

## Dear Life Stories Alice Munro

"Runaway" is the first story in this stunning collection, sure to be a runaway success. All of the eight stories here are new, published in book form for the first time. Two of the eight have never appeared anywhere, so this will be a special feast for the millions of Munro fans around the world. Miraculously, these stories seem to have been written by a young writer at the peak of her powers. Alice Munro's central characters range from 14-year-old Lauren in "Trespass," through the young couple in "Runaway," whose helpful older neighbour intervenes to help the wife escape, all the way to a 70-year-old woman meeting a friend of her youth on a Vancouver street and sitting with him to recall their tangled lives fifty years earlier, through a web of cheerful lies. Three of the stories, "Chance," "Soon," and "Silence," are linked, showing us how the young teacher Juliet meets her fisherman lover on a train (and, by terrible chance, visits his B.C. home on the day after his wife's funeral); how, years later, she brings baby Penelope back east to show her parents and learns sad secrets about their marriage; and how, twenty years on, she visits the estranged Penelope in her cult-like B.C. community. The result is more powerful than most novels, a quality in Alice Munro's stories that has been noted by many reviewers. The final story, "Powers," spans 50 years and runs from Goderich to Vancouver and involves a cast of four characters, each of whom steps forward to dominate the scene, not least Tessa, the plain girl whose psychic powers take her on the vaudeville circuit. But it is Alice Munro's own powers that dominate this collection and that will amaze reviewers and readers. How can she keep getting better? How can any one person know so much about the heads and hearts of so many different people? And how can she weave them together in stories that delight academics and ordinary readers alike, making each new Alice Munro book a runaway bestseller?

In the landmark thirtieth installment of the bestselling series the New Yorker has called "an unusually potent cocktail of atmosphere and event," Guido Brunetti is forced to confront an unimaginable crime. In his many years as a commissario, Guido Brunetti has seen all manner of crime and known intuitively how to navigate the various pathways in his native city, Venice, to discover the person responsible. Now, in *Transient Desires*, the thirtieth novel in Donna Leon's masterful series, he faces a heinous crime committed outside his jurisdiction. He is drawn in innocently enough: two young American women have been badly injured in a boating accident, joy riding in the Laguna with two young Italians. However, Brunetti's curiosity is aroused by the behavior of the young men, who abandoned the victims after taking them to the hospital. If the injuries were the result of an accident, why did they want to avoid association with it? As Brunetti and his colleague, Claudia Griffoni, investigate the incident, they discover that one of the young men works for a man rumored to be involved in more sinister nighttime activities in the Laguna. To get to the bottom of what proves to be a gut-wrenching case, Brunetti needs to enlist the help of both the Carabinieri and the Guardia di Costiera. Determining how much trust he and Griffoni can put in these unfamiliar colleagues adds to the difficulty of solving a peculiarly horrible crime whose perpetrators are technologically brilliant and ruthlessly organized. Donna Leon's *Transient Desires* is as powerful as any novel she has written, testing Brunetti to his limits and forcing him to listen very carefully for the truth.

"A powerful collection of testimonies that depict the struggles and hopes of Afghan women. An often emotional and at times painful read, this book is ultimately a poignant celebration of human resilience under unimaginable duress." —KHALED HOSSEINI, New York Times bestselling author of *The Kite Runner* "I am deeply touched by these stories...Dear Zari should be read by anyone who cares and wants to know about Asia and Asian women." —XINRAN "All the stories in *Dear Zari* illustrate the suffering caused by deeply ingrained Afghan traditions. But [the women's] bravery and resilience shines through and Kargar touchingly reveals how hearing others' life stories finally gave her the courage to share her own." —The Independent Moving, enlightening, and heartbreaking, *Dear Zari* gives voice to the secret lives of Afghan women. For the first time, *Dear Zari* allows these women to tell their stories in their own words: from the child bride given as payment to end of a family feud, to a life spent in a dark, dusty room weaving carpets, from a young girl being brought up as a boy, to a woman living as a widow shunned by society. Intimate, emotional, painful and uplifting, these stories uncover the suffering and strength of women in this deeply religious and intensely traditional society, and show how their courage is an inspiration to women everywhere.

