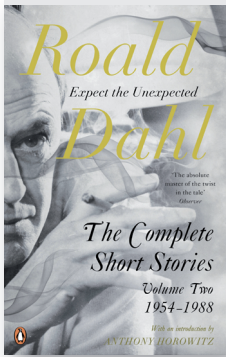


GENERAL FICTION



The Complete Short Stories Volume Two 1954-1988 Roald Dahl

Rape. Murder. Suicide. Thuggery. Marital infidelity. And the killing of humans on an industrial scale. These are just some of the themes covered in this collection of short stories for adults penned by one of the world's most loved children's writers. So it's probably best if you refrain from

bundling this book along with *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or *Matilda* when you're sending gifts to the grandchildren.

Almost every one of the 28 stories – spread across 802 pages – ends with a satisfying, stinging twist, in which many a cunning schemer gets their comeuppance. But more than a few innocents are sacrificed along the way too.

In the first, 'The Way Up to Heaven', a long-suffering wife exacts vengeance upon her husband. For decades he has needled her by causing this fastidiously punctual woman to be late. She stumbles upon her method of retaliation entirely by chance, but she exploits the opportunity in such a way that there is no possibility that she could be held culpable for her spouse's fate.

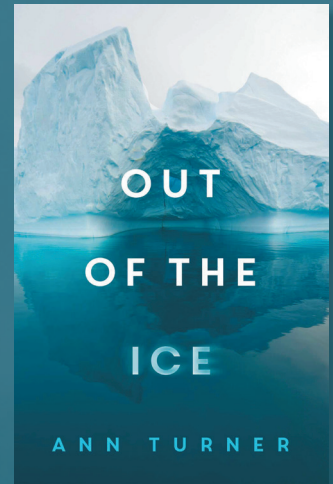
'Parson's Pleasure' is the tale of a dealer in antiques who generates business for himself by scouring the English countryside, looking for treasures that are mouldering away in the homes of guileless country folk. The dealer dons the garb of a clergyman to lend a distracting air of sanctity to his greedy enterprise and offers his victims only a fraction of the true value of the items of furniture.

'Princess Mammalia' is the shortest story in this collection at only six pages. But like any good fairytale, it packs a great deal into its compact form. A plain and dumpy young princess with a thick neck awakes one morning to find herself magically transformed into a dazzling beauty. She had always been much loved around the palace for her gentle and modest disposition, but once she becomes aware of the power that her newly bestowed physical loveliness confers on her, she ruthlessly exploits it. It's a fascinating rumination on the character-distorting effects of beauty and vanity. It also has the most thrilling ending. Dahl punches you in the guts in the penultimate paragraph. But then he wallops you in the face in the last paragraph with another twist that you won't see coming. This fabulous collection gathers together all of Dahl's stories that have hitherto been scattered across several books. Don't forget to also check out Volume One.

★★★★★ Penguin \$35.00

Reviewed by *Tim Graham*

Gripping suspense
from the bestselling
author of
The Lost Swimmer



Praise for
The Lost Swimmer

"It's absolutely
fantastic."

**Radio National
Books and Arts**

"A vivid,
suspenseful thriller."
**Sydney Morning
Herald**



SIMON & SCHUSTER
AUSTRALIA
A CBS COMPANY