



The Story and Its Writer: An Introduction to Short Fiction

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If John Gardner's description summarizes what writers of fiction do, then this anthology was created to enable readers of short fiction to experience their "shining performance" as elegantly and efficiently as possible. The Story and Its Writer grew out of my desire to teach from an anthology filled as much as possible with the writer talk about short stories, after years of dissatisfaction using textbooks filled with too much editor talk. The books available tended to be of two types: textbooks with a limited number of stories and a bothersome, often prescriptive, abundance of editorial material; or large anthologies with many stories and very little discussion by anyone about matters sure to be perplexing to students. The first type made the editor the authority; the second type made the teacher assume that role. In neither case were those most qualified to speak about fiction--the storytellers--given space to express their authority about their craft. The Story and Its Writers seeks to redress these imbalances. The gratifying success the book has enjoyed over four editions confirms the appeal and usefulness of its premise. This shorter version of The Story and Its Writer, Fifth Edition, is a response to the requests of many instructors interested in a more compact edition of the anthology. While the number of stories and commentaries has been reduced, the shorter edition remains otherwise the same as the longer book, retaining all of its flexible apparatus.

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Herbert Oakley:

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