

BBC

Young Writers'  
Award

with Cambridge University

BBC

Student  
Critics

with Cambridge University

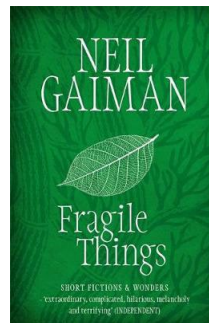
# Try these short stories



Have you enjoyed reading the stories shortlisted for the **BBC National Short Story Award with Cambridge University**?

Are you in search of **inspiration** to help you write a short story of your own? Or looking to **find out more** about the short story form?

These collections and anthologies are full of great short stories to **explore and enjoy**.

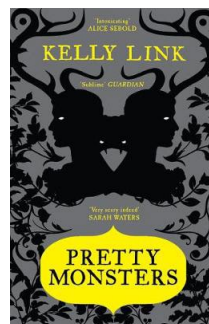


## Fragile Things

by Neil Gaiman

(Headline)

Tight storytelling, twists, beautiful description and human fragility combine in this collection of short stories from the author of *American Gods*.



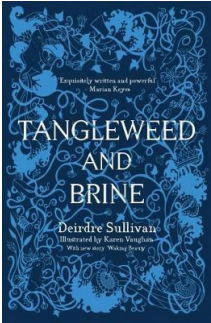
## Pretty Monsters

by Kelly Link

(Canongate)

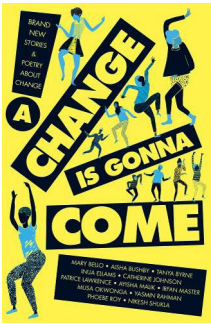
This eccentric collection of scary stories also has a tongue-in-cheek tone. The stories are suspenseful, surprising, and often laugh-out-loud funny.

## Try these short stories [continued]



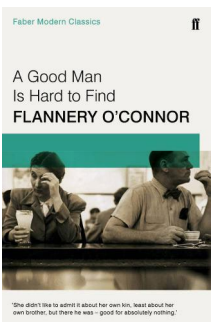
### **Tangleweed and Brine** by Deirdre Sullivan, illustrated by Karen Vaughan (Little Island)

In these feminist, witchy retellings of traditional fairy stories, female characters are no longer the victims of cautionary tales, endings no longer neat and tidy and there are shades of grey instead of black and white.



### **A Change is Gonna Come** (Stripes Publishing)

This anthology of stories and poetry from BAME writers explores the themes of social justice and change. Contributors include Tanya Byrne, Inua Ellams, Catherine Johnson, Patrice Lawrence, Ayisha Malik, Irfan Master, Musa Okwonga and Nikesh Shukla.



### **A Good Man is Hard to Find and Other Stories**

by Flannery O'Connor  
(Faber)

Flannery O'Connor is widely regarded as one of the great American short story writers. This collection of stories set in the rural American South is full of O'Connor's trademark humour, witty dialogue and wry characters.



Adam Marek's *The Stone Thrower* is bold and true and utterly fantastic and yet completely believable (for me, he is our very own George Saunders).

**RECOMMENDED BY**  
Jack Houston

Alice Munro's *Hateship, Courtship, Friendship, Loveship, Marriage* contains a number of terrific stories – I've taught some of them, too, which means that I've read them over and over and still find them moving. Especially 'Post and Beam' – the way she builds up to something that doesn't happen. She writes very well about the confinement of ordinary life and dramatizes it without exaggeration.

**RECOMMENDED BY**  
Ben Marcowitz

*This Is How You Lose Her* by Junot Diaz. It's incredible for its language, verve, control, bravery, inquiry, openness and reparation.

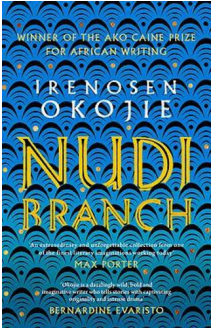
**RECOMMENDED BY**  
Sarah Hall

*Labyrinths* by Jorge Luis Borges. I never tire of re-reading these magical, inspiring short stories.

