



Brief Candles

Aldous Huxley

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This collection of Huxley stories contains 'After the Fireworks' which is the length of a short novel and deals with the predicament of a well-known writer who finds himself approached as an oldish man, by an importunate female admirer who aspires at all costs to be his mistress. Three more stories - 'Chawdron', 'The Rest Cure' and 'The Claxtons' complete the volume.

Brief Candles Details

Date : Published 1970 by Chatto & Windus (first published 1930)

ISBN : 9780701107925

Author : Aldous Huxley

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From Reader Review Brief Candles for online ebook

kunkku says

the most delightful book of short stories written in his inimitable style...

Persephone Abbott says

Of the four short stories I most enjoyed "The Claxtons" and the wonderful "After the Fireworks."

In that tale our would-be heroine states:

"For the moment," she went on, writing very fast, as though she was trying to get away from the sad, disagreeable thoughts that had intruded upon her, "I thought I was going to faint when he touched me, like one's coming to after chloroform, which I have certainly never felt like with anyone else."

Delicious.

Perhaps not all of the writing is five star, here I am touching on the boredom "Cure for Rest" but still, very entertaining social satire.

Anna says

Surprisingly stimulating; although there is very little plot involved, and the characters are shallow, the language is addictive, and moreish. Four short stories on romance, bringing up children, and relationships.

Alyssa Mcleod says

This collection is fantastic (if you're a fan of two-dimensional female characters).

Saya says

I thought Aldous Huxley was meant to be, like, way out.

Manny says

Four really good short stories. The one I think of most often is "Chawdron", one of the best examples I have ever seen of how to use an unreliable narrator.

The framing device is that a charming, witty, extremely cynical friend is telling the story after breakfast at a country house. With evident disgust, he describes how a wealthy industrialist, Chawdron, falls for a young woman, Maggie Spindell. Well, "falls" is maybe the wrong word. It's not clear that anything sexual happens. He becomes enamored of her soul, and finds her a remarkable, unique person, who opens his eyes to things he has never experienced before. The narrator encourages us to groan along with him at Chawdron's naive sentimentality, and the transparent subterfuges that Maggie uses to manipulate him. He knows she is just a cheap con-artist playing her mark, and also that she is terrified he will unmask her.

As the scene at the breakfast table progresses, it however becomes clear that the narrator is not a very nice person either, and that he may well have his own reasons for presenting the story the way he does. Some details don't quite ring true. After a while, you start to wonder if Chawdron could be right. Perhaps Maggie really is an exceptional person, and the narrator, eaten up with envy, is refusing to admit what he actually knows very well.

Huxley succeeds perfectly at keeping both views of the story plausible; at the end, I was uncertain which one to believe. It's a great technical achievement, and nonstop entertaining.
