



The Last Star & Other Stories

D.L. Orton

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Share the wonder, experience the pain and pleasure, take the journey...

From Award-Winning Author D. L. Orton comes a funny, thought-provoking, and sensual collection of short stories. Laugh, cry, and linger over these brief but intense glimpses into the lives of a billion-year-old AI, two awkward young lovers, a captive dolphin, an aging woman, and more.

The Last Star

Two beings watch the last star in our universe wink out and discover the answer to how it all ends. And, perhaps, how it all begins.

Just Friends

Friends since they carried Scooby-Doo lunch boxes in second grade, two college students take the awkward, irreversible, and perilous step away from just friends.

Phoenix

You think your roommate is bad, try living with a practical-joke-playing, drop-dead-gorgeous, celebrity femme fatale. No one is safe from her wiles, least of all you.

My Kingdom for a Double Espresso

Is sex just a physical thing for guys? You know you're in trouble when your girlfriend tosses that out after you make the mistake of falling asleep on her...

Down in Flames

Personal tragedy played against a background of public disaster leaves one woman stuck in a very personal hell—and hoping for a second chance.

Willing

Right now, at this every instant, you are older than you have ever been—and younger than you will ever be again. There will never be a better time to find love.

The Idiot's Guide to Writing Workshops

(Or How to Review a Manuscript & Not Risk Getting Run Over in the Hotel Parking lot)

The Devil and a Hard Place

After all the time spent apart—all the doubts, all the denial, all the lonely nights—a love that refuses to die draws them back together like darkness and dawn.

The Last Star & Other Stories Details

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From Reader Review The Last Star & Other Stories for online ebook

Caroline says

The Last Star and Other Stories is a collection of very different tales, all with a different theme or focus. From the first story, which is science fiction, to the last, which is erotic romance, I found these stories well written and in the case of the more reality based ones, very believable. Some made me laugh, others made me sad, and all were compelling reads. The first science fiction story made me think of Ray Bradbury, though the other stories were different in tone. One that is more touched with reality and uses the author's own experiences was 'Down in Flames', which was simply heart breaking.

The book has been well produced: no jarring mistakes or spelling issues, so you are free to be carried away by the stories.

I received this book in return for an honest review - I should say 'Thanks for sharing', though the author's highly amusing translation of what this actually means (in the story 'The Idiots Guide to Writing Workshops') doesn't apply at all in this case. I really enjoyed the collection and would like to read more from this author.

Damien says

Having finished the second book in the crossing in times series (and enjoying it) I jumped straight into the author's short stories. Unfortunately they are not as good.

I'll be fair and say it is well edited and I guess the stories are competent, but for the most part they are not very original. After reading crossing in time which was genuinely clever and entertaining I was expecting witty stories about time travel, science fiction and romance with clever concepts and interplay between characters. What I got were tedious longwinded stories about sitting and waiting in hospital (couldn't even finish that one) mediocre stories about friends hooking up and stories about fixing coffee machines.

I don't want to be a complete downer as a couple of the stories were ok, but the hospital story in particular was a trial to get through and even the best of the rest (willing, the last star) were just a level below the author's previous work. I'll stick with her other series but if I had read this first I would have given up on this author.

For fans of D.L. Orton I would say skip this and stick with crossing in time.

Cynthia Turner says

One of the best collections that I have read in a long time. Recommend.

Shobitha Hariharan says

The author is a collector of moments, a creator of new vistas.

Every minute of our lives is a story, every living second adds up to making us what we are today. Some we recall, most we forget. The author seems to remember them all. From not just her own point of view, but others' as well! This book is part fiction and part true story. The stories are heartwarming and poignant.

It is a bit like trying to stand still in ankle deep water on the banks of a fast flowing river. She captures passing thoughts revealing the human vulnerability beneath. Our thoughts, feelings and memories don't have a language when in our heads, the author gives them one in the book. As we read along, the reader becomes that fly on the wall watching seemingly everyday situations unfold, revealing connections at multiple levels be it situations, emotions, like and dislikes, habits or moods.

