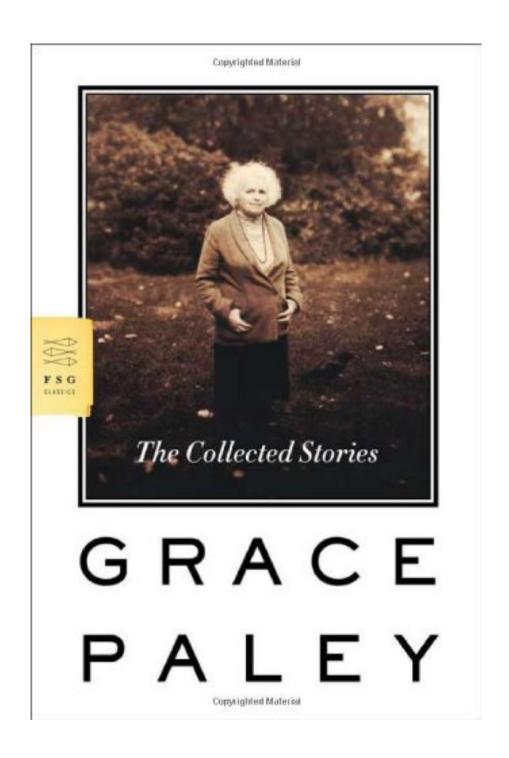


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From Library Journal

This collection brings together Paley's three previous volumes of stories: The Little Disturbances of Man (1959; Penguin, 1985, reprint), Enormous Changes at the Last Minute (Farrar, 1974), and Later the Same Day (LJ 1/86). Paley's inventive style and her funny, feisty, irreverent characters create vivid slices of life. Her stories often concern women coping with children alone, as in "An Interest in Life," where a woman has an affair after her husband deserts her. A continuing character, Faith, is a divorced woman with children who gets her emotional support from her women friends. In "Faith in a Tree," Faith's interests expand to include politics after she witnesses an antiwar demonstration in the park. In "A Conversation with My Father," a writer explains that even a story's terrible ending is not final--the characters could still change. This possibility of hope permeates all Paley's stories, creating a rich treasury of unexpected pleasures and revealing truths. Essential.

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Grace Paley's classic collection—a finalist for the National Book Award—demonstrates her rich use of language as well as her extraordinary insight into and compassion for her characters, moving from the hilarious to the tragic and back again. Whether writing about the love (and conflict) between parents and children or between husband and wife, or about the struggles of aging single mothers or disheartened political organizers to make sense of the world, she brings the same unerring ear for the rhythm of life as it is actually lived. The Collected Stories is a 1994 National Book Award Finalist for Fiction.

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a wonderful writer, very witty, pleasure to read.

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Ooh, what delicious writing this is

By A Customer

Grace Paley has that rarest of gifts: a voice all her own. Funny, tough, and compassionate, this voice mirrors her characters, some of whom (especially the eponymous Faith) are people you wish you knew, or already do. At every turn, her characters avoid stereotype, something most self-professed "political" and "feminist" writers fail to do. Three volumes of stories are collected here; the first volume, I think, is the richest. Here Paley is content to represent the hilarious, yet tragic, travails of her characters. In the later volumes, aside from being more experimental in form, she tackles overtly political themes. But the voice never fails her, and even the most dogmatic, contrived story is lifted above the ordinary. Paley never loses her compassion for mankind. At the end of her career, this was her abiding them: when faced with cynicism or compassion, she always extended the latter to her fellow human beings. These are great, tough stories, worthy of reading several times over. Please buy this collection and spread the word. Paley is that dying breed -- an American original.

38 of 38 people found the following review helpful. clearly female, uniquely brilliant

By A Customer

Nearly every book I've read on aging women has included a reference to Grace Paley's "The Long Distance Runner." Here it is, along with 43 other stories Paley has written since the beginning of her writing career. Anticipating an anthology of _stories_, the Paley-ignorant reader is bewildered, awed, and delighted in turns as Paley's darkly metaphorical tales reveal her clever humor and, ultimately, her unflagging hope for humanity. Using common language with an uncommon twist, Paley's descriptions cause the reader to laugh with familiarity: "The table was the enameled table common to our class, easy to clean, with wooden undercorners for indigent and old cockroaches that couldn't make it to the kitchen sink." "The Long Distance Runner" is a powerful allegory about menopause, that mystical time in a woman's life when so much more is happening than the simple cessation of menstrual flow. Paley attributes her success as a writer to the wonderful luck of the birth of the women's movement, which coincided with the publication of her first

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