



Olive Kitteridge: Fiction

By Elizabeth Strout

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**WINNER OF THE PULITZER PRIZE • THE EMMY
AWARD-WINNING HBO MINISERIES STARRING FRANCES
MCDORMAND, RICHARD JENKINS, AND BILL MURRAY**

In a voice more powerful and compassionate than ever before, *New York Times* bestselling author Elizabeth Strout binds together thirteen rich, luminous narratives into a book with the heft of a novel, through the presence of one larger-than-life, unforgettable character: Olive Kitteridge.

At the edge of the continent, Crosby, Maine, may seem like nowhere, but seen through this brilliant writer's eyes, it's in essence the whole world, and the lives that are lived there are filled with all of the grand human drama—desire, despair, jealousy, hope, and love.

At times stern, at other times patient, at times perceptive, at other times in sad denial, Olive Kitteridge, a retired schoolteacher, deplores the changes in her little town and in the world at large, but she doesn't always recognize the changes in those around her: a lounge musician haunted by a past romance: a former student who has lost the will to live: Olive's own adult child, who feels tyrannized by her irrational sensitivities; and Henry, who finds his loyalty to his marriage both a blessing and a curse.

As the townspeople grapple with their problems, mild and dire, Olive is brought to a deeper understanding of herself and her life—sometimes painfully, but always with ruthless honesty. *Olive Kitteridge* offers profound insights into the human condition—its conflicts, its tragedies and joys, and the endurance it requires.

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOK OF THE YEAR BY
*People • USA Today • The Atlantic • The Washington Post Book World •
Seattle Post-Intelligencer • Entertainment Weekly • The Christian Science
Monitor • San Francisco Chronicle • Salon • San Antonio Express-News •
Chicago Tribune • The Wall Street Journal*

“Perceptive, deeply empathetic . . . Olive is the axis around which these thirteen complex, relentlessly human narratives spin themselves into Elizabeth Strout's unforgettable novel in stories.”—*O: The Oprah Magazine*

“Fiction lovers, remember this name: *Olive Kitteridge*. . . . You’ll never forget her. . . . [Elizabeth Strout] constructs her stories with rich irony and moments of genuine surprise and intense emotion. . . . Glorious, powerful stuff.”—*USA Today*

“Funny, wicked and remorseful, Mrs. Kitteridge is a compelling life force, a red-blooded original. When she’s not onstage, we look forward to her return. The book is a page-turner because of her.”—*San Francisco Chronicle*

“*Olive Kitteridge* still lingers in memory like a treasured photograph.”—*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“Rarely does a story collection pack such a gutsy emotional punch.”—*Entertainment Weekly*

“Strout animates the ordinary with astonishing force. . . . [She] makes us experience not only the terrors of change but also the terrifying hope that change can bring: she plunges us into these churning waters and we come up gasping for air.”—*The New Yorker*

BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Elizabeth Strout’s *The Burgess Boys*.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Thirteen linked tales from Strout (*Abide with Me*, etc.) present a heart-wrenching, penetrating portrait of ordinary coastal Mainers living lives of quiet grief intermingled with flashes of human connection. The opening Pharmacy focuses on terse, dry junior high-school teacher Olive Kitteridge and her gregarious pharmacist husband, Henry, both of whom have survived the loss of a psychologically damaged parent, and both of whom suffer painful attractions to co-workers. Their son, Christopher, takes center stage in *A Little Burst*, which describes his wedding in humorous, somewhat disturbing detail, and in *Security*, where Olive, in her 70s, visits Christopher and his family in New York. Strout's fiction showcases her ability to reveal through familiar details—the mother-of-the-groom's wedding dress, a grandmother's disapproving observations of how her grandchildren are raised—the seeds of tragedy. Themes of suicide, depression, bad communication, aging and love, run through these stories, none more vivid or touching than *Incoming Tide*, where Olive chats with former student Kevin Coulson as they watch waitress Patty Howe by the seashore, all three struggling with their own misgivings about life. Like this story, the collection is easy to read and impossible to forget. Its literary craft and emotional power will surprise readers unfamiliar with Strout.

(Apr.)

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From [Booklist](#)

Starred Review “Hell. We’re always alone. Born alone. Die alone,” says Olive Kitteridge, redoubtable seventh-grade math teacher in Crosby, Maine. Anyone who gets in Olive’s way had better watch out, for she crashes unapologetically through life like an emotional storm trooper. She forces her husband, Henry, the town pharmacist, into tactical retreat; and she drives her beloved son, Christopher, across the country and into therapy. But appalling though Olive can be, Strout manages to make her deeply human and even sympathetic, as are all of the characters in this “novel in stories.” Covering a period of 30-odd years, most of the stories (several of which were previously published in the *New Yorker* and other magazines) feature Olive as their focus, but in some she is bit player or even a footnote while other characters take center stage to sort through their own fears and insecurities. Though loneliness and loss haunt these pages, Strout also supplies gentle humor and a nourishing dose of hope. People are sustained by the rhythms of ordinary life and the natural wonders of coastal Maine, and even Olive is sometimes caught off guard by life’s baffling beauty. Strout is also the author of the well-received *Amy and Isabelle* (1999) and *Abide with Me* (2006). -- Mary Ellen Quinn

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Judith Jordan:

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Randy Gable:

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Felix Smith:

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