Like in 'The Last Star', A story with vivid descriptions draws a unique picture as imagination runs amok and creates fantasies of companionships with no time and space limitations. Of going beyond the known, where nothing really needs to end. Or is it that every end is a new beginning?

Or the 'My kingdom for a double espresso' which could be the morning kitchen conversation while brewing the first coffee, in any home in the world.

Or 'Down in flames' which brings forward the unseen personal pain in the context of global terrorism.

'An Idiot's guide...' I plan to re-read this piece when I need to get my book reviewed!

A couple of simple poetry just adds variety to the collection.

The book is a light read that runs into deep emotions. She uses easy language in uneasy situations and uncomfortable experiences, and never fails to end the stories on a positive note, a hand extended in understanding and empathy, in some cases.

Here is an author who doesn't seem to care too much about maintaining a mysterious distance between herself, her writing and her readers! An aspect I found unexpected and refreshing. It made me feel that here was another person somewhere at the other end of the world, just like me!

This is a book of short stories written in immensely readable, everyday 'lexicon'.

I would recommend it to anyone looking for a simple 'comfort' read - one story a day with a cup of coffee maybe? And come back the next day same time for another one or maybe to read the earlier one again.

Thank you Book tasters the author for sending me a copy.

Shefali says

This short story collection brings to the reader a plethora of emotions and sentiments on the platter - there is a different side of love uncovered in each story, be it Artificial Intelligence and human, a dolphin and human or a steamy hot sensual relationship. A highly commendable work in itself, each story amazes you and engages you to read further. "Phoenix" is a story quite cleverly written where for over a page you think it's about the friendship of two young women, but after an encounter with their alleged visitor, bam! comes the surprise you never really expected. And the last story of the collection, "The Devil and the Hard Place" is the

perfect cherry on the cake. Oh dear, what a beautiful, sensual, goosebumps-causing tale, something really hard to forget! In all, you would absolutely, with a doubt, fall in love with the short stories immensely as each will absorb you into its plot. It's a collection you can finish within a day, for each story will urge you and prod you to read on, until you reach the end and then you want some more! Kudos to the writer for such a beautiful collection. If you've read the works of D. L. Orton, you know they are all pieces of genius and works of art in themselves and I assure you, this one is no different!

Keep Calm Novel On says

The author via Booktasters provided a copy of the eBook in exchange for an honest review.

D. L. Orton has compiled an eclectic collection of short stories. Although each story is truly unique the common thread is relationships. The variety of genres adds depth to the well-written stories. The author explores a variety of life's lessons including but not limited to friendship, love, loss, obstacles, happiness, and joy. The reader will be reminded of the simple experiences that shape one's life. The themes are touching and reveal the author's understanding of the human spirit. The Last Star and Other Short Stories does not disappoint.

Blogging Mama101 says

Not quite sure where to start! This collection of short stories, poetry and semi-autobiographical tales are packed with vibrant character detail and pack a punch with their delivery.

There is a tantalizing quality about them - the author teases the reader at times, pulling them toward the climax of her tales but not without obstacles along the way. She makes you work for the outcome, which keeps you engaged and wanting more.

A genuine range, showcasing the versatility of this author - from the fantastical to the evocatively sexy to the painfully, heartbreakingly real with more than a few surprises along the way.

Again, the only thing I was not sure of was the inclusion of The Idiot's Guide to Writing Workshops. Although it was an interesting and amusing piece, I'm not sure it fits with the rest of the collection. That said, I enjoyed reading it nonetheless.

I want to conclude by saying "This was a great read" ;-) but genuinely, it actually really was!

NB I have given the same review on Amazon.

John says

Review to come.

Navika says

This book contains many short stories with different genres and I think it's something for everyone. It starts with the first story "The Last Star" which is about the sun becoming a supernova and it ends with "The Devil & A Hard Place" which goes in the same genre as FSoG or the After-Series.

