



## Interesting Women: Stories

By Andrea Lee

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American brio confronts European sophistication—and diverse cultures collide with surprising results—in brilliant, sometimes outrageous stories of seduction and self-discovery by acclaimed New Yorker writer Andrea Lee.

In vivid prose shot through with mordant irony, Lee takes us into the hearts and minds of a number of extraordinary women—intelligent, seductive, self-possessed—who, with wit and style, must grapple with questions of identity in a shrinking world where everyone is, in some way, a foreigner.

In “The Birthday Present,” a loyal and conventional American wife explores the wilder shores of marital devotion by giving her Italian husband a costly present: a night with a high-class Milanese call girl. “Winter Barley” is the account, alternately lyrical and perverse, of the brief love affair in Scotland between an elderly European prince and a thoroughly modern New England beauty half his age. And in the collection’s title story, “Interesting Women,” an American woman on vacation in Thailand reflects with mocking detachment on the confessional relationships that spring up between women (“another day, another soul laid bare”), before falling into one herself, which culminates in a hilarious and absurd odyssey through the jungle.

Lee’s beautifully crafted stories, reminiscent of Colette’s, offer the reader a rare combination: sensual evocation of the moment, and profound insight into the underlying struggles—of gender, race, and class—that shape relationships worldwide.

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## Interesting Women: Stories By Andrea Lee Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

It would be difficult to overstate the elegance of this story collection from Andrea Lee, who produces fiction and journalism for *The New Yorker*, among other venues. Lee's interesting women are usually Americans trying their luck in Europe; most of them are African American wives of the Italian elite. Because her subject matter is so rarified (the first story mentions cashmere two times in as many pages) and because her writing is so beautifully transparent, it seems at first that Lee is coasting on the glamour of her subject matter. Not so--these stories are every bit as well put together as the women who inhabit them. "Brothers and Sisters Around the World" is an unforgettable tale of a well-to-do black woman who vacations in Third World countries with her European husband: "on vacation we travel the world to get hotter and wilder." When the narrator impulsively slaps a teenage girl who's been flirting with her husband in a village near Madagascar, the balance of the whole island is upset, with surprising results. Lee limns race, class, and a peculiarly female ambitiousness while always keeping her language as deceptively simple and sharp as an Armani suit. --

*Claire Dederer*

#### From Publishers Weekly

Although Lee has published one novel (*Sarah Phillips*) and one book of reportage (*Russian Journal*), she is best known for her frequently anthologized short stories infused with international glamour and a particular brand of American world-weariness. The 13 here are thematically unified, focusing on outsiders doubly estranged and often struggling to factor a sexual power play into the equation. The unnamed narrator of "Brothers and Sisters Around the World" is vacationing in the Caribbean with her young son and her Franco-Roman husband, who adores the tropics and assumes she does, too. "He doesn't seem to see that what gives strength to the spine of an American black woman... is a steely Protestant core... that in its absolutism is curiously cold and Nordic." Another American wife whose Milanese husband assumes she is traditional gives him a birthday present of an evening with two elegant and very young fancy women. The book takes its title from the musings of a woman vacationing in Thailand while her husband investigates mines in China. "Interesting women are we ever going to be free of them? I meet them everywhere these days, now that there is no longer such a thing as an interesting man." Reading Lee, you know you're in the presence of an author fully able to, as another narrator says, "picture an endless mazurka of former wives, husbands, lovers, children, and assorted hangers-on, not excepting au pairs, cleaning women and pets." The stories are full of tension sexual, material, racial. If they are less than perfectly realized, and if their glitter seems to fade from a distance, they still provide instant and sophisticated gratification. New York author appearances. (Apr. 16) Forecast: Lee's work is frequently published in the *New Yorker* and other high-profile venues, and readers already captivated by her cool, ironic voice will be this collection's chief audience.

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#### From Library Journal

Interesting stories, too; several of them appeared in O. Henry Awards anthologies. Lee came to our attention some 20 years ago with *Russian Journal*.

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**Stephanie Rodriguez:**

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**Mike Jones:**

Interesting Women: Stories can be one of your basic books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that will increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort to place every word into satisfaction arrangement in writing Interesting Women: Stories although doesn't forget the main level, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource info that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information could drawn you into new stage of crucial considering.

**Carol Smith:**

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**Michael Kelly:**

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