*Away From Her* is a stunning collection of nine short stories that deal with the substance of adult life. They draw us immediately into that special place known as Alice Munro Territory - where an unexpected twist or a suddenly recaptured memory can trace the arc of an entire life. An aging couple's relationship is tested as the woman develops Alzheimer's disease and forgets her long years of marriage in the title story "Away from Her." The fate of a strong-minded house-keeper, just entering the dangerous country of old-maid hood, is unintentionally reversed by a practical joke. A college student visiting her aunt and recognizing the family furniture stumbles on a long-hidden secret and its meaning in her own life. A woman recollecting an afternoon's wild lovemaking with a stranger realizes how the memory has changed and sustained her through a lifetime. Personal histories, both complex and simple, unfold in rich detail in this astonishing collection of stories, providing a further reason why Munro is often referred to as "our contemporary Chekhov." The short story "Away from Her" - originally titled "The Bear Came Over the Mountain" in the collection *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage* - is now a major motion picture by Sarah Polley.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013 The only novel from Alice Munro-award-winning author of *The Love of a Good Woman*--is an insightful, honest book, "autobiographical in form but not in fact," that chronicles a young girl's growing up in rural Ontario in the 1940's. Del Jordan lives out at the end of the Flats Road on her father's fox farm, where her most frequent companions are an eccentric bachelor family friend and her rough younger brother. When she begins spending more time in town, she is

surrounded by women—her mother, an agnostic, opinionated woman who sells encyclopedias to local farmers; her mother's boarder, the lusty Fern Doherty; and her best friend, Naomi, with whom she shares the frustrations and unbridled glee of adolescence. Through these unwitting mentors and in her own encounters with sex, birth, and death, *Del* explores the dark and bright sides of womanhood. All along she remains a wise, witty observer and recorder of truths in small-town life. The result is a powerful, moving, and humorous demonstration of Alice Munro's unparalleled awareness of the lives of girls and women.

When Canadian Alice Munro was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2013, she had already declared her resignation from the post of short story writer following the publication of her 2012 collection *Dear Life*. This present volume offers critical analyses of Alice Munro's complete final short story collection. The book's contributors exercise in-depth, close readings of each individual story and situate them in Munro's lifetime oeuvre, as well as in her work's critical reception to date. Scholars set out to show how complex, irritating, disturbing, and enchanting Munro's stories are, and how often all that matters is to hold life dear - or to hold on for (dear) life. (Series: MasteRRResearch - Vol. 7) [Subject: Literary Criticism]

Thacker takes us along the parallel tracks of Munro's life and her stories, to bring us a thorough, revealing, and enriching account of both.

In her Introduction, Margaret Atwood says, "Alice Munro is among the major writers of English fiction of our time ... Among writers themselves, her name is spoken in hushed tones." *My Best Stories* is a dazzling selection of stories—seventeen favourites chosen by the author from across her distinguished career. The stories are arranged in the order written, allowing even the most devoted Munro admirer to discover how her work developed, taking surprising turns. The stories span a quarter of a century and include "Royal Beatings," "Friend of My Youth," and "The Love of a Good Woman." This is a book to read—and re-read—very slowly, savouring each story. This collection of small masterpieces deserves a place in every Canadian booklover's home.

The Three Stories that Inspired the Movie With a foreword by Pedro Almodóvar Alice Munro is cherished for her exquisite, affecting meditations on the human heart. In these three linked stories, "Chance," "Soon," and "Silence"—which, together, inspired Pedro Almodóvar's film *Julieta*—her virtuosic talents are once again on display. The stories follow a schoolteacher named Juliet as she is swept up by fate: meeting an older man on a train and starting an affair; later, visiting her parents as a young mother; and later still, searching for contact with her estranged daughter. As with all of Munro's characters, Juliet radiates warmth, dignity, and hope, even as she is unflinching in the face of betrayal and loss. In Munro's hands, her journey is as surprising, extraordinary, and precious as life itself.

