



Midsummer Nights

Jeanette Winterson (Contributor)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Midsummer Nights

Jeanette Winterson (Contributor)

Midsummer Nights Jeanette Winterson (Contributor)

In 2009, the Glyndebourne Festival of Opera reaches its 75th year. In commemoration of this event, Jeanette Winterson has brought together some of the best loved and most critically acclaimed authors writing today to pen stories inspired by opera. A foreword from Ralph Fiennes and an introduction by Jeanette Winterson are followed by: Alexander McCall Smith on *Così fan tutte*; Ali Smith on *Fidelio*; Andrew Motion on *Peter Grimes*; Andrew O'Hagan on *Eugene Onegin*; Ann Enright on *Rusalka*; Colm Toibin on *Pearl Fishers*; Jackie Kay on *The Makropulos Case*; Joanna Trollope on *L'Elisir d'Amore*; John Mortimer on *Così fan tutte*; Julie Myerson on *The Crowning of Poppaea*; Kate Atkinson on *La Traviata*; Kate Mosse on *Pelleas et Melisande*; Lynne Truss on *The Turn of the Screw*; Marina Warner on *Dido and Aeneas*; Posy Simmonds double page of 'Glyndebourne Midsummer Night'; Ruth Rendell on *Theodora*; Sebastian Barry on *Natoma*; Toby Litt on *Don Giovanni*.

Midsummer Nights Details

Date : Published May 1st 2009 by Quercus Books (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9781847248046

Author : Jeanette Winterson (Contributor)

Format : Hardcover 329 pages

Genre : Short Stories, Fiction, Anthologies

 [Download Midsummer Nights ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Midsummer Nights ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Midsummer Nights Jeanette Winterson (Contributor)

From Reader Review *Midsummer Nights* for online ebook

Jess McCabe says

I feel bad giving this such a low star-rating, because it does include some five-star-rated short stories, as you might expect from the list of contributing authors to the anthology.

But as the collection progressed, I reached a personal limit on how many cleverish opera-themed plots and allusions I could stomach. A reader with a stronger enthusiasm for opera will get more out of this.

Sarah Ampil says

A collection of stories written to commemorate the 75th Glyndebourne Festival of Opera. I was anticipating a collection modern workings of the plots of renowned operas; instead, each story is inspired by different facets of opera as envisioned as 'the product of all the Arts'.

As is with most collections of short stories, this one is a mixed bag. Some beautifully written episodes, others seem forced in writing style, often highly distasteful. Nothing profoundly mind-blowing, however if you're familiar with opera, some of the authors have conveyed libretti/music/mood in innovative ways. So far there seems to be an underlying theme of romantic liaisons - not a surprise considering the nature of opera, but it can get tedious reading about broken/unstable relationships in every story. As a collection, definitely not appropriate for young readers.

Caroline says

A collection of short stories based on operas. Some good, some... meh.

Robert says

mixed, there were some of the short stories I really enjoyed, others meant nothing to me. A book of short stories based on opera plots with a twist

Jill says

Reinterpretations (remixes, relayers, redoes, updates, alternate universes, mixed media, *shifting the image sideways*) are among my favourite things in media. Blending two art forms together to shed light on the originals -- mwah. Kissing the tips of my fingers. Yes.

This collection does that: brings opera & the short story together into a series of uneven, but interesting, pieces. Each story is cursorily or directly based on an opera of the author's choosing. Now I'm the first to

admit that opera's not really my thing (I've been to a few, but it's never had the effect it has on most of the characters in these stories) -- but you don't really have to like opera, or know the operas, to find some enjoyment in these. For those curious, there're plot descriptions of each opera at the end -- and I like that it's at the end, that you're not forced into a particular interpretation by an introduction to each story -- but it's not totally necessary.

