



Bodily Secrets (Great Loves, #19)

William Trevor

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Wealthy widow Norah O'Neill wonders if she will ever marry again. When her son decides to close the family's failing toy factory, the manager, a decent man who dances the quickstep beautifully, becomes unemployed. Suddenly, Norah sees her chance for happiness, in a new venture of her own.

United by the theme of love, the writings in the Great Loves series span over two thousand years and vastly different worlds. Readers will be introduced to love's endlessly fascinating possibilities and extremities: romantic love, platonic love, erotic love, gay love, virginal love, adulterous love, parental love, filial love, nostalgic love, unrequited love, illicit love, not to mention lost love, twisted and obsessional love...

Bodily Secrets (Great Loves, #19) Details

Date : Published 2007 by Penguin (first published January 23rd 1992)

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Author : William Trevor

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Plum-crazy says

Five bittersweet love stories (my favourite being "*Lovers of their time*") set in a time when attitudes to love, romance & sex were very different to those of today....but in many ways things never change!
A quick but nevertheless lovely read.

Rosaleen Lynch says

William Trevor has that uncanny ability to make the ordinary and extraordinary lie side by side as if they were born as twins, separated at birth and after many years apart find each other and wonder at how much they have in common. The characters he creates are living, breathing, loving beings in a world that is real, in all its anguish, disappointment, excitement and joy. Bodily Secrets is a great collection of his stories to whet your appetite for more of the William Trevor world.

David Haight says

William Trevor is an astonishing writer. These stories really are - for lack of a better word - sad. These characters discover something about their lives and end up having to accept their fate. The sense of heavy resignation - the steady hopelessness of life - is hard at times to read. But Trevor does it so well and so honestly that he makes it hard to not go forward. His stories are hard to put down. And his pacing matches the gradual realization of his characters and their fate - deliberate, slow, forceful.

Dave J says

A thin, little book and my first exposure to William Trevor. Five stories of love set in the 40s, 50s and 60s in Ireland. Regular folks of all ages in sometimes clunky relationships in dowdy, grey townscapes and rooms ... but sympathetically written and feeling authentic. A few chuckles here and there. I loved it.

Emilie says

It's ok. Not too cerebral and wordy but not too deep either. I liked some aspects of the stories but not any one fully, weirdly.

okyrhoe says

The beauty of these stories is that they convey emotional depth without being wordy.

William Trevor is a master at uncovering the complexities of human relationships hidden behind the mundane activities of the characters, even though the characters themselves say very little.

I am not sure I always side with the narrative point of view (resignation/acceptance of the character's fate), but I do enjoy the way the author succinctly describes the internal workings of these characters. There is an honesty here, in that the author lets his characters decide for themselves, rather than directing their actions for the sake of a 'complete' ending, or for bringing a conclusion to a thematic statement.

If you like this collection, I recommend W. Trevor's short novel *The Story of Lucy Gault* (2002).

Mathona says

He writes so well. Little stories well told.

Marthe Bozart says

Bodily Secrets by William Trevor is a really really short book, with 5 stories.

Story 1 is about a man not wanting to fall out of love.

Story 2 is about how a man finds love, but life destroys it.

Story 3 is about an old woman looking to marry, but not out of love.

Story 4 is about a man who wants to save the girl he loves, but can't.

Story 5 is about a man waging out who won the most out of his marriage, him or his bride.

As you can see, in short, all these stories are about love. What I found really refreshing is that none of these stories are sappy, cliché lovestories. This collection shows very neatly how love can create all sorts of emotions, all sorts of pain and grief and happiness and contentness,...

These are not the stories that will explain everything to you, a lot of it is between the lines. If you want to enjoy this book to the fullest, read slowly. Don't think 'cool, this is a really thin book, I'll just blaze through it in one night'. You won't get everything out of it that way. These stories need some time, they warrant some reflection, some 'slowness'.

All of the stories are so beautiful in their own way. For example, in the first story, the last scene, was really heartbraking, really beautiful. Suddenly all the rest of the story made sense, fell into place. The feeling that crept up on me during that last moment was so sad, so melancholic, so painfull, I could picture what the main character was feeling exactly, it was so tragic.

Every story left me with a different feeling, sometimes an emptiness, sometimes a sadness,... None of them are the superficial teenage-lovestory and I was so thankfull for that. The emotions in this book were so much more profound.

Although the stories are told with very little words, the feelings behind them are so so clear, so well conveyed. William Trevor might not be an eloquent writer, but he is a master at conveying a certain feeling very quickly and well.

I loved these stories, I truly did. I'd recommend them to anyone who is in a pensive state, wants to reminisce about past and future loves.

Kay says

I love William Trevor's stories - spare, yet with such emotion packed into a few short words. I was especially drawn to the title story, in which the widow O'Neill defies expectations with somewhat unexpected results. There's little enough happiness - or at least lasting happiness - in these stories, but they linger in my mind long after I move on to the next book.

Kris McCracken says

A slender collection of short stories by a fine writer, the collection revolves around the theme of relationships (and yes, 'love'). At once tender and taut, it is a great little book that covers the whole gamut of emotions. Recommended.
