



If a Stranger Approaches You

Laura Kasischke

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In her first collection of short stories, Laura Kasischke exposes the dark heart of the domestic—it's wrapped in shabby silk, tucked away in a dresser drawer. *If A Stranger Approaches You* reminds us that intersection of the bizarre and the quotidian is always at play. Memorial statues and raggedy dolls seem to come to life, a man listens to the electric menace of suburban power lines while he struggles with his failed marriage, and the little boy and his dog knocking on the door might be Death in disguise. Surreal and darkly comic, these are stories that know the unexpected graces and random collisions that drive and haunt us. As one of her narrators remarks, "What a thing, this life."

If a Stranger Approaches You Details

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Author : Laura Kasischke

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From Reader Review If a Stranger Approaches You for online ebook

Natasha Small says

It was ok but the stories didn't hold me, very intellectual and blah.

Brittany says

I received this book through the First Reads giveaway program on Goodreads.

Reading the previous reviews, I guess I'm the only one who didn't like this collection. Like the book I read before this, it was horrible! What luck I have! The stories in this book were good ideas, but left you wondering what the heck was going on. The stories rambled on and on and on and on about nothing really important and didn't give the details needed for the important things.

Melissa Seitz says

Fantasy, magical realism, & richly-developed characters. Some of these stories will make you wonder about your neighbor or the person behind you in the store. I enjoy stories that make me wonder what might happen next.

Renee says

Captivating book of short stories - two of them really hit home for me. "Melody" about a man going through a divorce who is still in love with his wife yet succumbing to some serious anger issues and "The Foreclosure" about a young financially-struggling wife who dreams of a day they can own one of the cute, charming homes in neighborhoods close by her own. Author Laura Kasischke has a definite talented eye for culling life's nitty gritty details and drawing you in, as if you were there. I love her writing, even though some of the stories were a bit odd and obtuse to me.

Zoeytron says

A Goodreads giveaway, my first. Also my first review. This book is made up of 15 short stories, most of which I found to be just so-so, made only slightly better by a hint of the bizarre in each. A couple of the tales started off with good potential, but finished on random notes. Weirdness simply for the sake of being weird doesn't work for me. There were two of the stories, however, that were particularly haunting. "Somebody's Mistress, Somebody's Wife" was crazy good. I turned back to the beginning of the story immediately and read it a second time. It was most unusual. "Melody" was the other story that is staying with me. It is a tale of a man's obsessive love that seems to be slowly evolving into madness as a marriage stutters and fails. The

longer stories were more successful than the shorter ones.

Cathryn says

Amazing. Although some stories were a bit surreal for my taste, Mona, Melody, I Hope This is Hell, and If a Stranger Approaches You about Carrying a Foreign Object with You onto the Plane, were brilliant. The title story was beyond chilling, and the writing throughout was exquisite.

Paige says

I recieved this as part of the goodreads first reads giveaway program as a free giveaway. This stories in this book seem to have one thing in common which is the people in it, or the main character. Each story seems to be set on the grounds of loneliness, obsession, worry, loss, relationships or failing of past realtionships, or the failure or decline of the American dream, it also has a lot of refrences to childhood issues as well. It is an imaginativley and wonderfully crafted book, that I managed to read in one sitting. It is both personal and gripping. It can be a bit srange at times or can seem to be confusing and can at times be a bit hard to follow. But all in all three and a half stars for this book. My favirote short story in this book was probably "The Barge"

Good Books Good Friends says

Tout Laura Kasischke dans des nouvelles, j'ai retrouvé en condensé tout ce que j'aime chez cette auteure.

Debbie says

Collection of short stories by Laura Kasischke. I really like this author and I loved these quirky stories. They are all quite dark. My favourites were Somebody's Mistress, Somebody's Wife and especially, You're Going To Die. Definitely twisted but I loved them.

Tuck says

sign of a great writer is the illusion that she is not even really trying. that the people, settings, emotions, are true, are real, are her relating histories of her life. that is what this book is like. even has a zombie, and an "arab".

Michael Estey says

written by Laura Kasischke

Her first collection of fifteen short stories.

The title of the book:

If A Stranger Approaches You

The title of the last story in the book.

A book review...

I don't think you can get any better than this. Each story well written in an easy to read, style. Rivoting! Each story with it's own twisted ending. Each story leaving you miffed, bewildered, surprised! Each story unique. Of life's little fleeting moments.

Laura gets to the meat of her subject, quickly! Makes her surprise known. Then lets the stories end. No dilly-dallying. No frills. Exactly what you want, and all you need.

These fifteen stories have the ability to stir emotions. You feel the empathy, the love, the sorrows as if they were your own. Once you read the first story, Mona you'll understand what I mean.

What is this? I had to read the next story, Memmorial right away. Weird!

I couldn't put it down, after that!

I don't mean weird in a scary way. More, thought provoking. More, psycho dramatic. More Alfred Hitchcock'ish than Hitchcock himself.

I give it five stars out of five *****

You won't be disappointed.

Michael Estey

Donald says

Laura Kasischke has written a really odd set of stories - many of which made me feel like she had written a good beginning or middle, but never got around to the end. You get to figure out the end as you drive off the bridge that you didn't know you were on, trying to finish the thought just before you hit the cold purple water that will envelop you.

