



The Rip

Robert Drewe

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Internationally acclaimed as a novelist and memoirist, Robert Drewe returns to the short-story territory he has made his own. Set against a backdrop - the Australian coast - as randomly and imminently violent as it is beautiful, *The Rip* reveals the fragility of relationships between husbands and wives, children and parents, friends and lovers.

You will find yourself set down in a modern Garden of Eden with a disgraced Adam seeking his Eve; sharing the fears of a small boy in a coastal classroom as a tsunami approaches; in an English gaol cell with an Australian surfer on drug charges; watching an American film scout confront his masculinity on a Pacific island; and witnessing a middle-aged farmer contemplating murdering the hippie who stole his wife.

Written in a variety of moods, always compassionate, wry and razor-sharp, these dazzling stories are crafted with all the weight and resonance of Drewe's longer fiction as well as the incisive wit, passion and pathos of his Australian classic, *The Bodysurfers*.

The Rip Details

Date : Published 2008 by Penguin (Australia)

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Author : Robert Drewe

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From Reader Review The Rip for online ebook

Barbara says

I don't usually read short stories, but when an unplanned baby-sit night caught me without the book I was reading, I chose The Rip from the bookshelves, deciding that I could read a story or two during the evening and return it to its place.

However, I found myself half way through a story which had interested me enough to want to see how it ended, so took it home.

Though Robert Drewe 'paints' some great pictures and sensitive portraits, I found the stories, over all, unsatisfying and bizarre, and skipped a couple totally.

I'm not sure that I will be looking for his other short stories - or even his novels!

Mike says

I like Robert Drewe's writing, mostly and the dark humour of some of his work. The Body Surfers is a great collection. This isn't. The stories are more like sketches; they don't go anywhere. The characters are cliches and North Coast stereotypes. Tedious seachangers. It's all just kind of generic creative writing course pieces that are nice and all but not much more. The kind of stuff you read in dull literary mags that take themselves way too seriously. Whatever. The Lap Pool is the best of the bunch, although it's not very interesting until near the end, when it really takes an unexpected turn.

Calzean says

Well read and easy to read.

Some of the stories were very good. But a lot of them just ended and gave me the impression the author had run out of ideas and had moved on.

Jill says

Oh dear. Not my cup of tea. Read eight or so of the stories and tossed it in. All the stories were like "Picnic at Hanging Rock" type with an open ending some weird and some just stopped.

Anne_MB says

A great collection from Robert Drewe, one of my favourite Aussie writers. Quite varied but all profoundly Australian, the common thread being the coastal or small town settings and often a character new or somehow out of place in that location.

Trevor says

Sorry guys - is there a librarian who can fix to to The Rip by Robert Drewe???

I've read a few books by Robert Drewe, in fact, I've started at least five. I never got more than 30 pages into The Drowner although I did finish Our Sunshine, even if I thought it was a bit crappy. Our Sunshine came out at about the same time as Carey's True History of the Kelly Gang and was on pretty much the same topic, so it effectively stopped me reading that. Years ago I read Drewe's short stories called Bodysurfers and I really loved those stories. There was even a television thing made of them and that was also pretty good. But it is years since I read any of those stories and can hardly remember anything of them – except, that is, that I thought they were really very good. I've also read The Shark Net and loved that. I read that only about five years ago, so would trust that is still worth reading.

I had decided that he was a writer that was much better at writing short stories – and if you had asked me to recommend anything by him, I would have said, 'read his short stories, he is particularly good at them.' So when I read these and found I could hardly drag my way through them I was really very surprised. These are so dreadfully over-written that they are almost clumsy – and the themes are so drab and predictable and the motifs that were in Bodysurfers – architects and artists and the beach and Australians being Australians – that all seemed so fresh and new and different in the 1980s now just seemed like yet another dose of meat and two veg.

And I couldn't for the life of me work out what he would want to write these stories for. They were just the same as a million other stories that you might find written in a million creative writing courses just about anywhere across the first world. It is not that I wanted them to be more Australian, it is not that there weren't enough characters wearing Akubra hats and saying, "Nah, mate, Dinkum" and shit like that – it was just that the stories seemed so pointlessly bland. You know, yet another relationship on the rocks, yet another middle-aged, straight-laced farmer getting into a relationship with a woman into feng shui (do you think there is a proper way to say that or is it just random? Is it meant to be shoe-ee or sho-ay?).