Sometimes the author veers into left field, only mentioning the opera; other times the plot follows almost precisely. As usual in short story anthologies, some stories are boring, some mediocre, and some are stunning (Jeanette Winterson's "Goldrush Girl" chief among those -- this is Winterson in top form, guys; the collection's worth it just for that). It's quite a quick read, and I imagine if you have a soft spot for opera, exceptionally fun.

If you're not into opera, though, the best of the bunch are Toby Litt's "The Ghost" -- Kate Atkinson's "To Die For" -- Colm Toibin's "The Pearl Fishers" -- Julie Myerson's "The Growler" -- and of course Winterson's offering. All excellent accompaniment for a leisurely summer breakfast (and lunch) on a sun-dappled patio, tra la freakin la!

Kathy says

Definitely worth picking up. I do not know much about opera so I may have missed a few points but the stories are all very good. Note the guide to the operas in the back. Didn't realize it was there until the end.

Kay Hart says

I am not an opera fan generally, but I am a fan of many of the contributing authors in this collection. I found that I prefer to pick up a story from time to time, hence the fact that I originally borrowed this book from my local library meant I didn't finish it before due to return it. However, I have since bought my own copy so I can return to stories of my favourite authors as well as those new to my reading history. I found each story readable for itself irrespective of its connection to a particular opera. The notes in the collection regarding the author's choice of opera and a little about that opera was very helpful. However, I don't think this is a book that will have a broad general readership, but that said I do recommend it to fans of Jeanette Winterson as one to add to any collection of her own writing.

Shelly Dennison says

I liked the premise of stories inspired by operas but wasn't too taken with the results. Most authors took a very literal view of the idea and often had characters who were involved with opera in some way which allowed parallel narratives. The most successful broke way from this mould and were inspired in a more abstract way. Very mixed bag.

m_miriam says

I stumbled upon "Goldrush Girl" in The New Statesman, a British magazine my library gets; it made me cry, and yes, I can be overly-sentimental and I can come to cry a bit too easily these days, but even so my tears are very rarely prompted by a short-story read over my meal break in the back of the library.

I was so impressed that I had to exert a bit of search to track down a copy. This book has not been released in the states, and I rather doubt that it will be; although there are some very well known authors included, it is a collection of writers from the UK to commemorate the founding of a British opera festival, so it is has a relatively limited audience.

There are several pieces from the collection that I feel so-so about, although there are none that I flat out didn't like, which is impressive to me. This is definitely a popcorn read for lit people.

My favorite stories from the collection:

The Pearl Fishers by Colm Toibin

Goldrush Girl by Jeanette Winterson

Forget my Fate by Marina Warner

Pamster says

Read 4 stories: Ali Smith, Jeanette Winterson, Marina Warner, Kate Atkinson. I don't know dick about opera, but that was okay. Opera fans should love love love this. The Winterson story was breathtakingly lovely. All new stories from some awesome authors. At one point I was flipping through and saw a passage about lemony sperm, which terrified me.

Read for work.

Miki says

An interesting collection of short stories dedicated to opera. Some of them are adaptations of a specific piece, others use operas ad background or leit motif, others only vaguely refer to operas. Most of them are quite surprising and intriguing, thrilling or moving.

As a bonus, luckily for the less expert, all operas referred to in the stories are summarised and briefly explained in an appendix at the end of the volume.

Susana says

Historias que recrean argumentos de ópera o que recuerdan óperas o que rememoran el ambiente de la ópera. Una propuesta interesante ... para aquellos que no conocen los argumentos, en un anexo al final de libro presenta una sinopsis.

Cristina says

A collection of short stories inspired by different operas to commemorate the 75th year of the Glyndebourne Festival of Opera. I love Opera. I love so many of the contributing authors (Ali Smith, Lynne Truss, Kate Atkinson). I wanted this to never end.

Favorite Quotes:

From *Goldrush Girl* by Jeanette Winterson

When you meet someone for the first time, you forget it fast, or you remember it forever.

We went to lunch.

