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# The Magic Barrel

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 The Stories of Bernard Malamud  
 Magic Pot  
 "Take Pity" by Bernard Malamud

*The Magic Barrel*

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## CARLEE CORDOVA

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The Magic Barrel Schocken

When a woodcutter finds a pot that magically duplicates anything that is placed inside it, he and his wife are delighted until the wife accidentally falls in.

**The Assistant** Penguin

Abandoned by her father and struggling under the shadow of her overbearing mother, Jewish-Siberian teen Sasha has a baby with a homeless alcoholic and becomes a mail-order bride as part of her quest to find her father in America.

*The Adventure of Bernard and the Magic Barrel* Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Philip Davis tells the story of Bernard Malamud (1914-1986), the self-made son of poor Jewish immigrants who went on to

become one of the foremost novelists and short-story writers of the post-war period. The time is ripe for a revival of interest in a man who at the peak of his success stood alongside Saul Bellow and Philip Roth in the ranks of Jewish American writers. Nothing came easily to Malamud: his family was poor, his mother probably committed suicide when Malamud was 14, and his younger brother inherited her schizophrenia. Malamud did everything the second time round - re-using his life in his writing, even as he revised draft after draft. Davis's meticulous biography shows all that it meant for this man to be a writer in terms of both the uses of and the costs to his own life. It also restores Bernard Malamud's literary reputation as one of the great original voices of his generation, a writer of superb subtlety and clarity. Bernard Malamud: A Writer's Life benefits from Philip Davis's exclusive interviews

with family, friends, and colleagues, unfettered access to private journals and letters, and detailed analysis of Malamud's working methods through the examination of hitherto unresearched manuscripts. It is very much a writer's life. It is also the story of a struggling emotional man, using an extraordinary but long-worked-for gift, in order to give meaning to ordinary human life.

*The Tenants* August House

*The Magic Barrel* Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
*A Malamud Reader* Penguin

Winner of the 1966 Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award Kiev, 1911. When a twelve-year-old Russian boy is found stabbed to death, his body drained of blood, the accusation of ritual murder is levelled at the Jews. Yakov Bok - a handyman hiding his Jewish identity from his anti-Semitic employer - is first outed and blamed. Arrested and imprisoned, Bok

refuses to confess to a crime that he did not commit. What becomes of this man under pressure, for whom acquittal is made to seem as hopeless as conviction, is the subject of a terrifying masterpiece of twentieth-century fiction. Acclaim for Malamud: 'Malamud is a rich original of the first rank' Saul Bellow 'Malamud has never produced a mediocre novel... He is always profoundly convincing' Anthony Burgess 'One of Malamud's extraordinary gifts has always been for lifting the realistic world up, into the realm of metaphysical fantasy. Another has been to take life, lives, seriously' Malcolm Bradbury 'One of those rare writers who makes other writers eat their hearts out' Melvyn Bragg Of Malamud's short stories: 'I have discovered a short-story writer who is better than any of them, including myself' Flannery O'Connor

#### **The Fixer** Macmillan

Sy Levin, a high school teacher beset by alcohol and bad decisions, leaves New York for the Pacific Northwest to start over, imagining that an extraordinary new life awaits him there. Soon after arriving, he realizes that he had fallen for the myth of the West as a place of personal reinvention.

Dubin's Lives Univ. Press of Mississippi  
\*A New York Times Notable Book\* "Funny, painful, outrageous . . . Anya Ulinich is the David Sedaris of Russian-American cartoonists." —Gary Shteyngart Anya Ulinich turns her sharp eye toward the strange, often unmooring world of "grown-up" dating in this darkly comic graphic novel. After her fifteen-year marriage ends, Lena Finkle gets an eye-opening education in love, sex, and loss when she embarks on a string of online dates, all while raising her two teenage daughters. The Vampire of Bensonhurst, the Orphan, Disaster Man, and the Diamond Psychiatrist are just a few of the unforgettable characters she meets along the way. Evoking Louis C. K.'s humor and Amy Winehouse's longing and anguish, and paying homage to Malamud and Chekhov, Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel is a funny and moving story, beautifully told.  
Petropolis Atlantic Books Ltd

