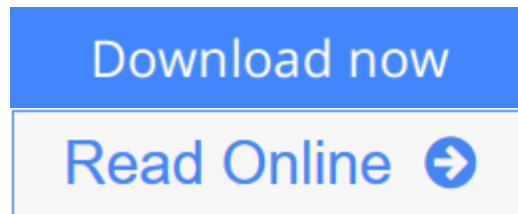


We Live in Water: Stories

By Jess Walter



We Live in Water: Stories By Jess Walter

From *New York Times* bestselling author Jess Walter, now available in paperback—the first collection of short fiction from Jess Walter—a suite of diverse and searching stories about personal struggle and diminished dreams, all of them marked by the wry wit, keen eye, and generosity of spirit that has made him a bookseller and reader favorite


The first collection of short fiction from Jess Walter, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Beautiful Ruins*, *We Live in Water* is a diverse suite of stories marked by the wry wit and generosity of spirit that has made him one of America's most talked-about writers.

Stories in *We Live in Water* range from comic tales of love to social satire and suspenseful crime fiction. Traveling from hip Portland to once-hip Seattle to never-hip Spokane, to a condemned casino in Las Vegas and a bottomless lake in the dark woods of Idaho, this is a world of lost fathers and redemptive con men, of personal struggles and diminished dreams.

In title story “We Live in Water”, a lawyer returns to his corrupt hometown to find his father, who disappeared 30 years earlier. In “Thief,” a blue-collar worker turns unlikely detective to find out which of his kids is stealing from the family fund.

“Anything Helps” sees a homeless man try to raise money to buy his son the new Harry Potter book; and in “Virgo,” a newspaper editor attempts to get back at his superstitious ex-girlfriend by screwing with her horoscope.

Also included are “Don’t Eat Cat” and “Statistical Abstract of My Hometown, Spokane, Washington,” both of which achieved cult status after their first publication online.

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We Live in Water: Stories By Jess Walter Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #110321 in Books
- Brand: Harper Perennial
- Published on: 2013-02-12
- Released on: 2013-02-12
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.00" h x .43" w x 5.31" l, .30 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 177 pages

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Editorial Review

From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review This is the first collection of short stories, all of which have appeared previously in Harper's and McSweeney's, among other literary publications, from the much-acclaimed, best-selling Walter (Beautiful Ruins, 2012). With their visceral depictions of the homeless, the bereft, and the marginalized, often presented with a signature blend of wicked humor and heartbreaking tenderness, Walter's intense stories speak directly to the contemporary American experience. In "Anything Helps," a homeless father has lost his wife to a heroin overdose and his son to social services. Determined to buy the latest Harry Potter novel for his son, he brings a practiced eye to his begging, opting to go "to cardboard." In the title story, Walter expertly uses the tropes of crime fiction to tell the grim story of an unrepentant gambler who steals from the wrong person, and his young son, who is forever haunted by his father's disappearance. In "Don't Eat Cat," Walter turns to zombie fiction to unleash a hilarious satire of political correctness ("I'm not one of those reactionaries, but hiring zombies for food service? I just think that's wrong"). Wildly entertaining and thought-provoking fiction from a prodigiously talented writer. --Joanne Wilkinson

Review

"Walter is a bighearted man who excels at writing about other bighearted, if broken, men. That generosity of spirit coupled with Walter's seeming inability to look away from the messy bits, elevates these stories from dirges to symphonies." (*New York Times Book Review*)

"Walter (*Beautiful Ruins*) writes-beautifully. . . . Darkly funny, sneakily sad, these stories are very, very good. The algorithm for this debut collection is straightforward: if you like to read, you'll like this book." (*Publishers Weekly*, **starred review**)

"Jess Walter, who is revered for his novels, shows a gritty side in these clear-cut stories... Each word is perfectly placed...[Walter] brings his first story collection to a smashing end." (*Daily Beast*)

"Mr. Walter brings (his) outlook to short-story writing easily, and with a vengeance... His most bleakly funny, hard-edge book in years." (*Janet Maslin, New York Times*)

"This badass collection aligns itself... with Walter's gritty, bighearted novels." (*Esquire*)

"[Walter] can mine the least scintilla of humor and wit from his characters' broken lives--people whose dreams will surely not come true but who somehow keep trying." (*Shelf Awareness*)

