

Magic for beginners

Short End of the Stick



I have to admit, even as someone who has great appreciation for short stories, I often

find it hard to muster the same kind of enthusiasm for reading them as I do when approaching the pleasant immersion of a novel. But I've proven myself wrong so many times, as I take up a book with a sense of duty and find myself thoroughly enthralled instead. Short stories are perfect for those with a hectic schedule (or a short attention span); they offer condensed, pithy prose and plot, and they can often alert you to a new talent before everyone's going crazy for their debut novel. I was inspired to write this post by Daniel Orozco's Orientation, which I just read. "Officer Weeps" in particular is one my my favorite short stories ever. His characters are weird and liminal--a woman on a late-night cookie binge, an ex-dictator, a pair of officers falling in love amidst an odd vandalism streak--and he presents them with hilarious and terrible brevity. Here are a few other collections that I really enjoyed, written with a similarly strange focus and an equal blend of heartbreak and humor.

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