



The Female Complaint: Tales of Unruly Women

Rosalie Morales Kearns (Editor) , Heather Fowler (Contributor) , Soniah Kamal (Contributor) , Teresa Milbrodt (Contributor) , Maureen O'Leary (Contributor) , Sarah Marian Seltzer (Contributor) , Katherine Vaz (Contributor) , Jennifer Baker (Contributor) , more... Ellie Knightsbridge (Contributor) , Maureen O'Leary Wanket ...less

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Praised by Kirkus as "a vital addition to contemporary literature." The thirty-six stories in this anthology, all by women authors, center around female characters who follow their own paths and tell the powers-that-be what they don't want to hear, women who stand up for themselves, for each other, for their beliefs.

The characters include housewives and high school students, a stand-up comedian, an artist, an attendant at a nursing home, several scientists. There's a woman who turns into a leopard; a chemist who comes to the rescue of a resuscitated Isaac Newton; and a female giant who metes out rough justice in a futuristic penal colony for male criminals.

Navigating a fine line between anger and laughter, these are raucous stories of solidarity, resistance, transformation, and joy.

Contributors include Gina Ochsner, Kathleen Alcalá, Theodora Goss, Kim Chinquee, and Katherine Vaz.

The Female Complaint: Tales of Unruly Women Details

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From Reader Review The Female Complaint: Tales of Unruly Women for online ebook

Vee says

It took me awhile to get all the way through this because I would read a few essays, set it aside, and then read a few more the next week. I just finished the final entry, and I have to say, I'm really sad! I guess I'll have to find a new collection of essays to pass my ten-minute breaks at work, but I doubt the next will be this poignant.

This is unusual fare for me; I typically live for the thousand page novel that everyone else thinks is too long. Unusual and, I have to say, refreshing.

My favorite essay was probably the second one, a spot-on characterization of the type of American, and the type of man, that I worked with for far too long and go out of my way to avoid now. All those uncomfortable memories didn't prevent me from laughing, though. This was one of the few entries or passages from a book that's genuinely made me laugh out loud, and it made me wish I had half the courage of the author. If the goal of the editors was to hopefully move a few women to be truer to themselves in the future, they succeeded.

But aside from that, it's hard to choose a favorite. Reading such a broad and touching collection from a group of women was a genuinely cathartic experience for me, and furthermore, I appreciated the editors commitment to inclusivity. Highly recommended :)

Ellen says

My detailed review of this book and a shout-out to Ramona Quimby and Beverly Cleary appears on The Fiction Writers Review, www.fictionwritersreview.com.

Kathleen O'Nan says

What a great collection of short stories of women that are strong women in many, many different ways. Some are funny, some are contemplative, all are important to the genre.

Maureen Wanket says

A story of mine is in this one, but besides that, objectively speaking, it's a wonderful collection. Each story evokes imagination and emotion. They are each so unique in voice and scope and intention. These are great stories, worthy of rereading. An ambitious and wonderful collection of stories.

Susanna Sturgis says

No, it did not take me 11 months to read this excellent collection of short stories by women. Well, yes, it did, but that wasn't the book's fault. Most novels or book-length works of nonfiction are best read over a period of days, lest one forget the beginning before one reaches the end. Not so an anthology of stories by almost three dozen writers. It's best to give each story time to stop reverberating in one's head before going on to the next. And that, I'm here to tell you, leads to gaps of days, weeks, and even months between one story and the next. It also leads to reading stories more than once.

Many of these stories have a magical, fantastical, or science-fictional element to them -- totally appropriate for unruly women who break and bend rules and make up their own. Reality is so much shiftier than we give it credit for.

The Female Complaint is one of five titles published thus far by Shade Mountain Press, established in 2014 by editor Rosalie Morales Kearns to publish literature by women. Each one breaks new ground and sets a high standard for originality, diversity, literary quality, and production. This anthology most definitely measures up.

Shelley says

I was expecting to like this book more than I did. I like the concept of "unruly women" and hoped for an overall good collection of stories. Unfortunately, about two thirds of these stories failed to meet my expectation.

I DID like about a third of the stories, namely: Grave to Cradle, Stony Limits, Noelia and Amparo, Revenge on a Plate, A Big Girl has a Good Time with Small Men, Discretion, Runaway Truck Ramp, Star of the North, And the Wisdom to Know the Difference, Game Set Match, Yatri, How to Save a Child from Choking, and What do you call a Monster?

Give this book a chance for the good stories in there, but be prepared for the uneven quality....

L.A. says

A killer collection of mostly speculative tales written by and about an inclusive group of women.

Short story anthologies can be a mixed bag, but Kearns has assembled a strong set of tales here, without a clunker in the bunch. Given that these are tales of outsiders and troublemakers, I'm not surprised that so many of them contained elements of magic/magical realism/fantasy: how else can a woman gain control over her world unless she shapes a new world? Even those tales set firmly in our own universe, however, demonstrate strength and an unwillingness to buckle down to conventional mores and values. Each of the five sections focuses on a different theme: Resistance, Solidarity, Entanglements, Mother Figures, and Transformation. These themes play out in the lives of women of color, women with disabilities, and queer women of the past, the present, and the future. They don't always end happily, but they always end with zing.

My favorites here include "The High Priestess Never Marries," "Stony Limits," "The Star of the North,"

"Game, Set, Match," and "Discretion," but they're all just so good. I'm definitely buying this for myself, and looking into the other anthologies Kearns has produced. There's a helpful contributor list in the back that will allow you to pursue other writing by your favorites from this volume. Recommended for anyone who considers the term "social justice warrior" a compliment.

SmallPressPicks says

This story collection artfully blends the light and the dark, the bitter and the sweet, with a delightful infusion of the strange and surreal. One story I was especially taken with was "Silted Castle Walls," by Megan Rahija Bush, which complicates conventional notions of the "summer romance" and of any love limited by time or circumstance. But there are many additional stories in this anthology that I would highly recommend.

Susan says

This was an interesting compilation of stories. Each one very different from the other, and each featuring a somewhat unhinged female. A completely different sort of read.

Book Riot Community says

This is an anthology of stories by woman authors, all featuring female characters who are strong in their own ways. It is an excellent mix of stories dealing with the breadth and depth of the female experience – from the dark to the lighthearted, from the mother who turns into a leopard to the librarian who struggles with the loss of her husband, from high school crushes to domestic violence. I love the concept of a collection of stories by women about women because too often the stories of women are treated as "less than" in literature, and this anthology lets them shine. — Valerie Michael

from The Best Books We Read In November: <http://bookriot.com/2015/11/30/riot-r...>