**RECOMMENDED BY**  
Ingrid Persaud



## Try these short stories [continued]

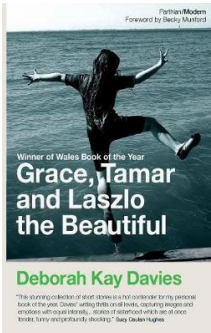


### Nudibranch

by Ireosen Okojie

(Faber)

Magic realist, surreal and sensual, this is a highly original set of stories, mixing the mundane with the extra-terrestrial and everything in between. Ireosen Okojie's inventive language startles and delights.



### Grace, Tamar and Laszlo the Beautiful

by Deborah Kay Davies

(Parthian Press)

Each story in this collection is complete in its own right but they also work together as a novella-length sequence. Moving from 1970 to the present day, Davies relates the history of Grace and Tamar, from childhood to maturity.



### How Long 'Til Black Future Month?

by N.K. Jemisin

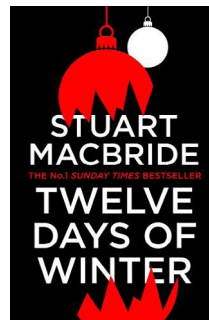
(Little, Brown)

This thought-provoking debut short story collection from a fantasy and sci-fi writer is rooted in American history as well as fantasy.



**Lot by Bryan Washington.** I have been recommending this book to anyone who will listen. Bryan Washington writes like no other writer I've come across. His prose is like music, the rhythm gorgeous and unbroken. His characters and setting are so local – the book of linked stories is set in Houston, Texas – but there's so much beauty in this specificity, so many emotions which resonated with me because the narratives are so specific.

**RECOMMENDED BY**  
Caleb Azumah Nelson

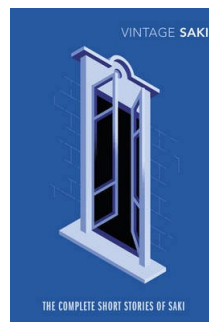


### Twelve Days of Winter

by Stuart MacBride

(HarperCollins)

Thieves, drug dealers, lap-dancers, gangsters and even the odd good guy populate these twelve interlinked tales of crime and retribution set around the festive season.



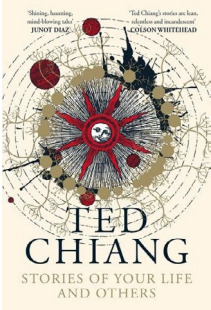
### The Complete Short Stories of Saki

by Saki

(Vintage)

Saki is famed for his savage one-liners, twists and delightfully cruel plots. This is a sharp collection of stories deconstructing the English upper class.

## Try these short stories [continued]

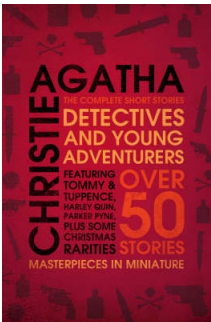


### Stories of Your Life and Others

by **Ted Chiang**

(Pan Macmillan)

From a soaring Babylonian tower that connects a flat Earth with the firmament above, to a neural modification that eliminates the appeal of physical beauty, Ted Chiang's *Black Mirror*-style stories make us think about what it is to be human in the way that the best sci-fi does.

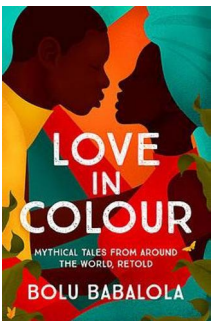


### Detectives and Young Adventurers: The Complete Short Stories

by **Agatha Christie**

(HarperCollins)

Over 50 stories by the Queen of Crime, including lesser known sleuths Harley Quin and Parker Pyne, a consulting detective whose aim is to restore happiness to his clients. Agatha Christie's pacing, plots, and intriguing clues will keep you turning the pages.



### Love in Colour

by **Bolu Babalola**

(Headline)

Focusing on the magical folktales of West Africa, Bolu Babalola also reimagines iconic Greek myths, ancient legends from the Middle East, and stories from countries that no longer exist in our world, all with the common theme of love.