It was an expensive restaurant with small tables angled to give the illusion of space. At small tables shamming space it is necessary to judge distances carefully – between wine glass and plate, food and fork, especially when you do not know your host/your guest, and especially when you have ordered food, not out of politeness, but because you are hungry.

I wanted to kiss you in the way that I want to eat cherries from the greengrocer's stall. I don't want them in plastic boxes half dead from cold, I want them warm, slightly sweating, stalky, random. I want to eat them while I walk round finger and thumbing the limes and throwing handfuls of rocket into brown paper bags. I want the smell, the taste, the surprise, the disagreeable stone.

Shanti says

I am not the intended audience for this book. I am a seventeen year old who has never seen an opera. The closest I've gotten is hearing Summertime sung, like twice. I hardly ever read adult books, but this one was interesting, and I'm glad I did, even though I really picked it up because it had a cute cover. Anyway, I liked some stories and was challenged but others and either way each will get a one sentence review. Also, what is it with adult books and nameless characters? Ugh

First Lady of Song ??? I liked the tone of this story, and the ending was happy

Fidelio and Bess ??? I didn't quite understand it, but I liked how the opera interacted with the central relationship. Most of the best stories were opera entwined with reality, not just retelling it.

Freedom ?? Not hard to read, but I don't get the point

To Die For ??? I liked the twist with this one, even if none of the characters were really appealing.

The Growler ??? This was quirky, but I don't get the title, I don't get why it was all there, but the characters

were glorious

The Ghost ??5 Again, interesting, but WHAT and also WHY and everything was underdeveloped

Nemo??? This premise could have been so cool! But it was sold short by a rushed storyline.

The Pearl Fishers? So much no and so much stuff described that I never wanted to be described ugh ugh ugh and also I don't get the pooiiiiinnnnnttt

Key Note ??5 This one was cool but I understood nothing. What did anything in the story have to do with anything and this is a true word that I've written in my life. (sorry, in joke)

First Snow ??? The man was probably the point, but I could have done without him; but the character of Hazel the librarian was delightful, and some interesting discussions of feminism

Goldrush Girl???5 Exquisitely written, but probably would have liked it more if I read it twice. Still, I loved how Winterson wrote about a relationship

The Martyr ??? Quite interesting--Rendell does a lot with few words--but compared to some of the other vibrant pieces in the collection, this one is bland.

String and Air ??? I liked that none of the relationships were really defined, that everyone was weirdly obsessed with the cats, and the cats were weird, and the ending totally caught me by surprise.

The Empty Seat???5 Quirky, but I didn't really understand it. People like opera. I get it. People make new lives. But somehow this story didn't combine them very well.

My Lovely Countess???5 So morbid! I read it with a gruesome pleasure, because I knew things would go wrong, but it was still fun to read.

La Fille de Melisande ????? Probably my favourite, nothing was explained, but Mosse's writing reminded me that I have to reread Labyrinth and continue the series. So exquisite! So startlingly brutal. (also Book Thief connections so)

Now the Great Bear...??? The elements of dead grandmother and opera did not merge well, but the writing was great, so.

Forget My Fate ???5 Another excellent one, I liked the opera weaved with life and was updated in mysterious, wonderful ways. Art reflecting art and all that.

The Albanians ???5 So good, quirky and delightful and not quite what you'd expect, and opera woven in with it all. I want to read more of McCall Smith's writing--I've only read his children's stories in the past. I'm glad I read this, and it has given me ideas of what I should read if I want to read adult books by established British writers in the future.

Kendra says

Some of these stories, all inspired by operas and collected for the 75th anniversary of the Glyndebourne festival, are clever or charming or thoughtful or all three. I especially enjoyed Jackie Kay's "First Lady of Song," which reimagines the title character of The Makropulos Case. Others--like Andrew O'Hagan's "First Snow"--seem to have been written without much knowledge of the operas or composers they cite, and that's a pity. My copy, at least, also has numerous typos, which don't much help convince me that much thought or careful editing went into the contents.