Covering the second half of Nobel Prize winner Alice Munro's career, these are some of the best, most touching and powerful short stories ever written. 'Munro is still one of our most fearless explorers of the human being' *The Times* Spanning her last five collections and bringing together her finest work from the past fifteen years, this new selection of Alice Munro's stories infuses everyday lives with a wealth of nuance and insight. Beautifully observed and remarkably crafted, written with emotion and empathy, these stories are nothing short of perfection. A masterclass in the genre, from an author who deservedly lays claim to being one of the major fiction writers of our time.

Winner of the PEN/Malamud Award: "The genius of his stories is to render his fictional world as timeless."—Colm Tóibín The sixteen exquisitely crafted stories in *Island* prove Alistair MacLeod to be a master. Quietly, precisely, he has created a body of work that is among the greatest to appear in English in the last fifty years. A book-besotted patriarch releases his only son from the obligations of the sea. A father provokes his young son to violence when he reluctantly sells the family horse. A passionate girl who grows up on a nearly deserted island turns into an ever-wistful woman when her one true love is felled by a logging accident. A dying young man listens to his grandmother play the old Gaelic songs on her ancient violin as they both fend off the inevitable. The events that propel MacLeod's stories convince us of the importance of tradition, the beauty of the landscape, and the necessity of memory.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE© IN LITERATURE 2013 A New York Times Notable Book A Washington Post Notable Work of Fiction A Best Book of the Year: *The Atlantic*, NPR, San Francisco Chronicle, *Vogue*, AV Club In story after story in this brilliant new collection, Alice Munro pinpoints the moment a person is forever altered by a chance encounter, an action not taken, or a simple twist of fate. Her characters are flawed and fully human: a soldier returning from war and avoiding his fiancée, a wealthy woman deciding whether to confront a blackmailer, an adulterous mother and her neglected children, a guilt-ridden father, a young teacher jilted by her employer. Illumined by Munro's unflinching insight, these lives draw us in with their quiet depth and surprise us with unexpected turns. And while most are set in her signature territory around Lake Huron, some strike even closer to home: an astonishing suite of four autobiographical tales offers an unprecedented glimpse into Munro's own childhood. Exalted by her clarity of vision and her unparalleled gift for storytelling, *Dear Life* shows how strange, perilous, and extraordinary ordinary life can be.

WINNER OF THE 2013 NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE Spanning almost thirty years and settings that range from big cities to small towns and farmsteads of rural Canada, this magnificent collection brings together twenty-eight stories by a writer of unparalleled wit, generosity, and emotional power. In her *Selected Stories*, Alice Munro makes lives that seem small unfold until they are revealed to be as spacious as prairies and locates the moments of love and betrayal, desire and forgiveness, that change those lives forever. To read these stories--about a traveling salesman and his children on an impromptu journey; an abandoned woman choosing between seduction and solitude--is to succumb to the spell of a writer who enchants her readers utterly even as she restores them to their truest selves.

A view of the south of Ireland – political, social, geographical – through the eyes of a liberal northern protestant being asked to rejoin it.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013 Vintage Readers are a perfect introduction to some of the greatest modern writers presented in attractive, accessible paperback editions. "In Munro's hands, as in Chekhov's, a short story is more than big enough to hold the world—and to astonish us again and again." —Chicago Tribune In an unbroken procession of brilliant, revelatory short stories, Alice Munro has unfolded the wordless secrets that lie at the heart of all human experience. She has won three Governor General's Literary Awards in her native Canada, as well as the National Book Critics Circle Award. Vintage Munro includes stories from throughout her career: The title stories from her collections *The Moons of Jupiter*; *The Progress of Love*; *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*; "Differently," from *Selected Stories*, and "Carried Away," from *Open Secrets*.

