



Taking Pictures

Anne Enright

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The stories in *Taking Pictures* are snapshots of the body in trouble: in denial, in extremis, in love. Mapping the messy connections between people - and their failures to connect - the characters are captured in the grainy texture of real life: freshly palpable, sensuous and deeply flawed.

From Dublin to Venice, from an American college dorm to a holiday caravan in France, these are stories about women stirred, bothered, or fascinated by men they cannot understand, or understand too well. Enright's women are haunted by children, and by the ghosts of the lives they might have led - lit by new flames, old flames, and flames that are guttering out. A woman's one night stand is illuminated by dreams of a young boy on a cliff road, another's is thwarted by an swarm of somnolent bees. A pregnant woman is stuck in a slow lift with a tactile American stranger, a naked mother changes a nappy in a hotel bedroom, and waits for her husband to come back from the bar. These are sharp, vivid stories of loss and yearning, of surrender to responsibilities or to unexpected delight; all share the unsettling, dislocated reality, the subversive wit and awkward tenderness that have marked Anne Enright as one of our most thrillingly gifted writers.

Taking Pictures Details

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Author : Anne Enright

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Hazel McHaffie says

I bought this book for two reasons. One, I heard Anne Enright read from it at the Edinburgh International Book Festival last summer' and her Irish accent brought the story alive. Two, because she's a Mann-Booker Prizewinner (2007) and has had good reviews. It really wasn't to my taste although I recognise the cleverness and at times like the rhythm of her writing.

Sarah Laing says

beautiful examination of relationships, all in this very droll tone. Such great dialogue, so concise

Initially NO says

Short stories that don't really connect as a book. Flashes of brilliance and a lot of churning. I am not a fan of collections of short stories. I often mistake a collection of short stories for a novel and wonder why the book loses solid ground and becomes a crowded pub full of noise, with some dissonant band playing, where no one can hear anyone actually speak, yet everyone tries to be heard.

Penni Russom says

This book made me remember what I love most about short stories, that tantalising promise to a reader, the elegant set up, like an elaborate row of dominoes, the breathless beauty in the knock down. Anne Enright is a master of the form, and now I am reading The Gathering, it seems she's pretty darn good at writing novels as well.

Melissa says

Best book of short stories I've read in a long time.

Oceana2602 says

I loved it. Definitely one of the better books I read this year.

"Taking Pictures" is a collection of short-stories. Short-stories fit very well with my interrupted and random reading schedule. These ones fit even better, because they really are short (10-15 pages), so I could actually read one or two in one session! Yay me! (you wouldn't believe how much fun a novel is NOT when you have

to pause after every third page).

Enright is obviously a master of the short-story genre, and I admire that. I always loved short-stories, so much more difficult to say what you have to say in a few words than to write a whole novel (let's face it, most novels could easily be half their size and still contain everything important). In the years (OMG almost a decade?) I've been involved in fandom, i've grown to love short-stories even more, and so i let myself be tempted by this book when i was in a book store (something I rarely allow myself to enter).

The stories in "Taking Pictures" all deal with woman and relationships, opne way or another. It's not always obvious, in fact, sometimes the very strong narrator-POV make you feel as if you've missed something, but that's the point, isn't it?

All stories touched me, in different ways, but the one that stood out most was "The Girl that Died". So much pain between the lines, perfect for me, seeing as I find the idea of an affair wildly romantic (in theory), and am a sucker for angst.

I highly recommend this book to everyone who likes short-stories and isn't afraid of fiction that sometimes only comes to life at the second look.

Nicholas Cavenagh says

The short stories in this book are so rich with emotion and imagery, I find I need a break between each of them so it is taking a while for me to read, which I don't mind at all. Enright is a literary astronaut - she uses the very limits of language to describe emotional states, mainly melancholic and painful ones, that almost no-one else could articulate.

Hubert says

A poignant, sad set of very short fictions by the esteemed Anne Enright. The narrators are oftentimes women, reminiscing on lives past, lives lost, lives that could have been. Enright writes with an economy of prose that makes you sometimes to a double-take to unravel layers of multiple meanings. Beautifully written.

tee says

I loved this, I particularly loved the first two stories. I've never read Enright's work before but this is exactly the kind of book I enjoy reading. If I wrote a book of short stories, I'd want them to be like these.

Donna says

Obtuse is the only way to describe this collection of short stories. I may have to read it again and pay more attention next time around to discover what was meant when the stories seemingly end abruptly.

Karen Angelico says

There is a darkness to Enright's stories that runs in an undercurrent, even when a flippant comment is made, or a funny bit of dialogue. Enright has a wonderful knack of getting under the skin of a character and making the reader see their flaws. 'Pillow' is one of my favourite stories in this collection - the tension between girls from different countries sharing a dorm at College in America - and contains all the dark humour, wit and yet poignancy that I feel is the basis of Enright's writing. Also 'Yesterdays Weather' is a superb example. The reflective nature of the writing in all of these stories brings a sharp realisation to the reader. Either in first person or third, Enright cuts through to the essence of a character, sums them up and makes the reader 'see' them with such economy of words.

In yesterdays weather for example:

'Hazel didn't want to eat outside - the amount of suncream you had to put on a baby....' highlights the way most mothers think - the fears of a mother with a new born, plus the interaction and differences between the mother and father of the baby and the fact that 'Dad' will be quite happy to sit in the sun and have fun, whereas his wife will spend the whole time worrying about the baby taking off its hat and watching with horror at the 'shitty flies' landing on the sterilised teat of the baby bottle - wonderful observation.

Lisa says

I think if I'd taken a break between reading each story, I would be able to appreciate each individual story better. However, I plowed through it on a holiday and the repeated bleakness, often revolving around unsatisfied women, began to get tiring - but every so often there was a more uplifting story that made the read worthwhile.

Vrsoffer says

I bought this book of short stories at the airport hoping it would be a good plane read. She has a bit of a potty mouth & rather then it working in seamlessly I am finiding it jarring. Don't know if I'll get through it but I will give it a few more stories.

The short story "Taking pictures" was the best of the bunch. She's a good writer so I may look into some of her other work.

Rick says

Bought at a thriftshop, seduced by the cover and the referral to the Man Booker Prize, and initially I was a bit disappointed: so bitter, so sad, so 'abandon all hope'... But also so beautifully written, and as I advanced I discovered hope between the lines. It is the first book by Enright i read, but it tastes like more. And even though it is not exactly joyful, I spend a beautiful sunday reading it, enjoying the prose and the mastership of the author. Compassion is a virtue too. And it does make you wonder what happens behind the doors in your street...

Alyssa says

DNF @ page 109

None of the stories were really standing out to me, and I felt like none of the remaining stories would stand out to me either.