Ali Smith's *The First Person and Other Stories* is written with such a deft, light touch while laying bare so many truths about language, tenderness, and wit. It is a delight to read her, re-read her.

**RECOMMENDED BY**

**Eley Williams**

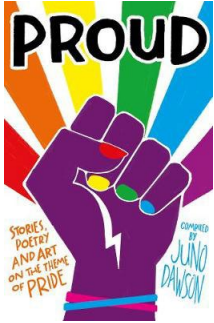
The collection I most often press upon friends is **Carys Davies' *The Redemption of Galen Pike***. I am in awe of the way Davies' story are both sparsely written and incredibly rich. She is a warm writer, whose stories always strike me as incredibly evocative and yet they are all so lean and tightly written. Every word in a Cary Davies short story feels like it's working double time.

**RECOMMENDED BY**

**Jan Carson**



## Try these short stories [continued]



### **PROUD**

**compiled by Juno Dawson**  
(Stripes Publishing)

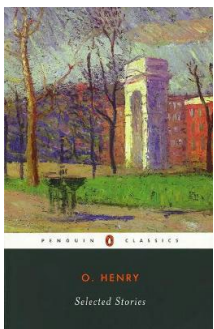
This powerful anthology of stories and poetry inspired by the theme of pride includes contributions by top LGBTQI+ young adult authors and new talent. Each story has an illustration by an artist identifying as part of the LGBTQI+ community.



### **A Manual for Cleaning Women**

**by Lucia Berlin**  
(Pan Macmillan)

Lucia Berlin's stories are anarchic and wild, detailing her life of addiction, poverty and the vibrant communities of New York.



### **Selected Stories**

**by O Henry**  
(Penguin)

Famous for the 'twist in the tale', O Henry's witty stories are a must for those studying plot and structure of short stories and fans of the 'twist' ending that readers don't see coming. In each of these stories, there's not a word out of place.

# LISTEN UP

## **Short Stories on BBC Sounds**

**Listen to hundreds of short stories on BBC Sounds including timeless classics and stories shortlisted for the BBC National Short Story Award with Cambridge University.**

**Subscribe to the BBC Short Story Podcast for brand new stories written by today's writers, brought to you by BBC Radio 4.**

**[bbc.co.uk/sounds](https://bbc.co.uk/sounds)**  
(search: 'short story')

# What next?

## Got a story in you? We want to hear it

If you have been inspired these short stories and would like to share some of your own writing, why not enter the **BBC Young Writers' Award with Cambridge University**? Young people aged between 14–18 years are invited to submit original short stories of up to 1,000 words.

Each year, a shortlist of five stories is chosen by the judging panel, which includes well-known writers and broadcasters. The shortlisted young writers have their stories narrated by an actor and recorded for a BBC broadcast, as well as being published in anthology. They are also invited to take part in a creative writing workshop with a leading writer – and the winner

receives a special one-to-one mentoring session with an author.

Launched as part of the tenth anniversary celebrations for the BBC National Short Story Award the BBC Young Writers' Award aims to inspire and encourage the next generation of writers.

Find creative writing resources for students and teachers, the latest news and how to enter at [bbc.co.uk/ywa](http://bbc.co.uk/ywa)

## You can be a judge, too

Put your critical skills to the test by joining the judges of the BBC National Short Story Award.

Taking place each year in September, **BBC Student Critics with Cambridge University**

challenges students to read, listen, discuss and critique the stories shortlisted for the BBC National Short Story Award.

Read the shortlisted stories, discuss them as a group, choose your favourites and then host a listening party to hear the winner announced live on BBC Radio 4's *Front Row*.

Visit the website to find out more, including how your group can apply for an enhanced experience, with free copies of the BBC National Short Story Award anthology for each student: [bbc.co.uk/teach/student-critics/zxhqdp3](http://bbc.co.uk/teach/student-critics/zxhqdp3)



## Stay up to date

BBC Young Writers' Award

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BBC Student Critics

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BBC National Short Story Award

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