



Tenth of December: Stories

By George Saunders

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NATIONAL BOOK AWARD FINALIST • NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW*

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY *People • The New York Times Magazine • NPR • Entertainment Weekly • New York • The Telegraph • BuzzFeed • Kirkus Reviews • BookPage • Shelf Awareness*

One of the most important and blazingly original writers of his generation, George Saunders is an undisputed master of the short story, and *Tenth of December* is his most honest, accessible, and moving collection yet.

In the taut opener, “Victory Lap,” a boy witnesses the attempted abduction of the girl next door and is faced with a harrowing choice: Does he ignore what he sees, or override years of smothering advice from his parents and act? In “Home,” a combat-damaged soldier moves back in with his mother and struggles to reconcile the world he left with the one to which he has returned. And in the title story, a stunning meditation on imagination, memory, and loss, a middle-aged cancer patient walks into the woods to commit suicide, only to encounter a troubled young boy who, over the course of a fateful morning, gives the dying man a final chance to recall who he really is. A hapless, deluded owner of an antiques store; two mothers struggling to do the right thing; a teenage girl whose idealism is challenged by a brutal brush with reality; a man tormented by a series of pharmaceutical experiments that force him to lust, to love, to kill—the unforgettable characters that populate the pages of *Tenth of December* are vividly and lovingly infused with Saunders’s signature blend of exuberant prose, deep humanity, and stylistic innovation.

Writing brilliantly and profoundly about class, sex, love, loss, work, despair, and war, Saunders cuts to the core of the contemporary experience. These stories take on the big questions and explore the fault lines of our own morality, delving into the questions of what makes us good and what makes us human.

Unsettling, insightful, and hilarious, the stories in *Tenth of December*—through their manic energy, their focus on what is redeemable in human beings, and their

generosity of spirit—not only entertain and delight; they fulfill Chekhov’s dictum that art should “prepare us for tenderness.”

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

“The best book you’ll read this year.”—*The New York Times Magazine*

“A feat of inventiveness . . . This eclectic collection never ceases to delight with its at times absurd, surreal, and darkly humorous look at very serious subjects. . . . Saunders makes you feel as though you are reading fiction for the first time.”—**Khaled Hosseini, author of *The Kite Runner***

“The best short-story writer in English—not ‘one of,’ not ‘arguably,’ but the Best.”—**Mary Karr, *Time***

“A visceral and moving act of storytelling . . . No one writes more powerfully than George Saunders about the lost, the unlucky, the disenfranchised.”—**Michiko Kakutani, *The New York Times***

“Saunders’s startling, dreamlike stories leave you feeling newly awakened to the world.”—***People***

“It’s no exaggeration to say that short story master George Saunders helped change the trajectory of American fiction.”—***The Wall Street Journal***

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, January 2013: George Saunders' first short-story collection in six years, *Tenth of December* is as profound and moving as it is entertaining. Saunders' wonderful ability to portray a character's inner monologue--the secret voices, the little fantasies, the inside jokes, the spots of sadness--might be his greatest talent as a writer. But he is also expert at parceling out details to hook the reader and nudge the story in whatever direction he wants it to go. While these stories are generally more straightforward than we're used to seeing from this author, the turns they take are constantly surprising. Saunders is an American original, a writer gifted at expressing the irony and absurdity all around us and inside us, but his ultimate goal is to show us something deeper: Our lives are composed of genuine experiences that deserve to be taken seriously. --*Chris Schluep*

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review Saunders, a self-identified disciple of Twain and Vonnegut, is hailed for the topsy-turvy, gouging satire in his three previous, keenly inventive short story collections. In the fourth, he dials the bizarreness down a notch to tune into the fantasies of his beleaguered characters, ambushing readers with waves of intense, unforeseen emotion. Saunders drills down to secret aquifers of anger beneath ordinary family life as he portrays parents anxious to defang their children but also to be better, more loving parents than their own. The title story is an absolute heart-wringer, as a pudgy, misfit boy on an imaginary mission meets up with a dying man on a frozen pond. In "Victory Lap," a young-teen ballerina is princess-happy until calamity strikes, an emergency that liberates her tyrannized neighbor, Kyle, "the palest kid in all the land." In "Home," family friction and financial crises combine with the trauma of a court-martialed Iraq War veteran, to whom foe and ally alike murmur inanely, "Thank you for your service." Saunders doesn't neglect his gift for surreal situations. There are the inmates subjected to sadistic neurological drug experiments in "Escape from Spiderhead" and the living lawn ornaments in "The Semplica Girl Diaries." These are unpredictable, stealthily funny, and complexly affecting stories of ludicrousness, fear, and rescue. --*Donna Seaman*

From Bookforum

It's almost hard to fathom how a writer this good could get better. But he has. A lot better, even. Saunders has always been a daring writer, but here he's trying something very risky indeed: he's going to tell you exactly what he's thinking about. —Zach Baron

Users Review

From reader reviews:

William Hoover:

Have you spare time for just a day? What do you do when you have considerably more or little spare time? That's why, you can choose the suitable activity with regard to spend your time. Any person spent their particular spare time to take a stroll, shopping, or went to the Mall. How about open or even read a book entitled Tenth of December: Stories? Maybe it is being best activity for you. You know beside you can spend your time with your favorite's book, you can more intelligent than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have different opinion?

Leonard Dail:

This Tenth of December: Stories are generally reliable for you who want to be considered a successful person, why. The main reason of this Tenth of December: Stories can be among the great books you must have is actually giving you more than just simple examining food but feed you with information that perhaps will shock your previous knowledge. This book is handy, you can bring it all over the place and whenever your conditions at e-book and printed kinds. Beside that this Tenth of December: Stories forcing you to have an enormous of experience for example rich vocabulary, giving you test of critical thinking that we realize it useful in your day exercise. So , let's have it and enjoy reading.

Joseph Asher:

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Dona Cole:

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