



Don't Try This at Home

By Angela Readman

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Don't Try This at Home By Angela Readman

A girl repeatedly chops her boyfriend in half but, while her “other half” multiplies, she is still not satisfied. Love transforms a mother working down the fish and chip shop – into Elvis. Clary’s father puts antlers on stuffed rabbits to make jackalopes, but when her mother walks out on them, Clary has to help her father if they are to survive.

Beautiful, sharp and fearless, Costa Short Story Award winner Angela Readman’s debut collection is aptly titled, for each story packs its share of explosive material. Exposing all kinds of prejudice – against age, status, disability – the stories also offer quirky new strategies for troubled lives.

If Angela Carter is Readman’s fairy godmother, then David Lynch is her wicked stepbrother. Don’t say you weren’t warned. . .

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Don't Try This at Home By Angela Readman Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Review

"Angela Readman's stories are fantastic, delightful gifts. You don't open them, they open you. They open you to the amazing, the tragic, the odd and the gorgeous. This is a very special collection." Toby Litt, author of *Hospital* and one of Granta magazine's Best of Young British Novelists

"In a fantastical world of witches, saints and talking toys, Angela Readman's characters struggle to escape the prison of their all-too-real circumstances. A wonderful, wonder-full debut collection." Adam Marek, author of *Instruction Manual for Swallowing*

"Sparky, shining writing that zings from the page. Subversive, funny and incisive. A real talent." Sarah Hilary, author of *Someone Else's Skin*

"With coolly unassuming delivery and not a single word out of place, this is storytelling at its best. A remarkable collection of delightfully skewed stories." Caroline Smailes, author of *The Drowning of Arthur Braxton*

"Angela Readman's stories are gems. Rainbow-coloured ones that probably glow in the dark and sing too. They are perfect, fizzing explosions of stories, told by a perfect storyteller. You will love them." Nik Perring, author of *Not So Perfect*

"The characters that drift through these stories are alienated from each other and from themselves, but each story shows a curiosity about the oddities of life that burns through the prose, bringing to life a world filled with surprise that is also surprisingly funny. A brave collection packed with striking concepts daringly pursued." Richard Beard, author of *Lazarus is Dead* and Director of the National Academy of Writings

"A strong collection in which elements of the strange are sustained by a surprising subtlety and understanding of human nature." *Kirkus*

"Angela Readman's prose exhibits two complimentary styles: fabulation is rendered deadpan, while wonderfully inventive similes are used to describe the everyday . . . [Her] medium is metaphor writ large . . . Borges, Kafka and Angela Carter will all be reference points, but there is something joyfully distinctive about Readman's voice . . . Readman's gift for emotional nuance is every bit as keen as her eye for the surreal." Toby Lichtig, *Sunday Telegraph*

"Readman writes with precision. Her stories emit suppressed yearning and she makes poignant comments about loneliness, identity, survival. Angela Carter is an obvious influence but fans of Donald Barthelme and Charles Baudelaire will cherish the emergence of a moral absurdist for our times." Max Liu, *The Independent*

"[A] masterclass in the surreal . . . This slim volume is a great commuter read, and shows why she won the Costa Short Story Award." Max Wallis, 10 Best Spring Reads, *The Independent*

"A sense of explosive danger and subversive mischief runs through this aptly titled collection of stories. Concise and precise, with unexpected flashes of poetry, these are darkly glittering fables for our times . . .

[Readman] immerses the reader in the quirky, conceptual world of her fiction, the stories become utterly compelling: social commentary meets magical realism, with a deadpan delivery . . . In these startlingly original tales of characters compressed to the limit by their circumstances, the creative imagination emerges as the only reliable redeeming force." Juanita Coulson, *The Lady*

"Don't Try This At Home positively bursts with an inquisitive off-the-wall energy . . . glimmering with a fierce promise." *Kill Your Darlings*

"[S]urreal, fantastical and carefully everyday. Readman, also a published poet, builds these small worlds with care and efficiency. Short, rhythmic sentences create tangible and down to earth settings for remarkable developments. . . Although they're most often set in everyday situations, magic seems to infuse these worlds . . . this is an enchantingly absurd marriage of the ordinary and extraordinary." Chris Lynch, *The Skinny*

"These are all delightful, odd, insightful, and original stories. . . Thank God Readman didn't give up. There are some real gems here. Fans of the slightly off-kilter will find lots to delight them in this collection, but anyone who needs their stories to be a little deeper will be happy to find the social awareness that runs through their centre." Fran Slater, *Bookmunch*

"Quirky, dark, and utterly captivating tales, which never cease to surprise their reader, as Readman combines the everyday and the fantastic, the sad and the funny with astonishing ease." *Ofi Press*

"With her slim volume of short stories, Angela Readman helps to make the point that while novels can be fine wines that one might enjoy, a bottle at a time, but maybe spread over more than one meal, short stories are the pure spirit distilled with care, to be sipped, one at a time and spread over a short time so as to enjoy each to its fullest extent." Michael Johnston, *Akanos*

"Angela Readman is a talented and original voice, bringing an unsettling and strange magic to her sharply observed stories of the everyday . . . The rich atmosphere and curious characters are reminiscent of authors like Angela Carter and Katherine Dunn, while the knife- sharp observation and tight storytelling reminded me in places of Mary Gaitskill, with the melancholy mood of Banana Yoshimoto's work . . . the stories are all conceptually fearless and bold, by turns brutal and tender but always making an impact . . . an evocative, memorable collection sure to stay with you long past the last page. Definitely do try at home." *For Book's Sake*

"*Don't Try This At Home* reveals a fresh, original voice, punchy enough to mesmerise in short doses and versatile enough to keep surprising over the course of a full collection." Tom Cuell, *Workshy Fop*

"The collection is a fantastic set of off the wall, interesting, creative and pretty imaginative stories that really highlight the sideways thinking of the author." *Carrot Cake Diaries*

"*Don't Try This at Home* is a fantastic and entertaining group of stories with memorable characters. I highly recommend that you add this collection to your summer reading list." *The Bookbinder's Daughter*

"Always entertaining and very visual. You don't read this pages, you watch them. Give me more!" *Lizzie's Literary life*

About the Author

Angela Readman's stories have appeared in a number of anthologies and magazines, winning awards such as the *Inskpill Magazine* Short Story Competition and the National Flash Fiction Competition. In 2012 she was

shortlisted for the Costa Short Story Award for *Don't Try This at Home* – an award she would go on to win in 2013 with the story *The Keeper of the Jackalopes*. In 2015, Readman won the Saboteur Awards Best Short Story Collection and the 2015 Rubery Book Award (Short Fiction Winner) for *Don't Try this at Home*. Readman is also a published poet.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Irma Patterson:

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