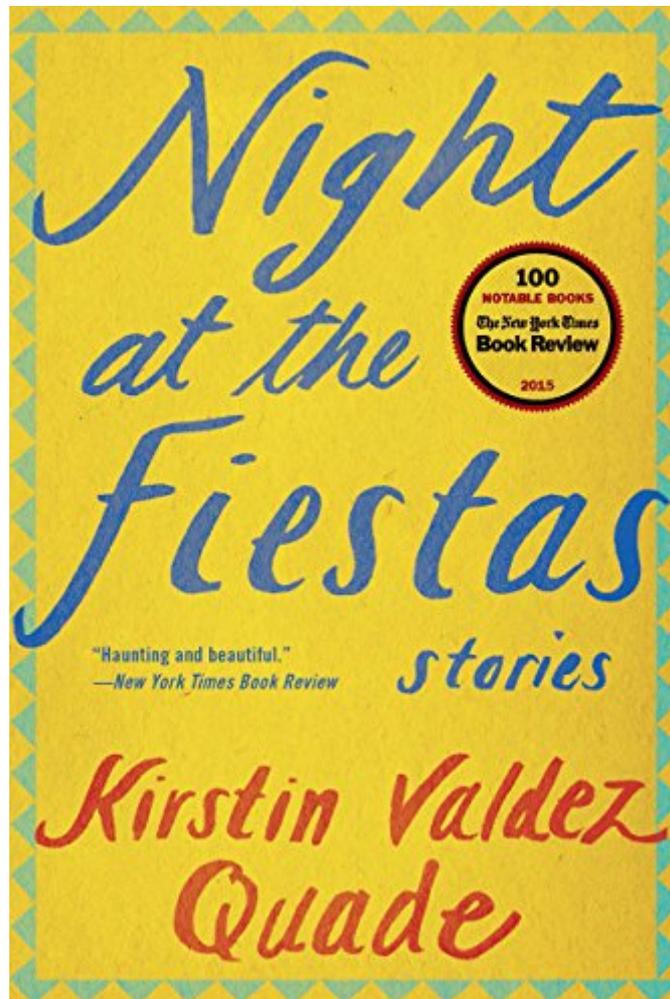


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Night At The Fiestas: Stories



Synopsis

Winner of the 2015 National Book Critics Circle John Leonard Prize "[A] sparkling debut collection that features dreamers and schemers whose lives pulsate with wild hopes, hard luck, stunning secrets, and saving grace." —ElleWith intensity and emotional precision, Kirstin Valdez Quade's unforgettable stories plunge us into the fierce, troubled hearts of characters defined by the desire to escape the past or else to plumb its depths. The deadbeat father of a pregnant teenager tries to transform his life by playing the role of Jesus in a bloody penitential Passion. A young man discovers that his estranged father and a boa constrictor have been squatting in his grandmother's empty house. A lonely retiree new to Santa Fe becomes obsessed with her housekeeper. One girl attempts to uncover the mystery of her cousin's violent past, while another young woman finds herself at an impasse when she is asked to hear her priest's confession. Always hopeful, these stories chart the passions and obligations of family life, exploring themes of race, class, and coming-of-age, as Quade's characters protect, betray, wound, undermine, bolster, define, and, ultimately, save each other.

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Customer Reviews

I picked *Night at the Fiestas* up yesterday, and read through the first 200 pages in one sitting, got up, and finished it this morning. I typically prefer novels to short stories, but I skimmed the first story, the haunting "Nemencia," at the bookstores, and was impressed by the language and the strong imagery. The best short stories, "Mojave Rats," "The Five Wounds," "Jubilee," could have gone on for another hundred pages a piece, and I would have been happily engrossed. I had heard of this book only because [she] recommended it after I had pre-ordered Mario Vargas Llosa's book (what a compliment!), and I'm so glad her name popped up on my radar. Look forward to following her career!

I first fell in love with Kirstin Valdez Quade when I read a story not included in this collection, *Kidline*, which won the Mississippi Review's 2014 fiction prize. In *Kidline*, a lonely, superior sixth grade girl meets a blind transfer student who quickly surpasses her in popularity and social confidence. What the lonely girl ends up doing to her blind classmate is almost cartoonish in its cruelty – the kind of outrageous behavior that gives a quietly told tale a welcome jolt of adrenaline – but it only makes us care all the more deeply for the twelve year old who is just learning who she is. Quade's work is a master class in learning how to forgive. This new collection is reviewed at length at <http://bestnewfiction.wordpress.com>

I am a native Santa Fean so I might be a little prejudiced, but these are terrific stories. Some of them are exactly what I felt growing up here - true feelings and memories put into words. A remarkable talent and I look forward to her next book. I hope it will be as lyrical and honest and beautiful as I found this one to be.....

Night At the Fiestas is a brilliant short story collection. Kristen Valdez-Quades is an architect storyteller who built momentum in each story. Her prose has the subtle power to teach readers, students, writing teachers, and professional authors how to design compelling experiences. In each episode she erected a fictionalized anthropological, political, sociological, psychological, and theological temple. This allowed for the potential development of every story to stand alone as it's own novel or family miniseries saga. As readers proceed with each account they will discover Valdez-Quades constructed an authentic SouthWestern community for everyone to settle in. It is perfect for high school and college students alike to read at home or in schools. However, adult readers will appreciate the literary techniques, adult themes, and multivisceral world she structured.

Very reminiscent of one of my favorite authors - Anne Tyler. These stories are new and fresh and familiar, with wonderfully constructed characters and vividly depicted surroundings. I very much look forward to more from Ms Quade.

I fell in love with this book. Her descriptions, emotion - the feelings being the stories. I was blown away. Quade is a talented, talented writer. I look forward to reading any and everything else she puts out!

I don't know of any other work of short stories that captures the culture of small town life in the Southwest as this book does. Engrossing from the start as told by a good story teller, it has insights in many ways and some of these insights are a plain and simple shock of recognition. This book is full of surprises because yes, someone (the story teller) sees and re-affirms what we already knew but did not realize we knew. Barclay Goldsmith Former producing director and founder of Borderlands Theater, Tucson, AZ.

Very interesting and compelling stories. I could hardly put them down. A little dark; almost reminds me of Flannery O'Connor. Quade writes in English, but appears to be of Latin descent. Most of her tales are set in the U.S. Southwest.

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