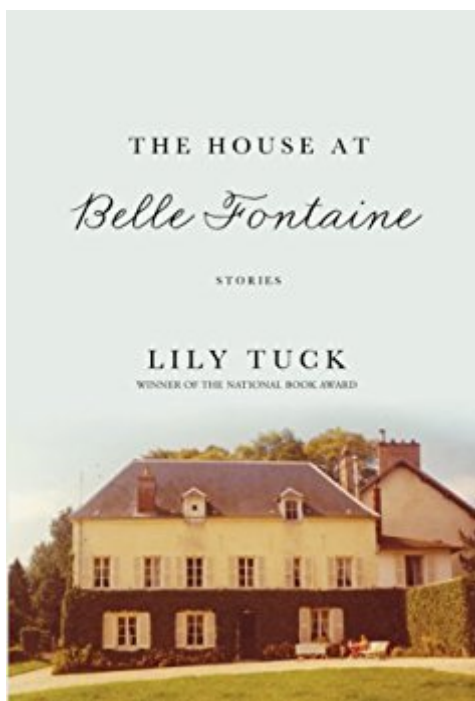


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# The House At Belle Fontaine: Stories



## Synopsis

Lily Tuck is a genius • Los Angeles Times Winner of the National Book Award, Lily Tuck follows her critically-acclaimed novel *I Married You For Happiness* with an elegantly constructed story collection about lives tethered to the past and the unexpected encounters that threaten to unmoor them. *The House at Belle Fontaine* is at once unexpected and familiar, and wholly memorable for its spare depiction of characters on the brink of transformation. The powerfully intimate stories within *The House at Belle Fontaine* span the better part of the twentieth century and almost every continent, laying bare apprehensions, passions, secrets, and tragedies that resonate across time and space. In crisp, spare, and penetrating prose, Lily Tuck unveils and suppresses personal truths as her characters navigate exotic locales and immediate emotional territory: an artist learns that her deceased ex-husband had an especially illicit affair seventeen years before his death; a young couple living in Thailand worries about the mental stability of their best friend, a U. S. army captain; on a ship bound for Antarctica, a retired couple strains to hold together their forty-year-old marriage; and a French family flees to Lima in the 1940s with devastating consequences for their daughter's young nanny. *The House at Belle Fontaine* reveals the extraordinary in the everyday and the perpetuity of the past. With a deft and expert hand, Tuck excavates the opportunities that arise from loss, and the moments that knock lives into a collision course and an uncertain future.

## Book Information

File Size: 700 KB

Print Length: 226 pages

Publisher: Atlantic Monthly Press (April 23, 2013)

Publication Date: April 23, 2013

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00B6TZHV6

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #22,965 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #24 in Kindle

Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories > United States #142 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories & Anthologies > Anthologies #209 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories > Single Authors

## Customer Reviews

Lily Tuck is one of our best prose stylists and these stories grab the reader in quite mysterious ways. Like her beautiful novel *I Married You for Happiness*, in which a wife at the bed of her dying husband remembers their marriage, she uses minutely observed details to bring relationships, obliquely and teasingly, to life. I'm not even sure how she works her wonders but because she's always suggesting a great deal more than is being said, her characters--ordinary people in midlife, in crisis--keep yielding up meanings long after we've finished the story. This is one of the great reading pleasures.

The ten unique short stories in the collection from Lily Tuck titled after one, *The House At Belle Fontaine*, showcase this skilled writer's mastery of the skill of writing short fiction. I felt that each sentence was assembled with care and precision, making its contribution in a critical way to the complete story. This efficient structure can be frustrating to those readers who crave for more, but I found that I ended each of these stories with a feeling of deep satisfaction at the writing skill displayed. Any reader who appreciates literary fiction, especially in the short form, should consider reading this fine collection. Rating: Four-star (I like it)

Just read this today matter of fact while enjoying an unusually Sunny Fall day here in upstate NY. I enjoyed each short story, though I was hoping some of them would magically tie together in some way. I'm going to send it to my Mother as I know she'll enjoy it as well!

I read the entire book in one sitting on a trip to New York. It took me about 2 and a half hours. The stories flow smoothly. Some are a little hard to follow but you figure them out in the end. The reason I gave it only 4 stars is because I wanted to keep reading. Some of the stories could have kept going and made great books. It made me make my own conclusion of what happens next and I wish I did not have too. She is a great writer and knows what she is talking about because of her age. It even has a little history in it if you're into that. They could also make good short films. All in all this is a great book and I recommend it wholeheartedly. My Personal Favorites: -Lucky \*\*\*\*\*-My Flame- The Riding Teacher They all could have kept going.

My true rating is 3 1/2 stars. It is elegantly written, yet spare. The locales are varied, but don't expect a lot of description - Tuck relies more on atmosphere. The characters are complex, yet undemonstrative. A book that holds you at arm's length, but that's not a criticism - sometimes observation is better from a sort distance, and more intriguing.

This was terrible and I don't want to spend a lot of time critiquing it. So here's my condensed response: Everything seems unfinished. The tensing and perspective jumps oddly... suddenly I am first person in a scene, then it jumps to exposition of the next ten years? Come on, pick a vantage point! In a nutshell every story is: France/French tie in, divorce, death, discomfort. I felt like I was reading the summary of multiple proposed novels. Blech.

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