



Bedtime Stories

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As Scheherezade proved long ago, good stories make the best bedtime entertainment. The tales collected here represent the essence of the storyteller's art, with its ancient roots in fantastical legends and tales told around a fire.

In *Bedtime Stories*, great writers of the past two centuries explore the boundaries between the real and the unreal, between waking and dreaming. From the surreal night visions of Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown" to the unspeakable horror that haunts two little girls in A. S. Byatt's "The Thing in the Forest," from Washington Irving's comical "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" to Ursula K. LeGuin's sly perspective on Sleeping Beauty in "The Poacher," these spellbinding stories transform the stuff of fables and fairy tales into high art. Isak Dinesen, Vladimir Nabokov, Angela Carter, Julio Cortázar, Steven Millhauser, Neil Gaiman, Haruki Murakami, and many more mingle their voices in this one-volume gateway to dreams--the perfect bedside companion for fiction lovers everywhere.

Bedtime Stories Details

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From Reader Review Bedtime Stories for online ebook

Dilek Karakoc says

Ke?ke hepsi benim olsa!

<http://www.everymanslibrary.co.uk/poc...>

Jennifer says

A beautiful edition of Everyman's Pocket Classics with lovely stories by a wide range of authors, including H.G. Wells! I Really enjoyed most of them, especially "The Country of the Blind", "The Dragon" and "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button". Some were hard to get into and I didn't really enjoy, like "Young Goodman Brown" but overall a very good collection. Probably not suitable for children due to the subject matter of some of the stories. An enjoyable afternoon read :)

Margaret Barnes says

This was published for children, but I wouldn't want to read them as a bedtime story to anyone under 26. No they lived happy ever after in this collection. Corruption of children's favourites for adult reading - the interface between dreams and waking, between fantasy and reality. Beautiful book too in the Everyman Classic series. Read yourself to sleep with this collection - if you can.

Vanessa says

3.5 stars.

Bedtime Stories is not the cosy, tucked up in bed, drifting off to the land of nod type read you might be thinking it is, judging by its title. Nightmare Stories would have been a more appropriate title for some of the eerie, magical and disturbing stories contained within.

I generally struggle with short story collections, particularly when they are written by a variety of authors, as if I'm not particularly enjoying one story, I find it hard to motivate myself to read the next one straight away. However, *Bedtime Stories* had definitely more of the intriguing, crazy stories than the boring ones.

There's a myriad of fantastic well-known authors in here, and some wonderful stories to boot. Haruki Murakami writes a Lynchian, surreal tale of a dancing dwarf, F. Scott Fitzgerald tells of a child born to age backwards, Angela Carter writes of a strange sensual tale of bestiality, and H.G. Wells tells the nightmarish story of a community of the blind. And there's more besides that!

Although I didn't enjoy all of the stories, and definitely struggled with the first half of the collection, there are some real gems in here that I would thoroughly recommend. Just don't expect to have a deep, peaceful sleep after it.

Leslie says

This terrific collection of short stories includes favorites read long ago—Nathaniel Hawthorne’s “Young Goodman Brown” and Washington Irving’s “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” come to mind—as well as a couple that I’d read (and been entranced by) more recently, “The Tiger’s Bride” by Angela Carter and A. S. Byatt’s “The Thing in the Forest”. The volume also includes works by Neil Gaiman, Ursula LeGuin, William Maxwell, Isaak Dinesen, and many other familiar names from the traditional Robert Louis Stevenson to the contemporary Haruki Murakami.

One of my favorites, though, is by someone who—and I’m ashamed to admit this—was unfamiliar to me, Lord Dunsany, whose “Where the Tides Ebb and Flow” was simply exquisite. All of the stories are beautifully written by prose masters, but there was something about this one that completely captivated and charmed me.

However, I have to say that while these *Bedtime Stories* are all fairy tale–like or at least fantastical, I would not claim that they promote easy sleep! Many of the stories are disturbing, and some are downright jolting; there were a couple that required a soothing read before turning off the light, or I would have been awake just pondering a thought-provoking or unexpected ending.

But, read the stories at bedtime or not, they’re worth the time. You might even discover a new author whose works you will want to pursue!

Juveria says

Bedtime Stories
by Diana Secker Tesdell

Recap of short stories.