And, even if that is odd or disquieting, we get to have images like *"Here, there we hundreds and thousands of cicadas humming invisibly overhead, making a somehow shiny and impenetrable music, the kind of music an orchestra full of mirrors might have made."*

- or -

"The wind seemed to move around in the mouths of these official men at our door, as if they'd been wolfing down nothing for so long they couldn't keep it from coming back out."

I dug it, you might too.

Alex-Mot-à-Mots says

15 nouvelles composent ce recueil, chacune paru dans une revue différente au cours des années.

Ce qui fait leur point commun : la vie de banlieue américaine.

Parfois avec un humour féroce, l'auteure nous parle du quotidien de la banlieue middle-class américaine sur laquelle elle porte un regard décalé réjouissant.

Il y a toujours un peu de mystère et d'étrange dans les romans de Laura Kasischke, que l'on retrouve plus ou moins selon les histoires.

Certaines m'ont laissé indifférentes, d'autres m'ont mis mal à l'aise, d'autres encore sont tellement décalées qu'elle m'ont paru peu crédibles, d'autres enfin sont tellement réalistes.

J'ai parfois aimé ce côté décalé, parfois pas du tout. J'en conclus que je préfère ses romans, dans lesquels elle installe une atmosphère plus homogène.

L'image que je retiendrai :

Celle du bras coupé d'un des personnages, emporté par un automobiliste.

<http://alexmotamots.fr/si-un-inconnu-...>

David Edmonds says

Laura Kasischke continually impresses me with her writing. From my first experience with her writing, [The Life Before Her Eyes], to this latest volume, her first collection of short fiction, she has continued to grow in her storytelling ability. Truthfully, I don't usually enjoy short fiction. For me, there is never enough time to become invested in the characters or what is happening to them before the story is over and I'm usually left wanting more. Kasischke, however, proves that she is just as capable of writing short fiction as she is novels, and also left me wanting more, but in a completely different fashion. While usually I felt there isn't enough in a short story to make it worth my while, Kasischke's stories make me feel like there is almost too much, and that each of these stories could easily be fleshed out into a longer, more involved story, yet they work perfectly as they are.

I took down some brief notes on each story as I was reading them, so I will just copy those here:

Mona - "First story in and I'm reminded why Laura Kasischke is one of my favorite authors. Eerie."

Memorial - "Haunting"

Melody - "Obsessive love crazy"

Our Father - "This has to be an idea for a longer story. There is so much potential here!"

Somebody's Mistress, Somebody's Wife - "What the what?! I don't even understand and I love it. This is particularly what I'm enjoying most about these stories: sometimes they make no sense whatsoever, and I'm

good with that."

Joyride - "A love story. Of sorts."

The Foreclosure - "Obsessive craving meets ghost story."

Search Continues for Elderly Man - "Death can come visiting in many forms."

The Barge - "Probably my least favorite of the collection. Not even sure how to explain anything about the story."

You're Going to Die - "The relationship between a parent and child is not always loving."

The Flowering Staff - "Family isn't always something that needs to be shared."

The Prisoners - "Again, another story that has a lot of potential to become something more."

I Hope This is Hell - "Sometimes you just need to get away from your life."

The Skill - "Knowing you can take a life and knowing when not to."

"If a Stranger Approaches You about Carrying a Foreign Object with You onto the Plane" - "Everyone has heard this phrase at the airport. But what if it really happens to you?"

Kasischke is a skilled artist at taking the mundane, everyday world and skewing it just enough to keep it recognizable but totally foreign. There is a disturbing familiarity to the world in her writing, yet parts are so strange that they almost seem like a dream, and these stories are no exception. There is a common thread of loneliness or despair throughout, but in some ways, I almost think these stories in some ways speak to our times. I don't know, maybe I'm reading too much into it, but even though these stories do seem a little skewed and not entirely grounded in reality, there is still an element of truth to them.

Highly recommended!!

Suzanne says

The full review appears in the Fall 2013 issue of the journal *Gently Read Literature*.

<http://gentlyread.wordpress.com/2013/...>

"In the much-lauded Laura Kasischke's first collection of short stories, *If a Stranger Approaches You*, the author investigates the role our perceptive inadequacies and past injuries play in our actions. She asks whether humans are equipped to function without harming themselves or others.

Kasischke (pronounced Ka-ZISS-kee), does not have a particularly uplifting view of humanity. Quite to the contrary, many of these stories resonate with some of humanity's lowest points in modern history-- the holocaust, totalitarianism, terrorism, and the poverty and displacement of the recent world economic crisis. Along with her stories that explore more abstract themes, such as the relationships between citizens and the government in a totalitarian regime, as in *Our Father*, she also presents stories that touch with great accuracy and detail upon close familial relationships, as in the first piece, *Mona*.

The settings in this collection vary in time and place, and are not particularly determinative of the story; it seems the author has purposely left these details vague. The works are arrayed at all points on the realism spectrum, sometimes in the same piece where the dividing line between the real and the surreal is not entirely clear, as in *The Flowering Staff*. All of these stories are written in a well-plotted and articulate fashion, with uniquely-constructed descriptions that are a pleasure to read."