In my opinion D.L. Orton's style to write is great because you want to read on and it does not get boring. The words used aren't only the 'simple' ones you use in everyday language, which I find great because I got to learn new words as English isn't my first language (it's my third one). The thing I find was, is, that you get through the stories so quickly because the whole thing isn't that long. But what's good about the length, is, that you can read it on your way whole travelling by train, plane or bus even if the distance isn't that long. You can always get through one story in a couple of minutes :)

I really liked all of the short stories except the last one because I don't like that type of genre but not everyone likes everything! I also really liked that the author put in her own experiences and sometimes had an "After Word" after a couple short stories.

My favourite short story was the one about the dolphin. It was really cute.

I really recommend these short stories because it's great to read them in between and you don't have to worry about cliffhangers.

Flor says

I received an electronic copy of the book via booktasters and the author, thank you.

This book is an anthology of short stories about love and life that touched my heart in ways I never expected.

Just Friends: a very nice and easygoing story about two best friends Meg and Jaime who revalue their relationship while spending the weekend together. I truly loved the story, found it very juvenile and sweet. Definitely the shortest love story I ever read and still couldn't help but rooting for them.

"I've been in love with you for years, Meg—maybe since the first time you told me what an awesome lunchbox I had."

Phoenix: I don't want to talk about this one that much, because for me it was a big amount of "Oh, I didn't was expecting that". I will say, however, that it was beautiful, it touched my heart and brought me to tears, specially because it turned out to be so different and so much more than I could have imagined.

Still: I don't know if it counts as a story but for me it was intriguing, the kind of things that makes you wonder.

My Kingdom for a double espresso: A light and quick read, about a couple that's having a little discussion while drinking coffee. I am not that eager to the topic but I still enjoyed it and the ending made me swoon.

"Merges with the compelling and powerful desire I have to be with you, please you, stay with you."

Down in flames: heartbreaking and so hard to read, it was really sad reading about two tragedies happening within days from the other. One known, one doesn't but still both devastating. I couldn't help but to feel so unpowered towards the story, I wanted to do something, unfortunately I can't. Really brave.

Willing: It was good but not my favorite, and it's not about the writing or the story but the topic it covers, just couldn't relate to it. However it was still enjoyable and I'm pretty sure older audiences will appreciate it.

The Idiot's Guide to Writing Workshops: pure gem! Witty, satirical and just fun! Instead of say, I will show: "Nice = Did you plagiarize that line?"
"I'm hopelessly pedantic so no one else will probably notice, but reading the first chapter put me into a coma*."

Like wild horses: A sweet story that also teaches a lesson about animals with little hints of a love story that's just about to begin.

The Devil and the Hard Place: unfortunately didn't read it (because of its warning) but I'm pretty sure it be just as good.

The last star: sad but hopeful read, it made me have the feels and that's always good. I love how love was the answer and how it makes you think about life, excellent way to finish the book.
"It seems it took me a hundred trillion years," I say, "to learn the value of a second."

Judith A Maugeri says

I recommend this book for anyone who likes romance. The stories were short and sweet and easy to read. Some of them were a little hokey but still entertaining. It's a good book to pick up if you don't have a lot of time to read. You can read one or two stories at a time if you're short on time. Some of the stories were better than others.

Keith Moser says

Read an ARC version of this as one of DL Orton's proofreaders. It's a pretty enjoyable collection of short stories!

"The Last Star" tells the story of two nearly eternal beings as they witness the Heat Death of the universe. The two characters have a unique relationship. I wish there had been more about their creation though. The male seemed to be an AI created in the near future and the other a human whose consciousness was transferred into an AI, I believe. Somehow it seems these two are the only eternal beings, but it's still a decent story about the end of the world.

"Just Friends" is about two college-aged kids who grew up together and is from the point of view of the guy who's had a crush on the girl for forever. It's a classic story (who hasn't been there) but the dialogue felt a little unbelievable. Or maybe it's the history they share through dialogue—it's so crazy what these two friends have done (without doing what they want to do).

"Phoenix" is a fun little bit of nonfiction with some misdirection and surprises. I forgot that it wasn't fiction as I read it and that gave me some fun ideas about what I was reading!

