



For a Little While

Rick Bass

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The definitive collection of stories--new and old--from Rick Bass, "an American classic" (Newsweek). For the past three decades Rick Bass, long considered one of the most gifted practitioners of the short story, has been unsurpassed in his ability to perceive and portray the enduring truths of the human heart. To read his fiction is to feel more alive--connected, incandescently, to "the brief longshot of having been chosen for the human experience," as one of his characters puts it. These pages reveal men and women living with passion and tenderness at the outer limits of the senses, each attempting to triumph against fate. In the timeless and much-loved "The Hermit's Story," a couple escapes a sudden blizzard by traversing a frozen lake--beneath the ice--while oft-anthologized treasures like "The Watch" and "The Fireman" provide searing insights into the complexity of family and romantic entanglements, whether it's a cantankerous father and son in the jungle of a Mississippi bayou, or a troubled marriage haunted and cleansed by house fires. In "How She Remembers It," Bass's latest Pushcart Prize winner, a twelve-year-old girl takes her first trip to Yellowstone with her beloved father, who, unbeknownst to her, is losing his memory. In other new stories we meet an ancient, once-vital matriarch refusing all attempts to lease her oil-rich land; a teenage boy rescuing a truck from the river in which his father drowned; an alcoholic logger seeking absolution and renewal amid the ancient ruins of South America; and a father protecting his daughters from a mountain lion on a trip to harvest a Christmas tree gone awry. Bass's lush and striking language pulls us ineluctably into the lives of these engaging characters and their surroundings. These intricate stories--brimming with magic and wonder, filled with hard-won empathy, marbled throughout with astonishing imagery--have the power both to devastate and to uplift. For a Little While showcases an iconic American master at his peak, and is a breathtaking work of literature every fiction reader must own.

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