A Thing in the Forest by A.S. Byatt

This was a good short story. It’s about two girls who had to leave London during the 1940s blitz raids. They arrive at a safe-way house, which is surrounded by forest. The two girls go into the forest to search for adventure. Inside, they find a Thing (later revealed to be a dragon that St. George had supposedly killed). It has survived throughout all the centuries. The two girls when grown older, become a child psychologist, and the other becomes a story teller to children. They both think that one or the other had made up that Thing in the forest. Years later, they back to the forest, while one actively searches for it, and another doesn’t.

Young Goodman Brown by Nathaniel Hawthorne

This tale is about Goodman Brown who is recently married. He is called away on business during the night. The road he travels on is through the forest. In the forest, he encounters two beings who he has a conversation with. When he is in the clearing, he finds that he is called away to a witch’s celebration. There he finds that everyone he knows from town, and his wife are practitioners of magic. Which causes him to become disdainful towards the town-folk, and his wife.

Troll Bridge by Neil Gaiman

This is a tale about a young boy who travels on a road for such a long time, that somewhere on the road

under a bridge, he encounters a troll, who wants to eat him. When is only a teenager, he comes back to that bridge, with a girl the "thought" he loved. He tries to exchange himself with the girl, but the troll wants nothing to do with the girl. So instead the boy promises to return when he is older, and more knowledge and delicious for the troll to eat. When he is in his 40s, he realizes that his wife has left him with his children, which in despair he goes to visit the troll under bridge. The troll sucks off his face, and disappears. Now that boy is the new troll under the bridge and there he remains.

The Poacher by Ursula K. LeGuin

I in particular liked this tale which is about a poor pheasant boy whose father forces him to salvage food from the forest. Since he knows the forest well he is able to get some thing for the family. But one day he walks deeper into the forest. Inside he encounters a the largest and the thickest hedge, with berries on it. He picks up the berries. Over time he becomes curious about what is behind that hedge, as he walks around it. The curiosity causes him to steal tools from a blacksmith in town, and take them to the hedge, where he begins his many month long project. He hacks away at the hedge, and just before spring almost 2 years later, he makes a breakthrough. Inside the hedge, he finds a castle guarded by sleeping guards, bees that are still, and no sound of anything. Everyone in that place is fast asleep. He watches them for many and many years. When finally he is old and gray, a prince hacks away at the hedge, and wakes up the princess that is fast asleep in the tower, while she wakes up, the boy now an old man dies in his sleep.

The Sailor-Boy's Tale by Isak Dinesen

This is the story of a sailor who rescues an eagle that gets caught on the mast of the ship. He hurts the eagle afterwards, but the eagle flies away. A few years later, that boy is has risen in status, and at a particular port falls in love with a girl. He promises a kiss from her in exchange for an orange. When he goes to claim his prize, he is stopped by a few Russian shipmates who want him to go drinking with them. The next day, he tries to go again, when he is stopped again by "the bear" Russian, in his anger, the boy kills the Russian and runs away. He first goes to see the girl, who kisses him, and tells him that he should hide because the friends of the "bear" are looking for his killer. He runs to a local party place, where as he is about to be caught by his pursuers, a woman comes out of nowhere, and claims him as her son and takes him home with her. When the search party arrives at her house, she lies about him being her son, and saves him. This woman is the eagle that a few years back the boy had saved from the ships' mast.

The Bottle Imp by Robert Louis Stevenson

This is another good story, in which a Hawaiian man comes across an old man that has everything, and the old man offers to sell him a lamp that can make this young man's wishes comes true. But its not just any ordinary lamp, it contains an imp, which grants all your wishes. But the catch is that the bottle must be sold for a lesser price than what it was purchased for. If purchased for more, then the bottle comes back to its original owner. And that man's soul will burn in hell for owning such a bottle upon his death. So this young Hawaiian man, buys it, uses it, then sells it for less to his friend. He becomes well known throughout the islands, and it is here that he falls in love with a woman. He marries her to only discover that he has some kind of disease. So in order to cure himself, he goes in search for the bottle, he buys the bottle at 1 cent. He is cured, but with it comes distress and depression over the fact that he can't sell the bottle back, so he will now go to hell for this. It takes a toll on his marriage, so one day he confesses to his wife, that the cause of his depression is an imp bottle. She proposes that they travel to some French islands, where they will be able to sell for 3/4 of a cent. In fear of not being able to sell the bottle, the wife, hires an old man who buys it for 3/4 of a cent, and she buys it from him for a 2/4 of a cent. When the man finds that the his wife now has that cursed bottle he gets his drinking buddy to go to his wife and buy the bottle for 1/4 of a cent, so he can buy it off again from him. But the man turns the table, and doesn't want to sell the bottle.

