



Domesticated Wild Things and Other Stories

Xhenet Aliu

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Just down the highway from Connecticut's Gold Coast is the state's rusty underbelly, the wretched, used-up sort of place where you might find Xhenet Aliu's *Domesticated Wild Things*: the reluctant mothers, delinquent dads, and not-quite-feral children, yet dreamers all. These are the children of immigrants who found boarded-up brass mills instead of the gilded streets of America; they're the teenaged girls raised in the fluorescent glow of Greek diners, the middle-aged men with pump trucks and teratomas. These are people who have fled, or who should have. And if they are indeed familiar, it is because Aliu writes what is real, whether we ourselves, her readers, have seen it up close or not. And her stories make sense in a way that matters.

A young mother buys into a real-estate investment seminar offered on an infomercial, only to be put back into her place by a bully in foreclosure. A closeted wrestler befriends a latchkey seven-year-old neighbor who harbors secrets of her own. A YMCA counselor tries to reclaim shoes stolen by a troubled young camper.

What they share is a biting humor, an eye for the absurd, and fumbling attempts at human connection, all rendered irresistible—and as moving as they are amusing—by a writer whose work is at once edgy and endearing and prize winning for reasons any reader can appreciate.

Domesticated Wild Things and Other Stories Details

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Author : Xhenet Aliu

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From Reader Review Domesticated Wild Things and Other Stories for online ebook

wade says

A very strong collection of short stories that are widely varied in subject matter. Many of them are "dark" but not scary as they deal with people and subjects that most readers would be somewhat uncomfortable with - characters who are struggling to survive against a deck of cards stacked against them. The book is full of interesting personalities and well developed plots that many times are not seen in short stories. It is my hope that Ms. Aliu will tackle writing a novel in the near future as she is a very talented author.

Patricia Bjorklund says

Gritty Connecticut, not the money belt. Smart, funny, arresting.

c says

Flawed characters make perfect stories in Aliu's debut collection. The portraits she paints are so devastatingly real that they inspire both empathy and discomfort. Aliu's fiction hits close to the bone and makes you yearn for home but grateful you never have to go back. Funny. Heartbreaking. Read this book.

Ryan Meyer says

Xhenet has quickly become a favorite and an inspiration of mine. The stories may be grim, but I got a sense of that through the title of the collection. What struck me was the realness of each story. The characters were real, the situations were real, and I was all-in. Right after she was published my class studied her works at our university, one Aliu and I both have in common. Being exposed to her style of writing opened new windows to my own styles, as well as windows to my own preferences for reading. Xhenet is an awesome person, and while it was an honor to have met and spoken with her, it was most definitely an honor to read tales such as these. They are some that I definitely won't forget. Aliu is going places, I know it.

Chris Blocker says

Once upon a time I loved short stories. Gradually I began to see how constraining they could be, and my love lessened. The more I fell in love with novels, particularly epic novels, the more I felt the short story was choking me, hoping to drain me of life and passion. I still read the occasional collection of short stories, and I write short pieces once in a long while out of necessity, but I haven't loved short fiction for many years.

Domesticated Wild Things may be the book that changes this for me. Time will tell if it completely shifts me from my bitterness for the form, but I really enjoyed these stories. Who'd have thought such a small volume by a relatively unknown author published by a university press would move me so? In these stories, Aliu has

created a bleak world that is foreign to me, yet evident in my everyday life. These are flawed characters in a world desperate to crush them, yet I felt there was always a glimmer of hope. That's what I love about these stories. There's a poetic quality told in simple prose that forces me to see the world in a different light. These aren't feel good stories, yet I felt good reading them. Characters I might have hated under another author's control were made beautiful in Aliu's hands. These are the stories I will recall when I'm in a dark and dirty diner, when I'm in a mildew-infested locker room, when I'm at the auto shop, hoping the mechanic has good news, knowing that he doesn't.

A new-old world may have been opened to me. I find myself once again interested in short stories; my mind is flooded with writing ideas; my bookshelf grows with volumes celebrating the form. *Domesticated Wild Things* is a book I'd recommend for those who love short stories, or anyone who might have at one time.

Susan says

Loved it

Hannah Wiest says

This author has a serious talent for capturing the real world and the actual happenings, not just the sugar coated version of them dressed up like a four-year old pageant girl and trotted out to the judges. This piece is the little girl in a baggy t-shirt, scraped knees, and a horrible story about her family's landlord that will take years of therapy to move beyond. Though I tend to dislike the grittier side of life and story-telling, this collection is real an honest, and I really couldn't ask for more than that our of any author or other human being in general. The stories are quick reads and fairly easy to follow, but still maintain a complexity and emotional level that draw in the reader and keep the pages turning.

Thankful says

A few glimpses into the disturbed lives of friends, neighbors and strangers. These stories are addicting, informative, bleak, and hopeful. I find the characters creeping into my life when I receive junk mail or while pumping gas. I'm left wondering what has happened to all of these people after we've read about a moment, a day, a week of their drab trying-to-make-it-by existence. I look forward to reading more!

T. Coughlin says

Three outstanding short stories are contained in this collection and the rest are all solid reads. I enjoyed the quirkiness and the strong voice of the characters. Unique and original. Worth a look.

Bryan John Lint says

One of the best books I have read.

The writer shows life as it is, yet hope is always around the corner. It is well written and carefully crafted to entertain the reader with powerful emotional content.

Shelley says

Stories are quite grim, portraying a society that exists but is not often portrayed in books. The writer has an interesting style, ending each story in a surprising manner. But I cannot say that I enjoyed the stories.

Steve Kemp says

I just couldn't get into this at all , The stories would start off good but peter out quickly. Not worth wasting time .

Kathy Piselli says

I liked the cover, a photo by Helen Levitt. She's a good choice because her subjects are Aliu's subjects. The author has a great ear for language.

Tammy says

I do not usually like short stories. I like these ones.

Jennifer says

A decent collection of short stories, though they are all depressing vignettes of people living in sad circumstances. The stories don't go anywhere, just give small glimpses, then end with zero closure. Honestly, it's not something I enjoyed reading, but for its type it was good, and I wasn't bored.