"My Kingdom for a Double Espresso" is all about an awkward morning after. But not a morning after sex but rather after a night when he fell asleep while she wanted to have sex. Felt like a real, yet heightened, first fight.

"Down in Flames" is the second non-fiction story of the collection. Originally I thought it was going to be a cloying retelling of the 9/11 aftermath but it quickly became something much more personal and emotional.

Probably the best piece of the collection!

"Willing" is about a new divorcée who gets into a flirtatious text conversation with a much younger man. It explores the emotions & feelings of getting back in the game after being out of it for so long.

"The Idiot's Guide to Writing Workshops" is a very inside-baseball, tongue-in-cheek look at writing and editing and proofreading. Some parts went over my head (I knew some of the abbreviations she pokes fun at but not all) while other parts were quite helpful (Hugs!)

And finally, "The Devil and a Hard Place" is the NSFW finale where Orton lets her naughty side out. I've never been a huge fan of the R-rated scenes in her other books but this story worked, maybe because it was a standalone piece of erotica and not a few sexy scenes peppered in throughout a standard story.

Overall, the collection averages out to 4*. Definitely worth the time it took to read!

Nerdish Mum says

I really enjoyed this collection and I liked that though there was a loose theme of different kinds of love, the stories were all vastly different.

The stories are all well written and though they are short, you don't feel like anything has been sacrificed to fit the short story format.

There were two absolute stand out stories for me for completely different reasons. The first of which is the title story, The Last Star, I found this story absolutely fascinating. It's about the two last sentient beings in the universe watching as the last star dies and they're thinking about their lives and how they spent them and wondering about what will happen next. The end was also extremely satisfying.

The second one that stood out was Down in Flames, this was so very, very difficult to read for two different reasons. The first being the memory of 9/11 and just how many lives were lost and how much it has changed and affected life. The other reason is the personal loss of the woman in the story, it's heartbreaking going through what she goes through as she does. What makes it more poignant is that from what I understand from the annotations is that this is a true story. I find reading anything of this kind very painful and very rarely make it through a story or article about this kind of thing, so the fact I made it the whole way through says a lot about the quality of the writing to keep me reading.

The only story I felt didn't fit was The Idiot's Guide To Writing Workshops, not because it was bad as it is incredibly insightful and amusing, but because I personally don't feel that it feels the theme or tone of the rest of the stories. I did enjoy this story but I would have preferred it in a different collection.

Overall a great collection and one that covers some important topics

This was originally posted on my blog <http://lifeofanerdishmum.blogspot.co.uk/>

Prapti Panda says

I received an ARC copy of this book from the author, D.L. Orton and was pleasantly surprised by the diverse

content!

The first story, THE LAST STAR, was not really to my liking. That could be because I'm not a huge fan of sci-fi. Still, the little bits of philosophy that seeped out of the two characters' somewhat weird relationship was enough to fill my heart. Like they say, the end of the world is no joking matter!

I glossed over JUST FRIENDS, since I'm only fifteen and the title of the story signified that the content wasn't age appropriate material. But I did like the bit about the Scooby-Doo lunchbox! Made me really nostalgic :)

PHOENIX was one of my favourites in the collection and I read it over and over for like, a hundred times. I'm really crazy about animals and loved the way the author talked about her friendship with the dolphin. (I'm guessing it was partly nonfiction) The last part is especially touching, when she narrates what happens in the end to Phoenix and her sweet message to the world to clean up the seas. People nowadays really need to read more stories like this one. Stories that inspire, motivate.

MY KINGDOM FOR A DOUBLE ESPRESSO again wasn't really meant for me, but I did enjoy as the lead character dismantled the espresso machine. Although it was over a little soon, I wished there were more coffee ground spills! Nothing brightens up your awful morning than watching someone else's get ruined! For me, this one was for a laugh.

DOWN IN FLAMES is by far the best story in this book. I literally felt the pain of the author (I'm assuming this was nonfiction too, judging by the tone), and not only did this made for a very touching 9/11 memorial read, it showed me a whole other side of what transpired when the whole world was in chaos over the attacks. There is nothing in this world that can be compared to a mother's love for her child and what their separation might feel like is unimaginable for me. This was probably the most poignant and raw story I've ever read.