The Industrious Tailor by William Maxwells

This is one of those useless stories in which an tailor, that does nothing but think about and make clothes, gets lost in a forest, only to find a way back to reality in which nothing has changed.

The Dragon by Vladimir Nabokov

Another story that was quite good. In this story a young dragon is scared for life as he witness the death of his mother by a knight. This causes him to live deep within a cave and to never come out. But one day he ventures out because he is feeling ill, and encounters magical things in his new world (namely the train). He follows it to come across a town. In the square of this said town he eats a sheep, and falls asleep. Meanwhile, the two opposing giants (business giants) of the town, come up with a marketing scheme, where the dragon is made to look like its actually a machine. The business rival creates a dragon that looks like a kids version of a giant, which is not much of a hit with the townsfolk then the pretend, life-like dragon. The other team creates a skit in the square, in which a knight is killing the fluffy dragon. This scares the real dragon into flying away, and never coming out of his cave ever again.

Night: a nightmare by Guy de Maupassant

This is one of those bizarre but good tale, in which a man that loves the night, comes out onto the streets of Paris, to just roam around after sunset. While he is roaming around the man finds that he can't get back to his apartment, as the moon as gone out and the lights are gone too. The man finds himself near the Reine where he ends up drowned.

Its a nightmare of a person, and its beautifully put into words some of my own nightmares.

Where the Tides Ebb the Flow by Lord Dunsany

This is the story of a man who is not allowed burial. He is buried only to be thrown into Thames. From here a compassionate man will find him and bury him again, to only be put back in the Thames. This keeps happening to him for a long time, until he is in the waters of the Thames River, for such a long time, that he realizes that the city doesn't have any human presence in it. It is just him and the birds. As the songs of the birds give a release from his body, another man wakes up in his bedroom to find a bird at his window sill.

The Night Face Up by Julio Cortazar

This is the story of a man who is in a motorcycle accident. As he is being treated at the hospital, he keeps coming in and out of consciousness. His unconscious mind takes him to a time when he might have been a native and is hiding from his enemies in the forest of the Aztecs.

An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge by Ambrose Bierce

In this story, a man is being hanged on the Owl Creek Bridge, while he is being prepared for the hanging, he dreams or hallucinates that he is saved. As he falls into the creek, breaks his bonds, survives the gun shots fired at him, and run into the forest. From the forest, he goes back to his house, and when he arrives there, in reality he is hanged at the Bridge.

The Country of the Blind by H.G. Wells

In this story a mountaineer becomes trapped in the Country of the Blind. The men and women of this little place that is between the mountains, have lost their sense of sight, so they don't understand what seeing is, but their other senses are very sharp. At first the men think that the mountaineer is a foundling, and that his mind has conformed to their way of thinking. In anger the man lashes out at them and tries to make them understand what it's like to see, and where he is from. Their refusal to believe him, and his frustration causes him to have violent tendency, which these blind men realize and pursue him to put him out. The man runs to the side of the mountains, where he almost starves himself to death. In desperation, he comes back to the village, and even though he can see, he believes in their religious and geographical beliefs. He falls in love with a girl who is really pretty even though she doesn't have any eyes. He wants to marry her, but in order to marry her, he has to give up his eyes. He is ready to do this, and is a side of the mountain, when he realizes that he can climb back up the mountain from where he fell, and go back to his old life.

