



## Thunderstruck & Other Stories

By Elizabeth McCracken

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**WINNER OF THE STORY PRIZE • LONGLISTED FOR THE  
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD • NAMED ONE OF THE TEN BEST  
BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY NEWSDAY**

**NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY**  
***The Washington Post* • *San Francisco Chronicle* • *O: The Oprah Magazine* •  
*The Miami Herald* • *Publishers Weekly* • *Kirkus Reviews***

*Look for special features inside. Join the Random House Reader's Circle for author chats and more.*

From the author of the beloved novel *The Giant's House*—finalist for the National Book Award—comes a beautiful new story collection, her first in twenty years. Laced through with the humor, the empathy, and the rare and magical descriptive powers that have led Elizabeth McCracken's fiction to be hailed as “exquisite” (*The New York Times Book Review*), “funny and heartbreakingly” (*The Boston Globe*), and “a true marvel” (*San Francisco Chronicle*), these nine vibrant stories navigate the fragile space between love and loneliness. In “Property,” selected by Geraldine Brooks for *The Best American Short Stories*, a young scholar, grieving the sudden death of his wife, decides to refurbish the Maine rental house they were to share together by removing his landlord’s possessions. In “Peter Elroy: A Documentary by Ian Casey,” the household of a successful filmmaker is visited years later by his famous first subject, whose trust he betrayed. In “The Lost & Found Department of Greater Boston,” the manager of a grocery store becomes fixated on the famous case of a missing local woman, and on the fate of the teenage son she left behind. And in the unforgettable title story, a family makes a quixotic decision to flee to Paris for a summer, only to find their lives altered in an unimaginable way by their teenage daughter’s risky behavior.

In Elizabeth McCracken’s universe, heartache is always interwoven with strange, charmed moments of joy—an unexpected conversation with small children, the gift of a parrot with a bad French accent—that remind us of the wonder and mystery of being alive. *Thunderstruck & Other Stories* shows this inimitable writer working at the full height of her powers.

### **Praise for *Thunderstruck & Other Stories***

“Restorative, unforgettable . . . a powerful testament to the scratchy humor and warm intelligence of McCracken’s writing.”—**Sylvia Brownrigg, *The New York Times Book Review* (Editor’s Choice)**

“[A] bewitching and wise collection . . . playful, even joyful.”—***O: The Oprah Magazine***

“Stunningly beautiful . . . brilliantly moving . . . Moments of joy and pure magic flicker and pitch-perfect humor acts as a furtive SOS signal through the fog of loss.”—***Los Angeles Times***

“Each of *Thunderstruck*’s nine stories is a storm: delightful and destructive, packed with electricity, fascinating to watch unfold.”—***Salon***

“The stories here are brilliant, funny and heartbreaking. . . . Elizabeth McCracken is a national treasure.”—**Paul Harding, *The Wall Street Journal***

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### **Thunderstruck & Other Stories By Elizabeth McCracken Bibliography**

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### Editorial Review

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Twenty years after her first collection of stories (*Here's Your Hat, What's Your Hurry!*, 1993), McCracken returns to short fiction with this collection of nine marvelously quirky, ironic, but, most of all, poignant stories. A young woman befriends a lonely, eccentric children's librarian, who is then devastated when the young woman is found murdered. An English couple who moved to France deed their house to the husband's son from his first marriage, and he later sells it out from under them, leaving them essentially homeless. A woman cares for her granddaughter in Iowa while her son, the girl's father, is dying in a Boston hospital, and neither is able to say goodbye. A woman who lives with her aging father and teenage son disappears into thin air, leaving her son reduced to stealing frozen pizzas from the corner market. Though her characters may seem strange, McCracken paints them with such rich detail that it feels as if we must know them, after all—so immersed in their lives do we become in just a few pages. --Deborah Donovan

