



A Girl with a Monkey: New and Selected Stories

By Leonard Michaels

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A Girl with a Monkey: New and Selected Stories By Leonard Michaels

Fiction. A *Los Angeles Times* Best Fiction Title of 2000. Finalist, 2000 Bay Area Book Reviewers Fiction Award. "Brilliant... Anyone concerned with the American short story should read and know these stories.... Other American writers have tried to write stories like these, but Leonard Michaels got there first and has done it better than almost anyone else."—Charles Baxter, *San Francisco Chronicle*

"Michaels, one of the most highly regarded contemporary American literary figures and widely read by the discerning public, has long been regarded as a master of the short story. His stature can only be enhanced by this gathering of the best of his previous work as well as new stories, all of them written within the period of the early 1960s through the 1990s. Love and sexuality are the twin themes he continues to mine, and the specific situations he creates to explore these themes pinpoint in the sheerest of prose the absolute truth about relationships. Michaels's trenchant, direct, and lyrical style, with not one word wasted, works as a tight springboard for conveying his vast knowledge about why we love who we love. No library's short story collection is complete without this career-defining compilation."—Brad Hooper, *Booklist*

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Cult literary author Michaels returns to the short story form with this set of 17: five from the '90s, two older works rewritten and nine reprinted from his celebrated collections, *Going Places* and *I Would Have Saved Them If I Could*. Michaels specializes in chronicles of erotic obsession. In "Viva La Tropicana," narrator Herman muses: "I could almost understand what comes into being, like another presence, between a man and a woman, and could almost feel how they must touch lest neither exist and invincible nothingness prevails." Infatuations have shaped Herman's life since his gangster uncle, Zev, fell for his widowed mother, who later ran off with a lawyer. When Zev asks Herman to contact Zev's ex in Havana, bizarre and dangerous espionage ensues. In the title story, a divorc? named Beard falls in love with Inger, a German prostitute, who flees from his pathological intensity. Beard almost wrecks his life to buy her earrings, but loses the jewelry--and then encounters Inger again, on a train. "Second Honeymoon" amounts to a long, sweet exploration of Jewish bourgeois life in the '50s. Newlywed Sheila Kahn falls for Larry Starker, the waiter at the Catskills hotel where she and her husband are honeymooning. Michaels tells the story through the eyes of Larry's unsympathetic roommate, Joseph Kukov: as the bookish, contemptuous Joseph charts Larry's almost unwilling seduction of Sheila, readers watch Joseph transcend his resentments. Michaels's clean, cold prose pays dignified homage to the imperious demands of sexual connection. His erotically driven characters try desperately to mark each other, to enclose one another within impossible bounds. His remarkable talent lets his new stories join ranks with his old, surveying the line between eros and selfishness with an almost frightening accuracy. (Apr.)

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From Library Journal

Many of the stories in this uneven collection were written in the late 1960s, a few date from more recent times, and one is repeated in both the original and in updated versions, "Honeymoon" and "Second Honeymoon." The title story follows a group of friends up to a roof to spy on a rabbi and his wife having sex, with tragic consequences. "Viva La Tropicana" re-creates a time when American gangsters were in Cuba and Uncle Zev comes from Havana to romance the widow of his twin brother. The characters and places are powerfully presented, but often the realism is too hard-edged to engage the reader. It's too bad, since short fiction suffers from neglect in the popular reading, but this collection--one story of which was included in *Best American Short Stories 1991*--is clearly the product of an author who strives too hard for perfection.

-Ann H. Fisher, Radford P.L., VA

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Review

Many of the stories here have appeared in Michaels's previous collections, but they're worth rereading. -- *The New York Times Book Review*, Tobin Harshaw

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Eric Sanders:

This book entitled A Girl with a Monkey: New and Selected Stories to be one of several books which best seller in this year, this is because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit onto it. You will easily to buy this kind of book in the book shop or you can order it by way of online. The publisher in this book sells the e-book too. It makes you more readily to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason for your requirements to past this book from your list.

Richard Kitterman:

Reading can called head hangout, why? Because when you are reading a book particularly book entitled A Girl with a Monkey: New and Selected Stories the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in each aspect that maybe unidentified for but surely can be your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a guide then become one contact form conclusion and explanation which maybe you never get just before. The A Girl with a Monkey: New and Selected Stories giving you one more experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful details for your better life within this era. So now let us explain to you the relaxing pattern at this point is your body and mind is going to be pleased when you are finished reading through it, like winning a sport. Do you want to try this extraordinary wasting spare time activity?

Michael Vines:

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