A new collection of stories by Alice Munro is always a major event. This new collection — her most personal to date — is no exception. Alice Munro's stories are always wonderful and so ingrained with truths about life that readers always want to know where they came from. In this book, Alice Munro tells us. In her Foreword (an unusual feature in itself), she explains how she, born Alice Laidlaw in Ontario, in recent years became interested in the history of her Laidlaw ancestors. Starting in the wilds of the Scottish Borders, she learned a great deal about a famous ancestor, born around 1700, who, as his tombstone records, "for feats of frolic, agility and strength, had no equal in his day." She traced the family's history with the help of that man's nephew, the famous writer James Hogg, finding to her delight that each generation of the family had produced a writer who wanted to record what had befallen them. In this way, she was able to follow the family's voyage to Canada in 1818, and their hard times as pioneers — once a father dies on the same day that a daughter is born in the same frontier cabin. "I put all this material together over the years," Alice tells us, "and almost without my noticing what was happening, it began to shape itself, here and there, into something almost like stories. Some of the characters gave themselves to me in their own words, others rose out of their situations." As the book goes down through the generations, we come to Robert Laidlaw, Alice's father, and then, at the book's heart, the stories become first-person stories, set during her lifetime. So is this a memoir? No. She drew on personal experiences, "but then I did anything I wanted to with this material, because the chief thing I was doing was making a story." The resulting collection of stories range from the title story — where through a haze of whiskey Alice's ancestors gaze north from Edinburgh Castle at the Fife coast, believing that it is North America — all the way to the final story, where we travel with "Alice Munro" today. In the author's words, these stories "pay more attention to the truth of a life than fiction usually does. But not enough to swear on." All of them are Alice Munro stories. There could be no higher praise.

"A fascinating, troubling, and finally heartening book that subtly shows ways that Christians might reconcile their bodies with their devotion to God. Highly recommended for individual Christians but also for pastors and church groups."—Library Journal, starred review Stories of sexual scandals in churches throughout the nation have been downright routine in recent years, suggesting to many Americans that a deeply rooted problem plagues American Christianity—and prompting some to abandon their congregations altogether. In *See Me Naked*, Amy Frykholm takes us beyond simple indictments of, or blind allegiance to, Christian cultures to explore the complex, intimate intersection of sexuality and spirituality as it affects the lives of ordinary Christians. Recounting with care and nuance the life histories of nine American Protestants, Frykholm shows us the harm done by the rules-based sexual ethic now dominant, which alternately denies and romanticizes sexuality. But she also points to how American Christians might otherwise access their spiritual tradition to heal the divide between religion and sexuality. One story examines the intricate relationship between a man's religious faith and his sexual addiction. In another, a man defines religion as a wall that kept him from the discovery that he was gay. One young woman uses sex to defy her devout parents, while another seeks to transcend her body by going without food. Nearly everyone interviewed in *See Me Naked* remains a Christian, with some further on their journey than others. Yet each of them is working to understand the connection between their desires and their faith. Ultimately, their stories—stories of pain and violence, perseverance and courage—attest to the healing power of struggling through the wild and uncertain experiences of life. *See Me Naked* explores the many ways that people work to recover from harmful beliefs and restores the notion that one of the key insights of Christianity is that the body, with all its struggles, pains, and difficulties, is a vehicle of the holy and can lead us into a more full relationship with God.

With her peerless ability to give us the essence of a life in often brief but spacious and timeless stories, Alice Munro illumines the moment a life is shaped -- the moment a dream, or sex, or perhaps a simple twist of fate turns a person out of his or her accustomed path and into another way of being. Suffused with Munro's clarity of vision and her unparalleled gift for storytelling, these stories (set in the world Munro has made her own: the countryside and towns around Lake Huron) about departures and beginnings, accidents, dangers, and homecomings both virtual and real, paint a vivid and lasting portrait of how strange, dangerous, and extraordinary the ordinary life can be.

In her lengthy and fascinating introduction Margaret Atwood says "Alice Munro is among the major writers of English fiction of our time. . . . Among writers themselves, her name is spoken in hushed tones." This splendid gift edition is sure to delight Alice Munro's growing body of admirers, what Atwood calls her "devoted international readership." Long-time fans of her stories will enjoy meeting old favourites, where their new setting in this book may reveal new sides to what once seemed a familiar story; devoted followers may even dispute the exclusion of a specially-beloved story. Readers lucky enough to have found her recently will be delighted, as one masterpiece succeeds another. The 17 stories are carefully arranged in the order in which she wrote them, which allows us to follow the development of her range. "A Wilderness Station," for example, breaks "short story rules" by taking us right back to the 1830s then jumping forward more than 100 years. "The Albanian Virgin" destroys the idea that her stories are set in B.C. or in Ontario's "Alice Munro Country." And "The Bear Came Over the Mountain," the story behind the film *Away From Her*, takes us far from the world of young girls learning about sex into

unflinching old age. This is a book to read slowly, savouring each story. It deserves a place in every Canadian book-lover's library.