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow by Washington Irving

I read this story a long time ago, and those who think this story follows the movie "the Sleepy Hollow" starring Johnny Depp and Christina Ricci, are very wrong. Its an entirely different story but with the same

characters as from the movie. Ichabod Crane is a schoolmaster in a small Dutch town called Sleepy Hollow. He thinks he is an expert at ghost stories because he is the proud owner of Matter's book. He is palmist at church, and great with children. He is infatuated with the money of Katherine Van Tassel, who he thinks loves him. At a party at the Van Tassels' house while telling ghost stories Ichabod's rival for Katherine, tells the tale of the headless horseman that travels the less traveled roads of the Hollow at midnight coming to a halt at the Church doors. As Ichabod is rejected and is going home, the rival plays such a trick by pretending to be the headless horseman, and scaring Ichabod so much that Ichabod leaves the hollow with only his party clothes on. Most of the town-folk believe that the horseman took Ichabod with him to his undead world, while a town notary says that he found Ichabod Crane alive in another town, where he practices law instead.

The Curious Case of Benjamin Button by F. Scott Fitzgerald

I have to say that I wanted to read the book for a long time as Fitzgerald is one of my favourite authors, and that this particular story was turned into a movie by the same title, starring Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchette. I have to say that the movie is an all time favourite of mine. I didn't care much of Ben's wife, nor his son. The story is that Robert Button has a baby boy, who looks like he is very old and can talk and stuff. The father takes him home, and forces him to dye his hair black to him look at least age appropriate. Benjamin gets along well with his grandfather, and older men in general, though in his mind he feels young and just happens to look old. At age 20 something, he marries Hildegard, with whom he has a boy, Rosco. He goes into the army, and when he returns, he realizes that he is getting younger every year. His wife leaves him because of this reason, and his son thinks that its a joke that his father is playing on him purposefully. Benjamin becomes so that he dies at the age of 60/70 something while he looks like a new born baby.

A Visit by Steven Millhauser

Another bizarre story in which a man visits his old friend who he hasn't seen for at least 10 years. When he arrives at his friends house, he feels awkward around him after not seeing for so long, and also inadequate about his own life. His friend introduces him to his wife, who he describes as a frog in looks and behaviour. After staying the night, the man leaves the two the next morning.

The Tiger's Bride by Angela Carter

This is a story that is very much like the remake of story of "Beauty and the Beast". I read another one of Carter's work for a university paper, in which she recreates the story of Bluebeard.

In this story, a girl from Russia is lost in a game of cards to 'The Beast'. She can't see his face as he wears a mask and hides everything that is not human. She refers him to a Tiger, who she first heard from her nurse when she was in Russia. She is take to 'The Beast's' palace, where the Beast sets up a bargain with her. If she does what he wants, then she is free to go back to her father, intact with the money. But she refuses to do what she is told, so in retaliation, the Beast reveals his true nature to her, upon which she does what she is told. As soon as the deed is done she is told to leave, but she does not she remains in the palace.

The Dancing Dwarf by Haruki Murakami

This is a story that is very much in similarity to "Rumpelstiltskin". In this story a man, dreams about a dancing dwarf, who at the end of the dream tells the man that he will dream of him again. This wakes up and goes to work. He works at an elephant factory. At this factory, the man talks to his work partner about his bizarre dream. This man tells him to find another man who knows more about this dancing dwarf. The young man finds this other man a tavern, who tells him of a dwarf who came from the north and was such a great dancer, that he danced for the king, before the revolution occurred. Some people believed that the dwarf was the cause of the revolution, and the authorities have been searching for him. So the young man doesn't dream about him for awhile. Until he finds that there is this beautiful girl working in another department. He asks her to a dance and she refuses. He wants her so badly, that he dreams of the dwarf that very night, and they both strike a deal in which the dwarf will dance with girl, and enchant her with his dance moves, while the young is not allowed to say a single word to anyone on that day. If he does then the body of that young man will now belong to the dwarf. The next day, the man goes to the dance with the dwarf inside of him. He doesn't say anything to anyone, and ends up dancing with the girl. He leaves with the girl and they walk for a

long time, until they sit down and start making out. The dwarf plays a trick on the man, and even though the man doesn't say anything, the dwarf loses and he leaves the body. But in the meantime, the authorities start looking for the man, as they believe that the man is in connection to the dwarf. The dwarf again tries to trick him and make another deal with him, but the man keeps refusing.

Most of these stories are really nicely written, like the story by Byatt, LeGuin, Dinesen, Stevenson, Nabokov, de Maupassant, Wells, Carter and Murakami. These are most definitely meant to be reread again. The themes in most of these stories are reality vs. dream and destiny vs. intension.

