



What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories

By Raymond Carver

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In his second collection, including the iconic and much-referenced title story featured in the Academy Award-winning film *Birdman*, Carver establishes his reputation as one of the most celebrated short-story writers in American literature—a haunting meditation on love, loss, and companionship, and finding one's way through the dark.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

"What We Talk About When We Talk About Love" is not only the most well-known short story title of the latter part of the 20th century; it has come to stand for an entire aesthetic, the bare-bones prose style for which Raymond Carver became famous. Perhaps, it could be argued, *too* famous, at least for his fiction's own good. Like those of Hemingway or any other writer similarly loved, imitated, parodied, and reviled, these stories can sometimes produce the sense of reading pastiche. "A man without hands came to the door to sell me a photograph of my house." "That morning she pours Teacher's over my belly and licks it off. That afternoon she tries to jump out the window." "My friend Mel McGinnis was talking. Mel is a cardiologist, and sometimes that gives him the right." What other writer ever produced first sentences like these? They are like doors into Carverworld, where everyone speaks in simple declarative phrases, no one ever stops at one beer, and failure or violence are the true outcomes of the American dream.

Yet these stories bear careful re-reading, like any truly important and enduring work. For one thing, Carver is one of the few writers who can make desperation--cutting your ex-wife's telephone cord in the middle of a conversation, standing on your own roof chunking rocks while a man with no hands takes your picture--deeply *funny*. Then there is the sheer craft that went into their creation. Despite their seeming simplicity, his tales are as artfully constructed as poems--and like poems, the best of them can make your breath catch in your throat. In the title piece, for instance, after the gin has been drunk, after the stories have been told, after the tensions in the room have come to the surface and subsided again, there comes a moment of strange lightness and peace: "I could hear my heart beating. I could hear everyone's heart. I could hear the human noise we sat there making, not one of us moving, not even when the room went dark."

Much of what happens in *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love* (1981) happens offstage, and we're left with tragedy's props: booze, instant coffee, furniture from a failed marriage, cigarettes smoked in the middle of the night. This is not merely a matter of technique. Carver leaves out a great deal, but that's only a measure of his characters' vulnerability, the nerve endings his stories lay bare. To say anything more, one feels, would simply hurt too much. --*Mary Park*

Review

"Carver's fiction is so spare in manner that it takes a time before one realizes how completely a whole culture and a whole moral condition is represented by even the most seemingly slight sketch. This second volume of stories is clearly the work of a full-grown master." —Frank Kermode

"Raymond Carver's America is...clouded by pain and the loss of dreams, but it is not as fragile as it looks. It is a place of survivors and a place of stories.... [Carver] has done what many of the most gifted writers fail to do: He has invented a country of his own, like no other except that very world, as Wordsworth said, which is the world to all of us." —Michael Wood, front page, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Splendid.... The collection as a whole, unlike most, begins to grow and resonate in a wonderful cumulative effect." —Tim O'Brien, *Chicago Tribune Book World*

"Carver not only enchants, he convinces." —J.D. Reed, *Time*

From the Inside Flap

In his second collection of stories, as in his first, Carver's characters are peripheral people--people without education, insight or prospects, people too unimaginative to even give up. Carver celebrates these men and

women.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Shirley Parker:

The book *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories* make you feel enjoy for your spare time. You may use to make your capable a lot more increase. Book can to be your best friend when you getting anxiety or having big problem with your subject. If you can make reading a book *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories* to be your habit, you can get much more advantages, like add your personal capable, increase your knowledge about a number of or all subjects. You could know everything if you like start and read a publication *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories*. Kinds of book are several. It means that, science book or encyclopedia or other people. So , how do you think about this reserve?

Kevin Lemon:

Book is to be different per grade. Book for children until adult are different content. To be sure that book is very important for people. The book *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories* had been making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is quite advantages for you. The publication *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories* is not only giving you much more new information but also to be your friend when you feel bored. You can spend your own spend time to read your guide. Try to make relationship while using book *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories*. You never sense lose out for everything if you read some books.

Greg Butler:

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to complete! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they doing activity like watching television, likely to beach, or picnic in the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you want to something different to fill your current free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of e-book that you should read. If you want to attempt look for book, may be the guide untitled *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories* can be fine book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

Janelle Ramirez:

With this era which is the greater man or woman or who has ability to do something more are more valuable than other. Do you want to become among it? It is just simple solution to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time not much but quite enough to experience a look at some books. On the list of books in the top checklist in your reading list is actually *What We Talk About When We Talk About Love: Stories*. This book that is qualified as *The Hungry Hillside* can get you closer in getting precious person. By looking upward and review this guide you can get many advantages.

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