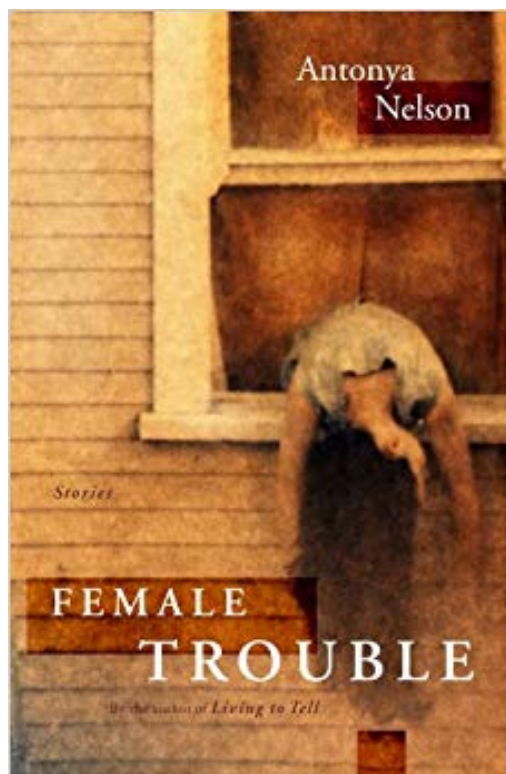


Female Trouble: Stories *by* Antonya Nelson



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Reviews of the **Female Trouble: Stories** *by* Antonya Nelson

Rivik

This is the most morose collection of stories I have ever read. I wish I could get a refund of the purchase price and a refund on the time I wasted reading it. I honestly cannot find one redeeming thing to say about the book. The characters are depressed and depressing, pitiful and mostly morally bankrupt human beings.

Quynaus

Not a good read. Too confusing. Sometimes you must read a. So so book in order to enjoy a good one.

Malodora

Antonya Nelson's stock in trade is her laser-like understanding of and her affinity for the foibles and miss-steps of we mortal human beings. Anyone familiar with her "Nobody's Girl" or in particular "Living to Tell" can attest to that.

In "Female Trouble" she sets her sights on a close to her heart, I would assume subject, women: Professional women, divorced women, suicidal women, mother-earth women, young women and old women, pregnant women and the men who are fortunate enough to cross their paths.

"Female Trouble" is a short story collection. The Short Story is probably the most difficult prose form for an author to master: a short story should be all of a piece. You should not crave for more. The author has to quickly create a world, inhabit it with interesting characters and resolve the story so that the reader is satisfied at its resolution.

The first story of this collection, "Incognito" is very well written and the premise is unique: a close group of three high school friends create an imaginary person, one Dawn Wrigley and use this persona as a means to act out all of their adolescent fantasies. The problem is at this story's end I craved for more, wanted loose ends tied, needed more information, felt cheated.

On the other hand in "One Dog is People," Nelson creates a world in which the basic premise of the story is tied up in a logical fashion with no loose ends hanging. This story also includes some of her most incisive writing: "A few days later I was sitting in traffic after dropping the children off at school. I relied on their disappearance every day; I could not stand such thorough neediness. And yet, as soon as they'd been swept into their buildings...I missed them. I fell under the heavy weight of guilt: how could I not be grateful? How could I not cling to what was left to me, cling and cherish?"

"Stitches" is in part about the relationship between a college-age girl (Tracy) and her mother (Ellen): "It was unnerving to be this girl's mother. She was so forthcoming. So frankly healthy...how had she gotten this way? Ellen felt somehow excluded from the process. She (Ellen) kept secrets--- not in drawers or closets or diaries, but in her heart, behind her eyes, on her lips. Tracy's admirable openness seemed not to have been inherited from Ellen, so it must have come from her father."

As with most story collections, the quality here is variable. But what does not vary is Nelson's obvious love for her characters and her unflinching desire to get at the heart of things through the use of her gorgeous, even voluptuous writing style.

Jusari

I pulled this book up on Amazon to order it for a friend and I couldn't believe no one had reviewed it. I bought it in hardback when it first came out and was so impressed with the stories that I tracked down Ms. Nelson's earlier collections of stories, Land of Men, and The Expendables. I am glad I did as they each contain some gems. Female Trouble, though, is full of gems. They showcase Ms Nelson's talent for finding the fresh way of looking at the moral questions and difficult relationships that are the fodder for much of fiction. And while this is serious stuff, Ms. Nelson handles it with clarity and sensitivity and even humor. The first story is about a woman who returns to her childhood town with her young daughter and while reading the newspaper comes across something that forces her to confront her own troublesome youth. The device that drives this story is so compelling and creative that I was anxious to see if Ms Nelson could sustain that level of creativity throughout the entire collection. She did. I believe you will find several characters and stories that stay with you long after you've put this one on your "A" shelf.

Burking

Female Trouble is one of the most profound women's anthologies I've ever read. This collection of short stories has dark and profound subject matters. There are stories of infidelity, failed marriages, mother/daughter relationships and women's sexual prowess. Antonya Nelson is a rather talented writer with an obvious penchant for revealing women's emotions. The female protagonists are of various ages and economic backgrounds. There is something for every woman here. I can't recommend this wonderful book enough! Brava, Ms. Nelson, for revealing some rather profound truths with such unflinching honesty.

Warianys

The author grasps the true murkiness, whimsicality, lustfulness of women. With humor and compassion. These strongly drawn characters are how at least some women really are: full of contradictions, sexual volition, willfulness. Vanity, veneers are all torpedoed.

Drelajurus

Though her grasp of nuance and language is considerable, the nature of her characters' internal dialogue is exhausting. I found her work to be bland and self-indulgent, infused with a sort of housewife's profundity. Plus, the image on the front cover did nothing to dissuade the notion that her narratives are the worst sort of "poor me-esque" weepy writing.

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