

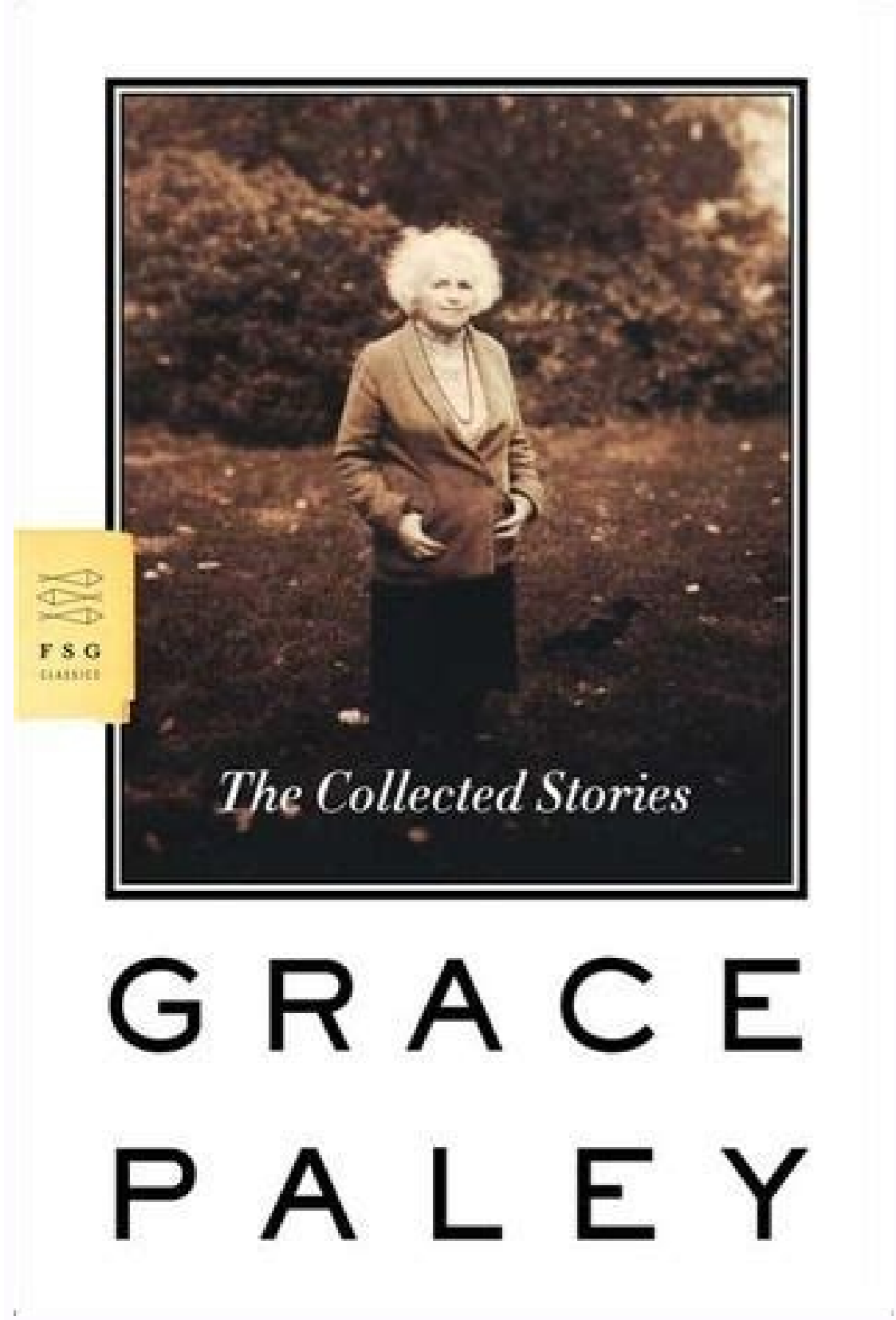
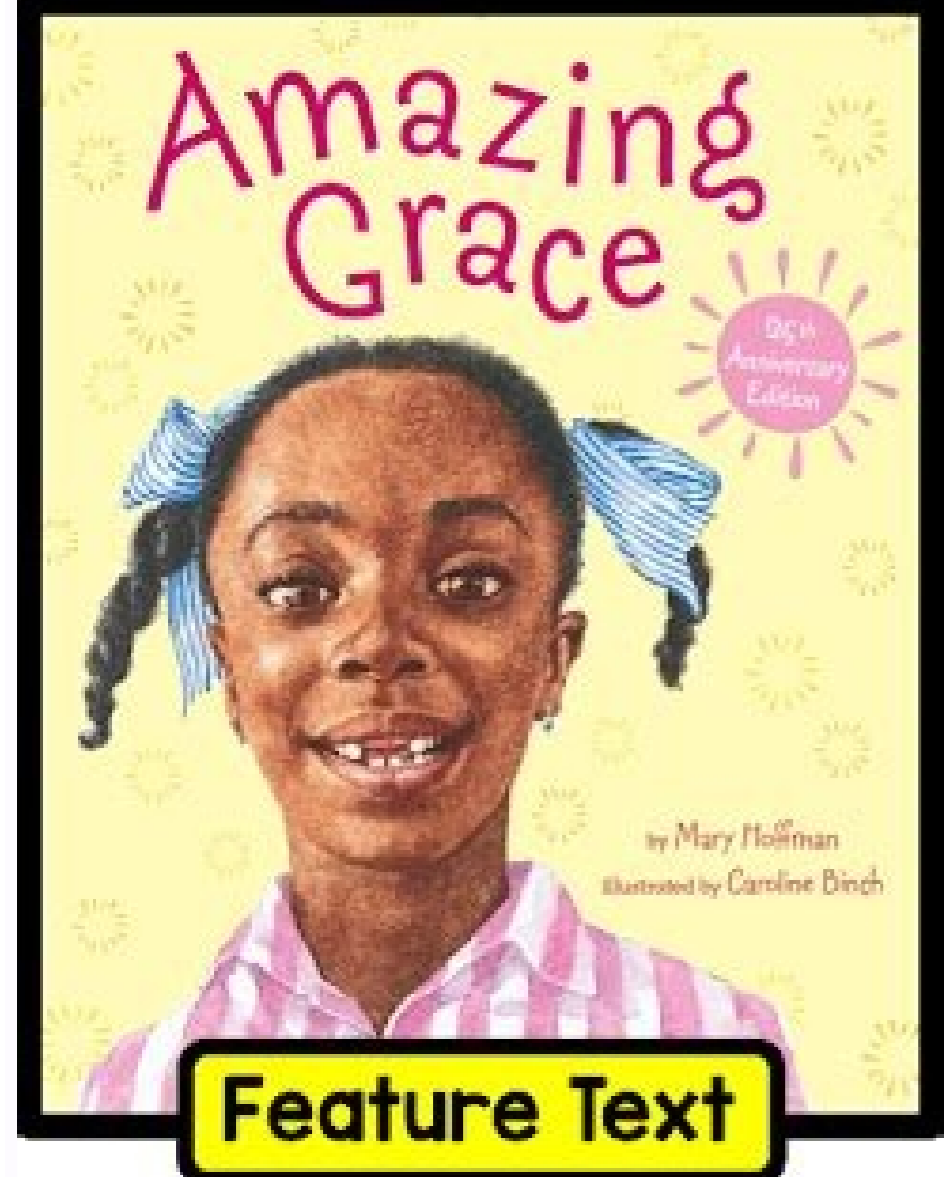
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PATRICIA
GRACE