"Brimms with humanity. **A-**" (*Entertainment Weekly*)

"Wildly entertaining and thought-provoking fiction from a prodigiously talented writer." (**Booklist**)

"This debut story collection from Walter proves he's as skilled at satire and class commentary in the short form as in his novels...A witty and sobering snapshot of recession-era America." (*Kirkus Reviews*, **starred review**)

"Walter's got a great ear and a genius for sympathy with America's new dispossessed." (*NPR's All Things Considered*)

"Deliver[s] unexpected laughs while playing with what it is we think we know...As a reader, I delight in

Walter's work. As a writer (humor me here), I curse. He's so freakishly, fiendishly good, it isn't fair."
(*Seattle Times*)

"With a cineaste's eye, [Walter] mov[es] the action at a terrific pace, such velocity and narrative swing... What he makes us understand is bracing, clear. Fiction or no, it is here we see Walter as trusted interlocutor, saying, let me show you, this is where we are now." (*The Oregonian (Portland)*)

"It is perhaps a grim and fatalistic vision that Jess Walter presents in *We Live in Water*, yet one that in today's America seems all-too-recognizable; no, we may not all live in water, but at one time or another, we have all lived in Spokane." (*San Francisco Chronicle*)

"For over a year, I've been waiting for a story collection to floor me the way Alan Heathcock did with *Volt*. The 13 stories of Jess Walter's *We Live in Water* come close." (*Cleveland Plain Dealer*)

"Black humor is what we expect from Jess Walter. What is different is that the stories give us a sense of the writer's heart we haven't gotten from the parade of bright novels." (*Newsday*)

"There's a certain magic that comes with reading a good story. Even one that's not about a magical time... [Walter's] collection is full of tragic characters — the homeless, the drug-addicted and those who have lost everything to gambling debts. But it is not without humor." (*Marketplace.org, The Big Book*)

"Displays... fearless, unflinching prose in these short stories." (*Bookreporter.com*)

"...gritty, pitch-perfect collection... Walter wrings enlightenment from dark realities." (*People*)

"Incrementally, profoundly, brutally, [Walter] pulls back the curtain... *We Live in Water* is a great collection, in fact, and an important contribution to the literature of our region." (*Portland Mercury*)

"Vintage Walter...quirky. And fun." (*USA Today*)

From the Back Cover

We Live in Water, the first collection of short fiction from *New York Times* bestselling author Jess Walter, is a suite of diverse, often comic stories about personal struggle and diminished dreams, all of them marked by the wry wit and generosity of spirit that has made him one of our most talked-about writers. In "Thief," a blue-collar worker turns unlikely detective to find out which of his kids is stealing from the family vacation fund. In "We Live in Water," a lawyer returns to a corrupt North Idaho town to find the father who disappeared thirty years earlier. In "Anything Helps," a homeless man has to "go to cardboard" to raise enough money to buy his son the new Harry Potter book. In "Virgo," a local newspaper editor tries to get back at his superstitious ex-girlfriend by screwing with her horoscope. And the collection's final story transforms slyly from a portrait of Walter's hometown into a moving contemplation of our times.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Craig Baker:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important take action, like looking for your favorite book and reading a book. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the reserve entitled *We Live in Water: Stories*. Try to make book *We Live in Water:*

Stories as your buddy. It means that it can be your friend when you really feel alone and beside that of course make you smarter than in the past. Yeah, it is very fortunate for you. The book makes you considerably more confident because you can know almost everything by the book. So, we need to make new experience as well as knowledge with this book.

Jennifer Yost:

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Albert Matthews:

The knowledge that you get from *We Live in Water: Stories* may be the more deep you digging the information that hide into the words the more you get serious about reading it. It does not mean that this book is hard to know but *We Live in Water: Stories* giving you buzz feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in specific way that can be understood by simply anyone who read this because the author of this e-book is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go along, both in printed or e-book style are available. We recommend you for having this particular *We Live in Water: Stories* instantly.

Russell Pittman:

Reading a book to get new life style in this 12 months; every people loves to learn a book. When you study a book you can get a lots of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, mainly because book has a lot of information in it. The information that you will get depend on what kinds of book that you have read. If you wish to get information about your study, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, such as novel, comics, and soon. The *We Live in Water: Stories* offer you a new experience in studying a book.

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