WILLING I had to give up reading after a casual tennis match arrangement turned into something, well, more explicit. It's amazing how many stories an author can spin off on tangents to the main theme!

THE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO WRITING WORKSHOPS was absolutely perfect! There was lots of satire, some very helpful facts and I somehow can't stop thinking about all the abbreviations she listed out! It's an ideal read for a frustrated writer who's looking for some help while also wanting to smile. That is, assuming he/she can differentiate between the wit and the truth!

Overall, this was a nice read read for a lazy weekend. I appreciated the fact that the author was very particular about including a life lesson with each story she spawned. When you're in the writing industry, it's quite difficult to hand out advice and still make your stories lively. D.L. Orton did a fantastic job with this and I'll be looking forward to read some of her other anthologies.

O. D. Book Reviews says

Description: This is an anthology of short stories, essays and personal narratives. They vary in genre and elicit different emotions.

I will give a brief description of each short:

The Last Star

A ride that takes you to the very end of the universe and beyond. You are guided by a pair of ageless beings that contemplate what will happen next, while the last star dies. I think this story will appeal to fans of time travel genres and Doctor Who and the like.

Just Friends

A story of long-time best friends now college age who are struggling to get up the courage to confess the way they really feel about each other. Was spending spring break alone together a mistake or exactly what they needed?

Phoenix

I don't know how to describe this story without spoiling the experience of reading it. I'll just say it was a cute and fun story and it thought it was nice that it had an Afterword that promotes eco-friendly attitudes and actions, while also giving background on the story.

My Kingdom for a Double Espresso

A new couple argues after sexual rejection. A passionate, romantic short story. I wasn't very interested in their fight, but the story did have a cute ending.

Down in Flames

The most heart breaking story of the bunch. It overlays two tragedies, 911 and a couple experiencing a miscarriage. This deeply personal narrative may be gruesome and difficult for some readers and comforting to others to know they are not alone.

Willing

This is a story I never would have sought out but I found it so enjoyable. It is an amusing tale of an older woman who is relentlessly flirted with by a young, attractive man. It has the emotional ride of a rom-com (in a good way). One of my favorite stories, highly entertaining!

The Idiot's Guide to Writing Workshops

As someone who has never participated in writing workshops this one went over my head a little but I did find it comical too.

The Devil and a Hard Place

An explicit erotic short story. A complicated romance.

In Short: This diverse collection of shorts will appeal to a range of audiences and you may love all of them or only some of them. I thought this book was a fun quick read that evoked many different emotions and proved to be quite entertaining. It is also the kind of book that is perfect for times when you are busy or traveling and only have time to read a short story or two at a time.

Overall, this book is an intense, emotional and some times sensual ride.

Pros: This book is very, very well written! It is easy to get swept into the stories. I would definitely read more by this author after reading this. Different readers will have different favorites out of this collection. I liked "Willing" because I found it very amusing reading their flirty and embarrassing text messages. The writing was so good I felt the anxiety of the protagonist after she accidentally sends a message with a little more spice than she was truly brave enough to say. The story goes on a roller coaster and I really cheered her on while also empathizing with her insecurities. I really liked too that the ending of "Willing" was just left up

to your imagination and not graphic. I also loved the story "The Last Star" the scientific theories were intelligently written in an approachable manner. The characters in The Last Star were very intriguing too. I wish it had been longer. All of the stories had well written characters and dialogue. I thought "Phoenix" was a really cute and sweet story and very cleverly and deceptively written. Some of the stories had Afterwords where the author shares her personal experiences

Cons: The variety of themes and genres in this book may not all be well received by all readers and the adult themes limit the book's audience. I would have liked more back story and descriptions of the characters in "The Last Star". I would have liked some more detail to the settings of the stories at times.

Parent's Guide: Some of the stories contain sexual content. This book is for adults.

I received a free copy of this book in return for my honest review. Full review at ODbookreviews.blogspot.com