The
Sky People
& other stories





Matariki afternoon tea with Patricia Grace



The Michael King Writers' Centre is delighted to invite you to a Matariki afternoon tea with author Patricia Grace to celebrate the publication of her latest novel *Chappy*.

Patricia Grace is a huge figure in New Zealand literature and has won accolades around the world for her work as a novelist, short story writer and children's writer. *Chappy* is her first published novel in ten years.

Patricia Grace is of Ngati Toa, Ngati Raukawa and Te Ati Awa descent. She began writing while teaching and raising her family of seven children. Her work expresses Māori

consciousness and values, featuring the lives of a wide range of Māori and Pakeha. She has won many national and international awards, including the Neustadt International Prize for Literature, widely considered the most prestigious literary prize after the Nobel. In 2007, she was made a Distinguished Companion of the New Zealand Order of Merit for her services to literature. She lives in Plimmerton, near her home marae at Hongoeka Bay. In 2014, she won a major legal battle against the New Zealand Transport Agency to save her ancestral land from being taken for the Kapiti Expressway. She was named as the Honoured New Zealand Writer at the Auckland Writers Festival the same year.



She will be in conversation with Michael King Writers' Centre writer-in-residence Mere Whaanga. This special Matariki event will be held on Wednesday June 17 at 3 pm at The Esplanade Hotel, Victoria Road, Devonport. Tickets are \$32 each through the Michael King Writers' Centre or can be purchased on-line through Eventfinda for \$34. There are a limited number of tickets.

Mere Whaanga is a writer, illustrator, historian and academic, of Ngāti Rongomauiwahine and Ngāti Kahungunu descent. She has written several bilingual books for children and a wide range of non-fiction work on aspects of Māori history, Treaty of Waitangi claims and Māori cultural practices. She has a Doctorate from Waikato University on the effect of Māori land law on ahikāroa (long-term occupation). While she holds the Māori Writer's Residency at the Michael King Writers' Centre, she is writing a novel on the theme of Māori spirituality.

The ticket includes afternoon tea at the heritage Esplanade Hotel.

The event is presented by PaperPlus in partnership with the Michael King Writers' Centre.