I don't think there was a single character in this entire book of short stories that I could care less about. You know, let's go through some of them – there is the guy who has somehow lost lots of other people's money and is living in his house somewhere in the country waiting for his trial and swimming in his pool every day while his wife is in Sydney with the kids – this one was a bit like The Drover's Wife, even if not quite as good. There is the surfer who is in an English gaol waiting for trial on a drugs smuggling charge and studying creative writing. There is some short-arsed American film studio guy looking for a location to film in Queensland who comes over here and shags our sheilas. There's a tree change. There are country folk who don't quite get the strange ways of these city folk who have moved into the neighbourhood. There is some coffee grower whose wife runs off with some guy in a kaftan so that she can finally begin her life's journey (oh, bloody hell, so many people on journeys, what the hell is this, a book of short stories or a bus depot?) There was even a kid potentially trapped in a tsunami... I couldn't help feeling that somewhere out there you might be able to find the Penguin Book of Themes for Effective Short Stories and...

But I could almost forgive the endless clichés of the stories, if only the writing hadn't made me cringe far too frequently. Is 'eschew' really a word one ought to use in a short story – I mean, a word one can use with a straight face? Is it ever a good thing to say, "Look mum, no hands" about learning to ride a bike in any piece of fiction of any description ever?

Like I said, I really liked Bodysurfers – but I read it a very long time ago and I will avoid reading it again now, just in case the memory is better than the reality. Oh, the other thing about Bodysurfers is that painting on the cover – that sort of Nazi-Australian Beach Art that both sums up what is so appealing about the Australian beach and what is so disgusting about it. That was how I remembered Bodysurfers, all fit and lovely on the surface, but not so nice underneath. The problems I've had with this one is perhaps best summed up by what was easily the worst story in the book, Beach Man – Bush Woman. He is in love with the beach, she with the bush, he is in advertising, she is an academic, she makes a fool of him in front of her work colleagues, he worries she doesn't love him anymore. She buys him a canoe and he thinks she is watching him as he rows out to the sandbar. But she isn't watching as he finds out when he looks back at the house, which he suddenly notices is run down and surrounded by the bush and he is alone in his canoe surrounded by the beach, and, and – spare me...

This book has received rave reviews from people much more aware of the joys of Australian fiction than I am. I thought it tried far too hard and begged too much for my interest and then struggled to be clear and I couldn't help feeling this seemed to be a symptom of the author not really having anything he actually needed to say. He clearly had things he wanted to say, but nothing he needed to say, nothing at all.

Kirsten says

A pretty depressing collection of short stories, my favourite being The water person and the tree person which illustrated the slick ugly side of pretentious literature types (fitting as reading for book club). It was great to read generally aus characters in an aus setting; some stories had fun humorous moments eg pink flip flops on blokey guy, but overall the cast of broken relationships made this a less than enjoyable read for me.

Louise Buchanan says

I would say a 3 3/4 star for me. I like how he writes but I always find short stories leave me disatisfied. I need some instruction on how to truly appreciate them or at least some discussion on their merits and purpose (?)

WF Boey says

I like the last story, "The life alignment of the coffee grower" best, but enjoyed almost all the stories in this collection, more than those in The Bodysurfers, maybe because the different Aussie blokes featured are so sympathetically drawn.

Virginia says

I love short stories; I think there is such a skill in creating an effective short story. There was nothing wrong with these stories but they just didn't grab me. Except for "The Lap Pool." I seriously didn't see that ending coming!

Merideth Lee says

Short stories are not generally my preferred fiction however, I do enjoy Robert Drewe's writing and enjoyed this book.

Joanne Hyland says

Got this little beauty from the library. Robert Drewe at his scintillating best. Loved his character driven short stories that resonate so beautifully with my feelings about the unique Australian landscape and the people who live there.

Jim says

(Note to Librarians - this book is 'The Rip' by Robert Drewe)

A fine collection of short stories; running a gamut of styles and settings, each offering insight into the 'human condition' - not always necessarily fresh, but always well crafted and believable.

Vicki says

The Rip is a wonderful collection of short stories set on the Australian coastline that look at lives changed in an instant by dramatic events.

There are 13 stories in the book, all of them a single separate gem that hang together to form a perfect strand. At the centre is the ocean, soothing and comforting, but in an instant, tempestuous and unforgiving; not unlike our relationships with our friends and loved ones.

In The Rip, Robert Drewe has us laughing at our ridiculousness, cringing at our desperation and saddened by the harsh cruelties of life; all the time with the underlying satire that he is loved for in Australia.

Drewe highlights that just like a rip; our lives can change forever in an instant, especially when we are unprepared for the unexpected.

For full review <http://www.slyonbooks.com/2011/03/rip...>

Romy says

An excellent example of Robert Drewe's short stories. An short they are!