#### Review

“Elizabeth McCracken knows how loss can melt reality, forever altering a person’s sense of time. . . . In her new collection, McCracken gives brilliantly splintered life to just that kind of story. . . . The fact that there is nothing depressing about the ubiquity of accident and disaster in *Thunderstruck & Other Stories* is a powerful testament to the scratchy humor and warm intelligence of McCracken’s writing. . . . Her wisdom and wit have a moral dimension that deepens our sympathy for her straying souls. . . . [A] restorative, unforgettable collection.”—**Sylvia Brownrigg, *The New York Times Book Review* (Editor’s Choice)**

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“The stories in Elizabeth McCracken’s latest collection land as swift and true as a prizefighter’s blows, and often they feel just as powerful, emotionally speaking. . . . The psychological punches McCracken delivers, with her keen sense of irony and mordant humor, are unforgettable.”—**The Miami Herald**

“The draw here is mesmerizing strangeness, heightened by McCracken’s extraordinary images. . . . McCracken’s description of eyeglasses which are ‘the opposite of the weather: overcast when it was bright, clear when it was cloudy’ will color the way you see transition lenses as surely as her off-kilter tales will subtly shade your view of love and parenting. . . . McCracken explores her characters’ subtexts even as she catches them in the car wrecks of their lives. To resist gawking is hopeless. Brace yourself for rubbernecking

delays.”—**NPR**

“Elizabeth McCracken is one of my favorite writers. Or, to put it another way: I’ve read everything she’s written . . . and there’s nothing I haven’t liked and admired enormously. . . . She writes with acuity, soul, and a kind of easy grace that probably kills her, about characters she has created to love. . . . ‘Thunderstruck’ showcases all the things this remarkable writer is so good at: the eccentric but illuminating metaphors, the deft characterization, the heart-lurching narrative development, the tenderness, the fantastic aphorisms. . . . Anything new by her is an excuse for wild, drunken celebration.”—**Nick Hornby, *The Believer***

“These gorgeous stories are so full of human oddity and surprising emotions. . . . [*Thunderstruck & Other Stories*] is alive with wit and feeling.”—**Newsday**

“Brilliant . . . captivating . . . electrifying . . . Let’s not forget the meticulous qualities of McCracken’s sinuous prose, or the ingenuity of her plots.”—**San Francisco Chronicle**

“McCracken’s stories are fresh, peculiar and always entertaining.”—**The Huffington Post**

“McCracken writes gorgeously sharp and insistent prose; her stories dazzle, uniquely angled and original.”—**More**

“[Elizabeth McCracken] writes sentences so beautiful you’ll want to stand up and applaud. I underlined so many phrases and details my copy is a mess, but that still didn’t keep me from lending it to my best friend. . . . McCracken’s revelatory prose style makes it impossible for even the bleakest story lines to feel like anything short of a blessing.”—**Cosmopolitan**

“There’s a strange magic . . . in Elizabeth McCracken’s work.”—**Reader’s Digest**

“Haunting . . . McCracken assigns herself the task of showing her readers that there is no prescribed way to grieve or to love.”—**Minneapolis Star Tribune**

“Extraordinary . . . In story after story, McCracken looks at the complexity of grief. At the same time, her quick eye never misses the strange little joys life comes up with.”—**The Dallas Morning News**

“It’s a rare story collection that starts strong and ends up even stronger. In her new book, *Thunderstruck & Other Stories*, award-winning novelist Elizabeth McCracken achieves this result through a combination of nonchalance, empathy and sheer intelligence. . . . There’s no dearth of fine authors who have taken to writing short stories of late. Few, however, possess McCracken’s full palette of hues, tones and shadows. This is three-dimensional writing at its most vivid.”—**Portland Press Herald**

“Magnetic . . . Anyone who enjoys short fiction will find pleasure and substance in McCracken’s witty, world-wise collection.”—**Library Journal**