When: Wednesday 17 June @ 3 pm

Where: The Esplanade Hotel, 1 Victoria Rd, Devonport, Auckland

Tickets: \$34 each through eventfinda.co.nz

Or email assistant@writerscentre.org.nz

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RD.COM Arts & Entertainment Books Best Books & Must-reads Every editorial product is independently selected, though we may be compensated or receive an affiliate commission if you buy something through our links. Ratings and prices are accurate and items are in stock as of time of publication. 1 / 26 via Amazon.com (18) Short stories are the perfect treats for people who love to read but lack time—they may be just “two bites,” but the satisfaction is supersized. What makes for the best short stories? Really, the same thing that makes for any “best books,” whether it’s the best memoirs, the best historical fiction, or even the best graphic novels: Through the magic of voice and storytelling, they capture your heart and don’t let go. Many readers consider Anton Chekhov to be the granddaddy of the short story as we know it (although the form is far older). Here are some of the best short story collections, old and new, from far and wide, in styles ranging from realistic to fantastic. Enjoy these perfectly crafted tales, and when you’re ready to add to your must-read list again, check out where to find the best free books online. 2 / 26 via Amazon.com O’Brien’s modern classic centers on the Vietnam War, but these are not your traditional war stories. The author, who based this book on his own service in Vietnam, not only chronicles the war in these related short stories but also pulls back the curtain on the very act of storytelling and the impossibility of ever capturing the full truth. As the narrator says, “Often the crazy stuff is true and the normal stuff isn’t.” This deeply moving, profoundly thought-provoking book continues to speak to all generations of readers. Shop Now 3 / 26 via Amazon.com Published in 2020, Philvav’s dazzling debut is racking up staggering accolades for good reason. She invites us into the lives of Black Southern women in a way that is intimate, tender, and deeply engaging. Here is how she opens: “Eula books the suite in Clarksville, two towns over. I bring the food. This year it’s sushi for me and cold cuts and potato salad for her.” And with that, you’re in the door. Here are more books by Black authors you’ll want to know about. Shop Now 4 / 26 via Amazon.com Munro is perhaps the most celebrated living writer of short stories, having won the Nobel Prize for literature in 2013. Her stories (in more than a dozen collections, including this most recent one) are mostly set in her native Ontario. She explores the complexities and subtleties of interpersonal relations in precise, plainspoken language. Come prepared to expect surprises. Shop Now 5 / 26 via Amazon.com Machado burst onto the scene in 2017 with stories that blend in elements of sci-fi, while exploring body image, love, sexuality, and violence. She is fearless on topics ranging from bariatric surgery (and the ghost of a former fat self) to prom dresses with awful secrets woven into the fabric. A bracing and necessary new voice. RELATED: The Best-Selling Science Fiction Books of All Time Shop Now 6 / 26 via Amazon.com Parsons’ stories have a heart as big as Texas, which is where she hails from. You’ll love her for her pitch-perfect sentence-making and for her sometimes messed-up but always compelling characters. For instance: “When I start dating Tim, an almost-doctor, all the sick, broken people in the world begin to glow.” Looking for a little love in your fiction? Peruse our list of the best romance novels of all time. Shop Now 7 / 26 via Amazon.com Dybek is one of the great chroniclers of the Windy City—in particular, the Eastern European immigrant South Side. These spare, grittily exquisite stories waste not a word. (“Tonight, a steady drizzle, streetlights smoldering in fog like funnels of light collecting rain.”) Dybek’s masterpiece has been rightly compared to James Joyce’s *Dubliners* and Sherwood Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*. Shop Now 8 / 26 via Amazon.com Argentinian genius Borges (1899–1986) wrote some of the most mind-bending and best short stories of all time. For instance, “The Library of Babel” (written long before the age of online algorithms and artificial intelligence) centers on an imaginary library containing every book that was or ever could be written by recombining the alphabet. If you like stories as twisty as, say, an M.C. Escher drawing, this book is for you. If you love flights of fancy, you need to check out these fantasy books readers