
Joanne Harris

Jigs & Reels

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Many of the stories in *Jigs & Reels* include explanatory notes relating to your composition process. Why did you decide to include those personal accounts in this collection?

I decided to include them in order to prepare the reader for some of the more experimental aspects of the book and perhaps to give some kind of an insight into the many ways that stories are generated. Writing is a very personal process, short stories perhaps even more so than novels, and it is sometimes helpful in a collection spanning so many different genres and written over such a long period of time if the context can also be demonstrated.

In your foreword, you describe the verbal compression of short stories as "demanding and frustrating." What do you think explains your comfort with larger forms, like novels, which so many writers find intimidating?

I don't think that the larger form is any less demanding or frustrating. However, working with a broader tapestry tends to allow for more experimentation with structure, and a structural looseness that wouldn't be permissible in the short story can be acceptable in a longer piece.

Many of your stories — "Come in, Mr. Lowry, Your Number Is Up!" "Waiting for Gandalf," and "Any Girl Can Be a CandyKiss Girl!" to name a few, are distinctly eerie. Are you especially drawn to exploring the darker side of human nature in short fiction?

Yes. I think all my work shows an interest in the dark side of human nature. I think people are at their most interesting when confronted with the demons of their past.

Are the stories in this collection organized chronologically or thematically?

Neither.

It took you ten years to accumulate the stories in *Jigs & Reels*. Will your readers have to wait another decade for your next collection of stories?

I don't tend to plan that far ahead.