“[Elizabeth] McCracken’s short stories are like no others. Her distinctive voice, her slightly askew manner of looking at the world, her mix of mordant humor and tenderness, her sense of life’s ironies, and the jolt of electricity at the end of each tale make her work arresting and memorable. . . . Readers will enjoy reading them twice—the first time quickly, because the plots are mesmerizing and strange, and the second to relish the dozens of images, aperçus, and descriptions. . . . McCracken transforms life’s dead ends into transformational visions.”—**Publishers Weekly (starred review)**

“Marvelously quirky, ironic, but, most of all, poignant . . . McCracken paints [her characters] with such rich detail that it feels as if we must know them.”—***Booklist***

“A bracing collection . . . The connecting notion—that love’s great capacity for tenderness must bear the risk of pain—is depicted with both joy and ruthlessness.”—***Shelf Awareness***

“Elizabeth McCracken’s magnificent stories are in a category all their own. They tremble with life, quake with heart-rending emotion, shine with wicked humor, and linger with a beautiful urgency. *Thunderstruck & Other Stories* is a stunning collection, a powerhouse of invention and heart and rare, buoyant curiosity.”—**Bret Anthony Johnston, author of *Remember Me Like This***

“It’s rare for title and book to work so well, in fact so perfectly, together. In this vibrant, darkly funny, deeply tender collection, the reader is thunderstruck, again and again, by Elizabeth McCracken’s endless gifts of plot, prose and insight that is as compassionate and sharp as one can bear.”—**Amy Bloom, bestselling author of *Where the God of Love Hangs Out and Away***

*From the Hardcover edition.*

#### About the Author

**Elizabeth McCracken** is the author of *An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination*, *The Giant’s House*, *Here’s Your Hat What’s Your Hurry*, and *Niagara Falls All Over Again*. A former public librarian, she is now a faculty member at the University of Texas, Austin, and has received grants and awards from numerous organizations, including the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, and the American Academy in Berlin. Elizabeth is married to the novelist and illustrator Edward Carey.

## Users Review

#### From reader reviews:

##### **Harold Baughman:**

Reading a e-book tends to be new life style in this era globalization. With reading you can get a lot of information that will give you benefit in your life. With book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Ebooks can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their own reader with their story or maybe their experience. Not only the storyline that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the data about something that you need case in point. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book which exist now. The authors on earth always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some investigation before they write with their book. One of them is this *Thunderstruck & Other Stories*.

##### **Inez Tuller:**

The book untitled *Thunderstruck & Other Stories* contain a lot of information on that. The writer explains your ex idea with easy technique. The language is very clear and understandable all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read the idea. The book was written by famous author. The author gives you in the new period of time of literary works. You can read this book because you can keep reading your smart phone, or model, so you can read the book within anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-

book, you can start their official web-site along with order it. Have a nice study.

**Chris Boos:**

Do you like reading a publication? Confuse to looking for your preferred book? Or your book has been rare? Why so many query for the book? But virtually any people feel that they enjoy for reading. Some people likes reading, not only science book but additionally novel and Thunderstruck & Other Stories as well as others sources were given understanding for you. After you know how the truly amazing a book, you feel would like to read more and more. Science reserve was created for teacher or maybe students especially. Those ebooks are helping them to add their knowledge. In additional case, beside science publication, any other book likes Thunderstruck & Other Stories to make your spare time a lot more colorful. Many types of book like this.

**Joaquin Bedard:**

As a university student exactly feel bored in order to reading. If their teacher inquired them to go to the library or to make summary for some reserve, they are complained. Just small students that has reading's internal or real their interest. They just do what the professor want, like asked to the library. They go to presently there but nothing reading very seriously. Any students feel that examining is not important, boring and also can't see colorful pictures on there. Yeah, it is being complicated. Book is very important in your case. As we know that on this period of time, many ways to get whatever we would like. Likewise word says, ways to reach Chinese's country. Therefore this Thunderstruck & Other Stories can make you truly feel more interested to read.

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