can’t put down. Shop Now 9 / 26 via Amazon.com Short has a nice long subtitle: *An International Anthology of Five Centuries of Short-Short Stories, Prose Poems, Brief Essays, and Other Short Prose Forms*. Between these covers, you’ll find blink-length works ranging from classic masters (Michel de Montaigne, William Blake, Franz Kafka, Clarice Lispector, Gertrude Stein, Italo Calvino) to cutting-edge contemporary writers (Lydia Davis, Dave Eggers, Joy Harjo). A sample from Michael Ondaatje: “I arrived in a plane but love the harbour. Dusk. And the turning on of electricity in ships, portholes of moon, the blue glide of a tug, the harbour road and its ship chandlers, soap makers, ice on bicycles, the hidden anonymous barber shops behind the pink dirt walls of Reclamation Street.” Shop Now 10 / 26 via Amazon.com If you like your fiction Southern—or if you just like it flawlessly precise—dive into National Book Award winner Gilchrist’s short story collection. Nine years in the making, it’s described by its author as “a book of praise and wonder,” who adds, “When we are young we are too self-serving and ambitious to look around and know how marvelous our fellow men and women and children truly are.” A sample: “The tornado struck in the middle of the night. It swept across an eight-block stretch of the small town of Adkins, Arkansas, and leveled dozens of houses. At ten the next morning four teenagers from Fayetteville, Arkansas, First Methodist Church Youth Group left Fayetteville and headed south and east to Adkins to see if they could help.” RELATED: The 50 Best Fiction Books to Read This Year Shop Now 11 / 26 via Amazon.com Long considered among the best short story writers ever, O’Connor published just two collections: *Everything That Rises Must Converge* and *A Good Man Is Hard to Find*. She died in 1964 at the age of 39, but her unsettling explorations of the Deep South (sometimes classified as Southern Gothic) remain must-reads. This complete volume, which won the National Book Award in 1972, includes both of her collections and 12 additional stories, all marked by wry wit and a willingness to examine complicated questions of morality. RELATED: Fascinating Facts About Famous Authors Shop Now 12 / 26 via Amazon.com Short story writer, novelist, essayist, and writing teacher Saunders is widely acclaimed for the breadth and audacity of his work. His stories—at times bordering on sci-fi or the surreal—are strange but emotionally true. Sample sentence: “Why was it, she sometimes wondered, that in dreams we can’t do the simple things? Like a crying puppy is standing on some broken glass and you want to pick it up and brush the shards off its pads but you can’t because you’re balancing a ball on your head.” Shop Now 13 / 26 via Amazon.com Butler (1947–2006) was the first Black woman to win accolades in sci-fi, not only blazing a trail for many others but also—as many of the best short stories do—transcending strict definitions of genre. She introduces extraterrestrials as a way of making us think more deeply about ourselves and envisions a future we want to preclude. For more trailblazing women in all fields, take a look at this list of impressive female firsts. Shop Now 14 / 26 via Amazon.com Williams is among the most innovative writers alive today. These extremely short pieces fall somewhere between fierce poetry and story. They’re neither plotted nor linear; instead, you feel as if you’ve walked into a woman’s inner, astonishing life. Williams’ style has been described as “erudite, elegant, and stubbornly experimental,” but don’t let that intimidate you. Whatever bypasses the mind goes straight to the heart. Shop Now 15 / 26 via Amazon.com Paley’s stories about being a wife, ex-wife, mother, daughter, and friend in New York City in the ‘50s and ‘60s are bursting with life. With her distinctive voice, Paley (1922–2007) takes a seemingly ordinary event and turns it into art, and her insights are razor-sharp: “...it is like a long hopeless homesickness my missing those young days. To me they’re like my own place that I have gone away from forever, and I have lived all the time since among great pleasures but in a foreign town.” Shop Now 16 / 26 via Amazon.com Lahiri’s beautiful stories move from Boston to Bombay, and center on intergenerational clashes in Indian immigrant families. The secrets and longings of her characters are powerfully real. Starting with the very first sentence, she creates an empathetic engagement: “After her mother’s death, Ruma’s father retired from the pharmaceutical company where he had worked for many decades and began traveling in Europe, a continent he’d never seen.” Shop