An array of short fiction, selected by the author and spanning the full range of her career, encompasses seventeen stories, drawn from such collections as *The Beggar Maid*, *The Moons of Jupiter*, and *Runaway*.

Dear Life Stories Vintage

Like Hans Christian Andersen and the Brothers Grimm, Isak Dinesen and Angela Carter, A. S. Byatt knows that fairy tales are for grownups. And in this ravishing collection she breathes new life into the form. *Little Black Book of Stories* offers shivers along with magical thrills. Leaves rustle underfoot in a dark wood: two middle-aged women, childhood friends reunited by chance, venture into a dark forest where once, many years before, they saw—or thought they saw—something unspeakable. Another woman, recently bereaved, finds herself slowly but surely turning into stone. A coolly rational ob-gyn has his world pushed off-axis by a waiflike art student with her own ideas about the uses of the body. Spellbinding, witty, lovely, terrifying, the *Little Black Book of Stories* is Byatt at the height of her craft.

A fleeting affair lingers in the memory of a woman. Thirty years after the event, when both husband and lover have died, she remembers one further detail. Part of the *Storycuts* series, this short story was previously published in the collection *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*.

When an affluent Kempsey matron spots a young Aboriginal boy who bears an uncanny resemblance to her husband, not only does she scream for divorce, attempt to take control of the child's future and upend her comfortable life, but the whole town seems drawn into chaos. A hero of the First World War has a fit at the cinema and is taken to a psychiatric ward in Sydney, his Irish farmhand is murdered, and a gay piano-playing veteran, quietly a friend to many in town, is implicated. *Corporal Hitler's Pistol* speaks to the never-ending war that began with 'the war to end all wars'. Rural communities have always been a melting pot and many are happy to accept a diverse bunch ... as long as they don't overstep. Set in a town he knows very well, in this novel Tom Keneally tells a compelling story of the interactions and relationships between black and white Australians in early twentieth-century Australia.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013 In this series of interweaving stories, Munro recreates the evolving bond between two women in the course of almost forty years. One is Flo, practical, suspicious of other people's airs, at times dismayingly vulgar. the other is Rose, Flo's stepdaughter, a clumsy, shy girl who somehow leaves the small town she grew up in to achieve her own equivocal success in the larger world.

Throughout his life, Henry James was drawn to the short story form for the freedom and variety it offered. The nineteen stories in this selection span James's career, from brief tales to longer works, all exploring his concerns with the old world and the new, money, fame and art. 'Daisy Miller', the work that first brought him fame, depicts a bold, unsophisticated American girl abroad, and 'In the Cage' portrays a young telegraphist's romantic fantasies about customers who send telegrams from her post office. In 'The Birthplace' a Stratford tour guide embellishes the Shakespeare legend, while in the late masterpiece 'The Jolly Corner', an elderly American returns from Europe and encounters a strange apparition. Haunting, witty and beautifully drawn, James's tales are as complex and resonant as his novels.

From the winner of the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature—and one of our most beloved writers—a new selection of her peerless short fiction, gathered from the collections of the last two decades, a companion volume to *Selected Stories (1968-1994)*. *Family Furnishings* brings us twenty-four of Alice Munro's most accomplished, most powerfully affecting stories, many of them set in the territory she has so brilliantly made her own: the small towns and flatlands of southwestern Ontario. Subtly honed with her hallmark precision, grace, and compassion, these stories illuminate the quotidian yet extraordinary particularity in the lives of men and women, parents and children, friends and lovers as they discover sex, fall in love, part, quarrel, suffer defeat, set off into the unknown, or find a way to be in the world. Peopled with characters as real to us as we are to ourselves, Munro's stories encompass the fullness of human experience—from the wild exhilaration of first love, in "Passion," to the lengths a once-straying husband will go to make his wife happy as her memory fades, in "The Bear Came Over the Mountain." Other stories suggest the punishing consequences of leaving home ("Runaway") or leaving a marriage ("The Children Stay"). The part romantic love plays in one's existence is explored in "Too Much Happiness," based on the life of the noted nineteenth-century mathematician, Sophia Kovalevsky. And in stories that Munro has described as "closer to the truth than usual"—"Dear Life," "Working for a Living," and "Home" among them—we glimpse the author's own life. As the Nobel Prize presentation speech says in part: "Reading one of Alice Munro's texts is like watching a cat walk across a laid dinner table. A brief short story can often cover decades, summarizing a life, as she moves deftly between different periods. No wonder Alice Munro is often able to say more in thirty pages than an ordinary novelist is capable of in three hundred. She is a virtuoso of the elliptical and the master of the contemporary short story."