Caroline says

Great range of stories, though as another reviewer says, these are dark, disturbing and more likely to give you troubled dreams than a sound night's sleep. Some of them stay with you - the stories by Ursula Le Guin and Julio Cortázar have been going round my head all week. I will be looking for more of their short stories.

Sarah says

Only giving this five stars for the Byatt story. The rest were duds (imho), or not new to me.

The cover is gorgeous though!

Jason Furman says

Another excellent collection of short stories from Everyman's Pocket Classics (I previously read their Detective Stories and have on-and-off been reading Ghost Stories and Stories of the Sea).

Don't be mislead by the title, these are not gentle, innocuous stories to put you to bed. Instead, Bedtime Stories weave in and out of dreams, the real, the unreal and the surreal, often with unclear boundaries between them. Some are psychological, some magical, some a combination of both.

The book has a number of old stand-by's that were good to re-read (including Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown", Stevenson's "The Bottle Imp" and Wells' "The Country of the Blind"). Particularly good was A.S. Byatt's "The Thing in the Forest" which will send me running to read the rest of the collection that came from, LeGuin's "The Poacher" and Nabokov's "The Dragon", which showed yet another side of that author. Steven Millhauser's "A Visit," a seemingly realistic story that includes a character's dream (described as such and clearly delineated from the waking) takes on a new aspect when read in juxtaposition to a collection like this. And many others.

Scott says

5 STARS

Nancy says

It's hard to rate this one since it's an anthology. There are a couple stories I didn't care for, and several that will stay with me.

Vanessa says

There were a few stories I quite enjoyed, but most of the book was kind of a slog to get through (as evidenced by the fact that I read multiple other books between stories while taking a year and a half to read this one).

Luis says

I've just finished this collection of stories and I already feel a good taste in my mouth. Some of them are hard to find in Spanish, that's why I want to tell you about the ones I liked most.

All the stories appearing in this book belong to famous writers, each of them lasting from twenty to forty pages. I do not remember any of them being especially unbearable, so I think that the selection is quite appropriate.

These ones have been my favourites:

- Ursula K. LeGuin's 'The Poacher' was second to none. It was by far the tale I most enjoyed. It talks about the story of a poacher who finds a huge hedge in the forest, whose mystery will unravel. The end is so astonishing that it's hard for me to forget.

- 'The Country of the Blind' by H. G. Wells was also gripping, about the only person with sight in a blind community, but I disliked that the original ending of this story was later replaced by the one that appears here. I strongly recommend reading the original one and if so, tell me your opinion.

- R. L. Stevenson's 'The bottle imp' is amazingly well designed. I had previously read it in Spanish, but it is always enjoyable to experiment it again. If you don't know yet this story, what are you waiting for? This one is at least easy to find.

- Haruki Murakami's 'The Dancing Dwarf' closes the book, but it holds the best of this well-known Japanese writer. The tale combines the two realities of a dream about a dancing dwarf and a weird reality of a worker who builds elephants with an outstanding final.

I must also mention some of them that were really amusing, such as 'The visit' - really weird-, 'The Tiger Bride' - an impressive ending-, 'The Curious Case of Benjamin Button' - far better in a short story than in an extremely long movie, 'Troll Bridge' and 'The Sailor-Boy's Tale'.

To sum up, if you stumble upon this volume, you won't be disappointed by the wide variety of stories you can find here. Perfect bedtime stories, but for any time of the day as well.

s.penkevich says

Although I have many of these stories in other collections, I still picked this up as there was enough material within that was new to me. Also, Everyman's Library always makes nice hardcover editions and the dust-jacket is quite attractive and the book is bound in a cool light blue color; how could I resist adding this to my library? Here you will find a variety of different stories all offering a glimpse into some dreamy, translucent world. The first story, A.S. Byatt's "The Thing in the Forest" was quite powerful and I am glad of this book for presenting this story to me along with many other stories and authors I was unfamiliar with. Another author whom I had never previously heard of, Lord Dunsay, has a vivid, nightmarish piece that shouldn't be missed. This book offers some new along with old favorites like "Young Goodman Brown", "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow" all within its binding. This is a perfect little book to sit on your nightstand so you may dive into it from time to time before falling asleep.

Elizabeth says

2.75 stars? Meh.
