



Town

James Roy

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Everyone has a story.

In Town, James Roy turns his hand to the short story, using it to explore the lives of the young residents of an Australian town. This town doesn't have a name. But if it seems familiar, it's because we recognise the people who walk its streets.

From the serendipity of an unexpected moment of connection, to the sadness of leaving home, and the pain of the desperate decisions we make, these stories take a personal and uncompromising look at life. Love and loss, grief, humour and passion. Hope and hopelessness. Thirteen linked short stories, spanning a year in the lives of thirteen young people, from a town near you.

Town Details

Date : Published 2007 by UQP

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Author : James Roy

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Genre : Young Adult, Short Stories, Cultural, Australia

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From Reader Review Town for online ebook

LJ says

I truly wanted to like this book but I just couldn't. I think the concept was such a great idea and had so much potential but was poorly executed. I see what Roy was trying to do, and I'm disappointed that it just didn't work. Each story was pretty dull and didn't really make an impact before moving onto the next story. I think the only thing I really enjoyed was the way all of the character's interconnected, that was quite interesting. Overall, it wasn't really worth the read.

Judith says

James Roy is a consistently good, but somewhat overlooked, writer for children and teenagers. I am hoping that "Town" will be his break-through book. It's a collection of short stories, each one about a different young adult character from a small rural town somewhere in Australia.

The thirteen stories span a year in the life of these people in this community, and the cumulative effect of the stories layering upon each other create a rich and involving read. Beautiful writing and excellent characterisation makes for a book I really want to re-read—except I've loaned my copy to a friend.

Adele says

Before this week I had never read a James Roy novel. I had heard his name of course, he had won the NSW Premier's Literary Award in 2008 for this title, but I had never had the pleasure of reading one of his books.

Town is a curious little creature comprised of a series of short stories all revolving around the teens in one small Australian town. Each vignette is from one teen's perspective, written in their voice, telling their story. You'd have to be a complete sourpuss not to revel in the authenticity, the humour, the pathos and the utter delight of this novel. Roy knows small towns, there was a feeling of familiarity and yet, the characters were all unique.

It is easy to be captivated by the novel. One vignette would have you chuckling over a small victory, the next you would find yourself tossing between anger, frustration and sadness within a couple of pages. The tales would intertwine with characters appearing to large and small degrees in other's stories just like an actual country town.

A whole range of subject matter is tackled - disability, family disintegration, death and grief, racism and sexuality. However, you will not, at any time, feel as though you are being hit over the head with the dumb cliche stick. Roy has a natural style and authentic voice that works simply with the stories he's telling. He sweeps you along for the ride with relatable characters that you will find something to like in them, no matter how small.

This may have been my first Roy but it will not be my last. Colour me impressed and eager for more!

James Laidler says

A collection of short stories which combine beautifully into a whole. A celebration of life in all its earthy grief and wonder. An impressive read.

Banafsheh Serov says

Set in a fictional town, Town is a string of thirteen linked stories revolving around the lives of the young adults who live there. Each character is diverse in their background, personality, gender and age thus illustrating the characteristics of the town and the individual struggles, wants and desires of its residents. Town is also an illustration of no matter what our background, we all share the common need for love, security, acceptance and a sense of belonging. Many of the stories revolved around family ties that bind or drive us apart. Amongst the thirteen stories, there is at least one character that the reader will recognize or identify with which proves that despite our outward appearances, deep down we are not all that different from one another.

Simone Ramone says

This book reminded me of exactly what I hate about short stories.
I was left with the feeling that these were all ideas the author didn't bother fleshing out.
Maybe 3 stories were good, 3 were okay, and the rest were not worth printing.

For the 3 characters that were very good deserved much better treatment and the rest deserved far less than they got.

Viktoria says

"Town" erzählt in 13 Kapiteln von 13 Jugendlichen. Jedes Kapitel gehört der Geschichte eines Jugendlichen, wobei sie alle lose mit einander bekannt sind und man hin und wieder Kleinigkeiten von anderen erfährt. Sie erzählen in Ich-Perspektive, was manchmal auch den Stil des Erzählens beeinflusst. Ein Jugendlicher spricht nicht so gut die Sprache, ein anderer macht selten Komma und Punkt. Wenn allerdings die Figur keine Sprachschwäche hat, reden sie eigentlich alle gleich. Darin ist auf jeden Fall etwas verschenkt. Ich bin mir nicht sicher, ob ich dieses Buch als Roman bezeichnen würde. Es ist eher eine Kurzgeschichtenreihe, die mit ähnlichem Personal arbeiten. Das zieht einfach nach sich, dass einige Geschichten interessant sind und andere so gar nicht.

Die Geschehnisse sind ganz im Realen verhaftet. Das machen sie für mich alltäglich und nicht besonders. Es wird kein besonderer Blick auf / in das Leben der Jugendlichen geworfen. Das ist nicht spannend. Und

dennoch ist dieses Buch auf der Nominiertenliste des Deutschen Literaturpreises. Ich vermute, dass hier das Konzept nominiert wurde, nicht die Ausführung.

Kat says

This was my first taste of James Roy and I liked it. When it comes to short story anthologies it's very rare that I read them from cover to cover. I prefer to pick and choose depending on whether or not the opening of the story grabs me, but this collection had me reading all the way through.

As the blurb says, a collection of stories centered around the lives of a group of adolescents in a small unnamed Australia country town. Some of the stories stayed with me long after I read them (The New Girl, The First Law of Thermodynamics, The Clearing), others didn't necessarily resonate with me but were well written nonetheless (The Extension Piece, Running Out of Puff). What I liked most was Roy's ability to bring out so many distinct character voices, giving each story a distinctly different feel. It usually took me a little while into each story to place the protagonist of the tale in the wider context of all the town's teen characters, but this didn't detract from my enjoyment of the collection.