A collection of stories illuminates moments that shape a life, from a dream or a sexual act to simple twists of fate, and is set in the countryside and towns of Lake Huron.

A Vintage Shorts "Short Story Month" Selection The solution came to the writer one evening: she should have an office. From Nobel Laureate Alice Munro, a brilliantly executed and revelatory story—one of the earliest published works of her career—in which simply finding a place to write turns out to be the hardest act of all. Alice Munro is the universally acclaimed master of the contemporary short story, the Chekhov of our time, and "The Office" sheds light on the process and growth of a beloved writer. A selection from *Dance of the Happy Shades*, Munro's first collection. An eBook short.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013 The ten miraculously accomplished stories in Alice Munro's *Friend of My Youth* not only astonish and delight but also convey the unspoken mysteries at the heart of all human experience. "[Friend of My Youth is] a wonderful collection of stories, beautifully written and deeply felt."--Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times* Sheila Munro is the daughter of one of the world's most admired fiction writers: Alice Munro, three-time winner of Canada's prestigious Governor General's Award. In *Lives of Mothers and Daughters*, she reveals what it was like to grow up with a mother of such tremendous renown. At the core of the book lies a loving and intimate biography of Alice, presented as only a

daughter can. Sheila traces the story back to her ancestors, who left Scotland in the early 19th century, before telling of Alice's birth in 1931, her youth growing up on an Ontario farm, and her two marriages, and two grandchildren--Sheila's own children. Sheila has a tale to tell that's her own as well, involving her writerly aspirations and her efforts to forge a unique path while following in her mother's footsteps. And so, from her perspective as both an author and a mother, Sheila writes frankly about her mother and her mother's writing. The legions of devoted Alice Munro fans will glimpse real-life settings, situations and characters that have worked their way into her fiction as Sheila offers a behind-the-scenes tour (replete with Munro family snapshots) of the inspirations for the tales Munro fans know and love.

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013 Alice Munro, who received the National Book Critics Circle Award for her latest collection of stories, *The Love of a Good Woman*, is widely acknowledged as a modern master of the short story. In this earlier collection, she demonstrates all of those strengths that have won her so many literary accolades. A divorced woman returns to her childhood home where she confronts the memory of her parents' confounding yet deep bond. The accidental near-drowning of a child exposes the fragility of the trust between children and parents. A young man, remembering a terrifying childhood incident, wrestles with the responsibility he has always felt for his younger brother. In these and other stories Alice Munro proves once again a sensitive and compassionate chronicler of our times. Drawing us into the most intimate corners of ordinary lives, she reveals much about ourselves, our choices, and our experiences of love.

An international literary event: Ten new stories from a beloved and award-winning author. This stunning collection of new stories demonstrates once again why Alice Munro is celebrated as a pre-eminent master of the short story. While some of the stories are traditional, set in "Alice Munro Country" in Ontario or in B.C., dealing with ordinary women's lives, others have a new, sharper edge. They involve child murders, strange sex, and a terrifying home invasion. By way of astonishing variety, the title story, set in Victorian Europe, follows the last journey from France to Sweden of a famous Russian mathematician. This daring, superb collection proves that Alice Munro will always surprise you. In the stories that make up *Dance of the Happy Shades*, the deceptive calm of small-town life is brought memorably to the page, revealing the countryside of Southwestern Ontario to be home to as many small sufferings and unanticipated emotions as any place. This is the book that earned Alice Munro a devoted readership and established her as one of Canada's most beloved writers. Winner of the Governor General's Award for Fiction, *Dance of the Happy Shades* is Alice Munro's first short story collection.