When Rembrandt the bear loses his special lucky hat, he finds that neither a bird nor a clown hat can replace it.  
Arthur P. Snittles Minotaur Books  
Bernard Malamud was one of the most accomplished American novelists of the postwar years. From the Pulitzer Prize winner *The Fixer* as well as *The Assistant*, named one of the best "100 All-Time Novels" by Time Magazine—to mention only two of the more than a dozen published books—he not only established

himself in the first rank of American writers but also took the country's literature in new and important directions. In her signature memoir, Smith explores her renowned father's life and literary legacy. Malamud was among the most brilliant novelists of his era, and counted among his friends Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Theodore Roethke, and Shirley Jackson. Yet Malamud was also very private. Only his family has had full access to his personal papers, including letters and journals that offer unique insight into the man and his work. In her candid, evocative, and loving memoir, his daughter brings Malamud to vivid life.  
*The Minotaur Sampler, Volume 4*  
Macmillan

Compassionate and profound in their wry humor, this collection of stories captures the poetry of human relationships at the point where reality and imagination meet.  
A Barrel of Laughs, A Vale of Tears  
Macmillan

'Prince Roger sets out eagerly on a quest and finds a few adventures, a lot of friends, a damsel or two in distress (not!) and himself, in the end. A 'carrier of joy' whose mere presence causes everyone to laugh uncontrollably, Roger finds cruelty and kindness equally amusing, and expects his quest to be a lark. It's anything but: As Roger passes through the Forever Forest, nearly starves at the Dastardly Divide, sees people at their worst in the Valley of Vengeance, and temporarily despairs in the Mountains of Malice, he sobers up, learns to care for others, becomes an expert peacemaker, does Good Deeds, and falls in love with Lady Sadie, who says what she thinks as she repeatedly saves his bacon.'—K.  
'Feiffer's worldly-wise, confiding tone and sense of the absurd are highly congenial, and the drawings are a vintage Feiffer delight.'—Publishers Weekly. 100 Books for Reading and Sharing 1995 (NY Public Library)

Conversations with Bernard Malamud The Magic Barrel

This volume presents between the covers of a single book the range and scope of one of the most distinguished writers in America, Bernard Malamud. A Malamud Reader contains the complete text of *The Assistant*, his novel of love and redemption in Brooklyn; ten stories from *The Magic Barrel* and *Idiots First*; three journeys—to Chicago, from *The Natural*; to the coast, from *A New Life*; and to Kiev, from *The Fixer*—and two long selections, "S. Levin in Love" and "Yakov Bok in Prison."

The Natural Farrar, Straus and Giroux  
For more than eighty years the Jewish

Daily Forward's legendary advice column, "A Bintel Brief" ("a bundle of letters") dispensed shrewd, practical, and fair-minded advice to its readers. Created in 1906 to help bewildered Eastern European immigrants learn about their new country, the column also gave them a forum for seeking advice and support in the face of problems ranging from wrenching spiritual dilemmas to petty family squabbles to the sometimes hilarious predicaments that result when Old World meets New. Isaac Metzker's beloved selection of these letters and responses has become for today's readers a remarkable oral record not only of the varied problems of Jewish immigrant life in America but also of the catastrophic events of the first half of our century. Foreword and Notes by Harry Golden

*God's Grace* Oxford University Press  
Frank, a troubled, somewhat desperate, Italian American, works long hours in the grocery store of a struggling Jewish family in a Brooklyn neighborhood where he develops a secret passion for his employer's attractive daughter.

*A Study Guide for Bernard Malamud's "Magic Barrel"* Minotaur Books

Winner of the National Book Award for Fiction Introduction by Jhumpa Lahiri  
Bernard Malamud's first book of short stories, *The Magic Barrel*, has been recognized as a classic from the time it was published in 1959. The stories are set in New York and in Italy (where Malamud's alter ego, the struggling New York Jewish Painter Arthur Fidelman, roams amid the ruins of old Europe in search of his artistic patrimony); they tell of egg candlers and shoemakers, matchmakers, and rabbis, in a voice that blends vigorous urban realism, Yiddish idiom, and a dash of artistic magic. *The Magic Barrel* is a book about New York and about the immigrant experience, and it is high point in the modern American short story. Few books of any kind have managed to depict struggle and frustration and heartbreak with such delight, or such artistry.