Zoe says

I thought this book was interesting how all the stories had a small number of characters and a problem. The problems were all different and interesting to read. Having different characters in each chapter and having them links to other parts of the book also made it interesting. My favourite month of this story was June (Veronika) because this story was intense, by having Veronika under a lot of pressure. I also liked how she stood up for herself and found a way out of her problem.

Shirley Marr says

I wanted to love this book. As much as I wanted to love "Dubliners" by James Joyce. Both books are much-praised collections of short stories about a small town and they are supposed to paint a complete story when viewed as a whole. There is no doubt that James Roy is a writer of considerable talent. He has a wonderfully realistic, down-to-earth and deceptively simple style of narrative, full of sombre pathos and depth.

As opposed to a novel, which you choose because the subject matter interests you - collections of short stories means that you might be really interested in one or two, vaguely interested in a few others...and be faced with some stories that if they were stand-alone novels, you would never have picked up at all.

It went like this: I loved the opening story. I loved the tale about two cheeky teen boys and I wanted to tag along with them and laugh at some more of their shenanigans, but I was whisked away by the next short story.... but it was all about cricket. Which made me feel as if I really were spending a day at the cricket... which I did once and I went comatose. Rinse and repeat.

Presenting a set of short stories lacks the backbone that say a central story told from multiple points of view would.

I wanted to skip some stories, but then it would destroy the effect cos the same character would appear later and I wouldn't know their "back story"! I really enjoyed it when the characters intersected with each other, but it didn't quite form the "Town" I was hoping for.

ps - James Roy is this country's most underated writer of... teen girls. He writes the sort of strong, realistic and gutsy girls I want to be friends with. My favourite character by far was Veronica ("The Clearing") and if the whole book was just about her, I'd give it six out of five stars.

Sita says

Amazing...

Let me start by saying that this **isn't** the sort of book that I would normally read. The only reason I read it was for my English class, and boy am I glad I read it. This book was amazing and I decided to review it because the term is over, so we'll be starting a new book next term. And I thought, really am I going to let all those lessons analysing each short story go to waste? I think not! So enough of my rambling, onto the actual review:

What the book was about:

The book is set over the course of a year, it is made up of 12 different short stories, each told from different peoples point of views. Some in first person some in third person, I actually found the fact that the author had a totally different voice for each of the characters. I'll give you a few examples:

Adam – Adam spent the entire story describing Robbie and his life and what happened to him *“Sometimes he gets onto the bus with a shoe-box under his arm, or a jam jar. And you’ll ask him what he’s got, just to be polite...”*

Lee – Lee’s story was written in a different way compared to all the others. And it was refreshing. *“But I do some quick maths, & you don’t even have to be a bit bright to work out that it’s like the beers at the lake, & three guys divided by two girls means that there’s going to be one remainder, if you know what I mean.”*

Most of the other story’s are written normally, but we still get a glance into the characters personality just by the way the character talks and narrates the story.

What I thought of it:

WOW! Like I said before, normally I would never read this sort of book. But am I glad that I did. I can see why it has won so many awards. The characterisation was good, all the different story’s were good, and how it all came together was amazing. The novel on a whole was generally amazing. The only thing that I would change is the cover, when I first saw it I thought it was about a bunch of kids in rehab or jail, all discussing their problems, no joke. Besides the fact that the book was amazing, I can find no flaws in the writing the plot or anything really. Maybe you can find some problems but I can’t and that’s why I gave town a 5 (I would give it higher if I could).

Overall...

Town is a must read, and this maybe nothing like what you normally read. But trust me Town has it all, and you can read this book with high expectations. Trust me. Town does and will not disappoint.

Christina Batey says

James Roy's interwoven series of short stories explores the struggle for young people to find direction in a town which by its own nature wanders aimlessly. The characters keep popping up in others' stories, much like in a real country town where everyone knows everyone, somehow.

Mr Roy's stories drew me in. I finished "The Whistleblower" feeling frustrated and unsatisfied - I think this was the author's aim. I held my breath most of the way through "The Clearing".

I could see where some of the stories were going to end, but it didn't make the read any less enjoyable. Some others had a surprising and satisfying twist.

Mr Roy explores the different voices and situations in the town with clarity and accuracy. Some of the younger voices sometimes didn't ring true with the dialogue for me, but it would be a minor nitpick in an otherwise involving and enjoyable read.

Julian w says

This was a really bad book. I hate it.

Barbara Philip says

Annotation:

Thirteen linked stories told by thirteen different adolescents over thirteen months (February to February) in an unnamed Australian town.

These stories, which vary in length, create a jigsaw-like effect as various characters are shown from the perspective of the teller. The interactions, slowly revealed, are fascinating.

Themes in this book:

Adolescents. Country children. Individuality. Relationships. Year.

Source: Magpies

LauraW says

I generally dislike short stories. I just get interested in the characters and the story is over. The story never seems to have enough STORY for me. But I think, in a way, that is part of the point of this collection. The stories are interrelated, but there isn't an overarching plot. It is just a series of vignettes about kids who are near the end of their high school years. The point, for me, is that, in general, this IS all you get. You see

snippets of people's lives, but you never know their whole story - or even the parts of their story that are most important to them. You get your little snippet of their life and then you get a snippet of the next person's life. Does it all make sense? Probably not, but it IS life.

I am also not a good judge of "good" writing, but, from what I can tell, this is significantly above the average writing quality.