Now 17 / 26 via Amazon.com Schutt’s style is masterful and distinctive, as she looks deep into the hidden corners of relationships between mothers and daughters, sisters, and couples. “Whatever your literary comfort zone is, the chances are Christine Schutt is outside it,” according to a review in the *Guardian*. The discomfort is more than worth it. Shop Now 18 / 26 via Amazon.com The late Raymond Carver (1938–1998) was a master of pared-down stories about working-class people. A story titled “Why Don’t You Dance?” begins: “In the kitchen, he poured another drink and looked at the bedroom suite in his front yard. The mattress was stripped and the candy-striped sheets lay beside two pillows on the chifonier. Except for that, things looked much the way they had in the bedroom—nightstand and reading lamp on his side of the bed, nightstand and reading lamp on her side.” Wildly popular in the 1990s, these less-is-more narratives influenced a generation of writers. The collection stands the test of time in its deceptive simplicity and emotional depth. Shop Now 19 / 26 via Amazon.com Already known as a best-selling novelist and memoirist, McBride has his manifest talents on display here in miniature, in a collection of funny and moving tales. Many are set in the inner city; the final piece takes place at an imaginary zoo. McBride looks at race relations, as well as the meaning of masculinity, with both humor and honesty. RELATED: Essential Books for Understanding Race Relations in America Shop Now 20 / 26 via Amazon.com Moore’s whip-smart, wisecracking stories carry an after-burn, as all of the best short stories do. She reveals, through beautifully observed characters, the anxieties, longings, and conflicting impulses we try to hide from ourselves. A sample: “Ira had been divorced six months and still couldn’t get his wedding ring off. His finger swelled doughily around it—a combination of frustrated desire, unmitigated remorse, and misdirected ambition, he said to his friends.” Shop Now 21 / 26 via Amazon.com This compelling collection might indeed keep you up at night, haunted. Chaon writes astute, suspenseful stories about people whose struggles might be easily overlooked: a young widower, a boy with night terrors, a foster child, and more. Shop Now 22 / 26 via Amazon.com No roundup of best short stories would be complete without this poignant collection. Most everyone knows Salinger (1919–2010) as the generation-defining author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, but each of these nine stories is a gem. “For Esme with Love and Squalor,” about a sergeant’s meeting with a young girl during World War II, will break your heart. Shop Now 23 / 26 via Amazon.com One of the brightest talents of the 21st century, Russell’s fantastical tales are filled with wit and imagination. In her third collection, you’ll find ghosts and zombies, along with achingly real people. As one character says in a postnatal group: “My name is Halimah. I had a C-section, and I feel like a library where they misshelved all the books.” You’re in for an adventure of the best kind. Shop Now 24 / 26 via Amazon.com The title story is something closer to a novella, and it’s more than worth the price of admission. Maclean (1902–1990) turned to writing only after retirement, basing this semi-autobiographical story on his own youth in Montana and his relationship with his brother, Paul, who struggled with addiction. “Now nearly all those I loved and did not understand when I was young are dead but I still reach out to them,” he writes. Robert Redford turned it into a movie—but (you guessed it) the book is better. Here are more books that became hit movies. Shop Now 25 / 26 via Amazon.com Cisneros is best known for her best-selling novel *The House on Mango Street*, a modern classic about a young Mexican American girl coming of age in Chicago. That novel is told in short vignettes, so the transition to short stories seems natural. In *Woman Hollering Creek*, the beloved author writes about women’s lives on both sides of the Mexican border. Shop Now 26 / 26 via Amazon.com These six quietly haunting stories span the globe and center on people who’ve been dealt losses through war, poverty, or displacement. Each character (a landmine worker, a nurse, and a factory worker among them) long for connection, for a place where they belong. Their particularities make these stories immersive while the underlying emotions are universal. For a totally different yet equally satisfying experience, try the best nonfiction books of all time. Shop Now Originally Published: May 18, 2021

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