The People and Uncollected Stories Farrar, Straus and Giroux

Bernard Malamud gave his first interview in 1958, his last in 1986. During the intervening twenty-eight years he was formally interviewed at least forty times. This book collects twenty-eight of the best interviews, ranging from brief conversations with journalists to more extended and leisurely conversations with academics and writers. Winner of two National Book Awards and a Pulitzer Prize, this universally praised author of *The Magic Barrel*, *The Fixer*, *The Natural*, and many stories that are acclaimed among

the masterpieces of American fiction appears in these interviews quite appropriately as an artist devoted more to his work than to discussing it. This collection includes interviews in which Malamud gives a commentary on each of his novels and on many of his short stories. What emerges from these encounters with this great author is a sense of Malamud's deep, lifetime commitment to his art and to a seriousness of purpose. Though there is very little domestic detail or literary gossip in Malamud's conversations, these interviews reveal the essence of a great writer that the multitudes of readers inspired by his books crave to find and retain.

**The Beginning After The End** GRIN Verlag

Bernard Malamud, author of such acclaimed novels as *The Fixer* and *The Natural* and winner of two National Book Awards and a Pulitzer Prize, is widely recognized as one of the most important and enduring of American writers. Yet because he was intensely private about the way he worked, few readers are aware of his extraordinarily prolific expression of his commitment to the writing process. Including a wealth of never-before-published material, *Talking Horse* is designed to provide writers with insights into the way a master thought about and practiced his craft. This unique collection includes speeches, interviews, lesson plans, essays, and a series of previously unpublished notes on the nature of fiction, all of which offer an unparalleled look at the writing life. Each section of the book

includes a headnote by Nicholas Delbanco or Alan Cheuse.

*Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel* Catapult \*A New York Times Notable Book\* "Funny, painful, outrageous . . . Anya Ulinich is the David Sedaris of Russian-American cartoonists." —Gary Shteyngart Anya Ulinich turns her sharp eye toward the strange, often unmooring world of "grown-up" dating in this darkly comic graphic novel. After her fifteen-year marriage ends, Lena Finkle gets an eye-opening education in love, sex, and loss when she embarks on a string of online dates, all while raising her two teenage daughters. *The Vampire of Bensonhurst*, *the Orphan*, *Disaster Man*, and *the Diamond Psychiatrist* are just a few of the unforgettable characters she meets along the way. Evoking Louis C. K.'s humor and Amy Winehouse's longing and anguish, and paying homage to Malamud and Chekhov, *Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel* is a funny and moving story, beautifully told. **Talking Horse** Farrar, Straus and Giroux *God's Grace* (1982), Bernard Malamud's last novel, is a modern-day dystopian fantasy, set in a time after a thermonuclear war prompts a second flood -- a radical departure from Malamud's previous fiction. The novel's protagonist is paleosist Calvin Cohn, who had been attending to his work at the bottom of the ocean when the Devastation struck, and who alone survived. This rabbi's son -- a "marginal error" -- finds himself shipwrecked with an experimental chimpanzee capable of speech, to whom he gives the name Buz. Soon other

creatures appear on their island-baboons, chimps, five apes, and a lone gorilla. Cohn works hard to make it possible for God to love His creation again, and his hopes increase as he encounters the unknown and the unforeseen in this strange new world. With God's Grace, Malamud took a great risk, and it paid off. The novel's fresh and pervasive humor, narrative ingenuity, and tragic sense of the human condition make it one of Malamud's most extraordinary books. "Is he an American Master? Of course. He not only wrote in the American language, he augmented it with fresh plasticity, he shaped our English into startling new configurations." -- Cynthia Ozick

**Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel** Farrar, Straus and Giroux

With a new introduction by Aleksandar Hemon *In The Tenants* (1971), Bernard Malamud brought his unerring sense of modern urban life to bear on the conflict between blacks and Jews then inflaming his native Brooklyn. The sole tenant in a rundown tenement, Henry Lesser is struggling to finish a novel, but his solitary pursuit of the sublime grows complicated when Willie Spearmint, a black writer ambivalent toward Jews, moves into the building. Henry and Willie are artistic rivals and unwilling neighbors, and their uneasy peace is disturbed by the presence of Willie's white girlfriend Irene and the landlord Levenspiel's attempts to evict both men and demolish the building. This novel's conflict, current then, is perennial now; it reveals the slippery nature of the human condition, and the human capacity for violence and undoing.

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