has his own, quite different, story, later in the book. Snowdie may be the only townspeople who is truly kind; even almost unbelievably so; but sustains wounds from the catty "pity" of the other women - who feel that dwelling on Snowdie "makes church holier."

In "June Recital," an innocent nine-year-old boy, Loch Morrison, watches from his window as a woman enters the abandoned house next to his, and sets about to burn the house down. The story then switches to the very different point of view of his traumatized sixteen-year-old sister, Cassie, the former student of the would-be-arsonist, Miss Eckhart - a single woman piano teacher, Yankee, German, isolated and thought of as "different." Cassie recalls the ordeal of her piano lessons with Miss Eckhart who lived and had her studio in that now-abandoned house, where Miss Eckhart tried, not always successfully, to maintain her dignity in the face of abuse by a man rooming in the house, the death of the man she loved, and her infatuation with her precocious student, Virgie, who takes advantage of her teacher's excessive devotion, becoming cocky.

Virgie - the town's "wild girl" - the independent thinker- the one Miss Eckhart hoped would go on to greater things - now sneaks into the abandoned house to frolic with her sailor boyfriend - observed by the children next door. Virgie, also a loner who never marries, becomes the central character in the final story, The Wanderers, where she deals with her mother's death and then makes the decision to leave the town for good. This is the story that had grown on me most in memory.

"The Whole World Knows" tells the story of Ran MacClain, son of the infamous King MacClain. When he believes his new wife to be unfaithful, Ran moves out and rents a room nearby - but still in love with his wife, he goes every night to play cards and croquet with her and her presumed lover (who is also his co-worker.) He fantasizes about beating the lover to death with the croquet mallet, then goes back to his rented room and vomits. Everyone in town, particularly the old women, feels free to lavish Ran, in public, with their advice. The story escalates as he begins spending time with an innocent country girl who falls in love with him.

"Moon Lake" - maybe the most astonishing story - is an encounter between a group of town girls and a group of orphan girls that explores what it might mean to be an orphan, or, in the case of Easter, the "leader" of the orphans, a child abandoned first by her father and then by her mother, someone that "nobody is watching. Nobody cares." And at the same time, in the character of Nina, I thought Eudora may have been showing us a glimpse of her young self becoming an artist, longing to be able to inhabit the consciousness of Easter, "or a boy, or a Negro," to "become" someone other than herself.

## Melatikaye says

Hard to get into initially because she writes in circles and the language is unfamiliar. But hang in there, it's so rewarding! so beautiful.

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## Umi says

I took a class in college in which Welty's works were 1/3 of the focus and I remember skimming a few of her short stories and *The Optimist's Daughter* at breakfast before a few classes and I remember thinking oh, this is great, I should give it another chance sometime. So anyway I came across this collection at the library a few months ago and thought it was time to give her that other shot. I loved the first couple of stories and then I just sort of lost interest. I don't know if I just wasn't in the mood for them, but I also don't know when I would be in the mood for them if not at the time. Perhaps Eudora Welty is just not for me, and I am ok with that.

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## Blake says

*She pressed through a haw thicket and through the cherry trees. With a tree-high seesawing of boughs a squirrel chase ran ahead of her through the woods - Morgan's Woods, as it used to be called. Fat birds were rocking on their perches. A little quail ran on the woods floor. Down an arch, some old cedar lane up here, Mattie Will could look away into the big West. She could see the drift of it all, the stretched land below the little hills, and the Big Black, clear to MacLain's Courthouse, almost, the Stark place plain and the fields, and their farm, everybody's house above trees, the MacLains' - the white floating peak - and even Blackstone's granny's cabin, where there had been a murder one time. And Morgana all in rays, like a giant sunflower in the dust of Saturday."*

The character of these stories is immensely generous: the prose overflows with mythic music, time passes into place, people are formed and reformed as folklore and events enlarge to the Homeric. And somehow this is all boundlessly human and sad.

You encounter no small difficulty in describing a book like this, because its choice ground lies somewhere between the novel and the short story collection. That is, between broad lakes and small rivers. Some of these are short stories. One or two look happily the length of novellas. And others are barely tales at all. These last look like collecting pools that only take substantial shape when waters rise; the pools gain body from rivers and the rivers gain new shape in flooding the pools. Bathe in it. Drink it in handfuls.

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