When two teenage girls fabricate one end of a correspondence, they leave a lonely, unprepossessing housemaid with some sadly misguided ideas. The prank upsets several lives, even if all the pieces don't tip over in the expected directions. Part of the *Storycuts* series, this short story was originally published in the collection *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*.

After hard luck and heartbreak, Sunny finally finds a place to call home—in the middle of an Afghanistan war zone. There, the thirty-eight-year-old serves up her American hospitality to the expats who patronize her coffee shop, including a British journalist, a "danger pay" consultant, and a wealthy and well-connected woman. True to her name, Sunny also bonds with people whose language and landscape are unfamiliar to most Westerners, but whose hearts and souls are very much like our own: the maternal Halajan, who vividly recalls the days before the Taliban and now must hide a modern romance from her ultratraditional son; and Yazmina, a young Afghan villager with a secret that could put everyone's life in jeopardy. In this gorgeous first novel, New York Times bestselling author Deborah Rodriguez paints a stirring portrait of a faraway place where—even in the fog of political and social conflict—friendship, passion, and hope still exist. Originally published as *A Cup of Friendship* Look for special features inside. Join the Circle for author chats and more. [RandomHouseReadersCircle.com](http://RandomHouseReadersCircle.com)

WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE® IN LITERATURE 2013 In these eight tales, Munro evokes the devastating power of old love suddenly recollected. She tells of vanished schoolgirls and indentured frontier brides and an eccentric recluse who, in the course of one surpassingly odd dinner party, inadvertently lands herself a wealthy suitor from exotic Australia. And Munro shows us how one woman's romantic tale of capture and escape in the high Balkans may end up inspiring another woman who is fleeing a husband and lover in present-day Canada. "Open Secrets is a book that dazzles with its faith in language and in life."--New York Times Book Review

**\*\*Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature\*\*** Alice Munro captures the essence of life in her brilliant new collection of stories. Moments of change, chance encounters, the twist of fate that leads a person to a new way of thinking or being: the stories in *Dear Life* build to form a radiant, indelible portrait of just how dangerous and strange ordinary life can be. In these selections from twenty years of her best short fiction, Edna O'Brien's *A Fanatic Heart* pulls the reader into a woman's experience. Her stories portray a young Irish girl's view of obsessive love and its often wrenching pain, while tales of contemporary life show women who open themselves to sexuality, to disappointment, to madness. Throughout, there is always O'Brien's voice—wondrous, despairing, moving—examining passionate subjects that lay bare the desire and needs that can be hidden in a woman's heart.

All of these eight wonderful stories are about what people will do for love, and the unexpected routes their passion will force them to take. An old landlady in Vancouver who alarms the just-married narrator with her prim advice about married life – and "the peculiar threat" of a china cabinet that must be washed once a month – is shown to have conspired when young in a crime of passion. A young mother, at the mercy of the "radiant explosion" that comes when she thinks of her secret life, abandons her baby and four-year old to be with her lover in the story "The Children Stay." A gruff old country doctor in the 1960s is discovered by his daughter to be helping desperate women, his "special patients." An impetuous young woman meets a visiting Indian student and conceives on a train from Vancouver to Toronto because of "the fact that you couldn't get condoms around the Calgary station, not for love or money." An Ontario farm wife's affair drives her husband to commit a murder; its discovery, years later, will act as a negotiating point for a new, presumably satisfactory, marriage. The book is clear-eyed about the imperfections of marriage, the clutter of our emotional lives, and the impermanence of love: "Not

that that was the end. For we did make up. But we didn't forgive each other." Even the shared memories of earlier times prove to be a minefield, and many of the stories track the changes that time brings over generations to families, lovers, and even to friends who share old, intimate secrets about "the prostration of love." As always these stories by Alice Munro are shot through with humour, and are as rich as novels. As always the characters in the stories are easily, sometimes uncomfortably, recognizable as people like us. One quote summarizes the delightful surprises that await the reader: "Did you ever think that people's lives could be like that and end up like this? Well, they can."

[Copyright: 84d0e59cdaff9d0b74f8ebfdb6bd7916](#)