



The Magic Barrel: Stories

By Bernard Malamud

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud

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.

 [Download The Magic Barrel: Stories ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Magic Barrel: Stories ...pdf](#)

The Magic Barrel: Stories

By Bernard Malamud

The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud

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 Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #427716 in Books
- Brand: Malamud, Bernard
- Published on: 2003-07-07
- Released on: 2003-07-07
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: .33" h x .69" w x 5.55" l, .50 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

 [Download The Magic Barrel: Stories ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Magic Barrel: Stories ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud

Editorial Review

Review

“In the short story, Malamud achieved an almost psalmlike compression. He has been called the Jewish Hawthorne, but he might just as well be thought a Jewish Chopin, a prose composer of preludes and nocturnes.” *?Mark Shechner, Partisan Review*

“There are thirteen stories in *The Magic Barrel* and every one of them is a small, highly individualized work of art. This is the kind of book that calls for not admiration but gratitude.” *?Richard Sullivan, The Chicago Tribune*

About the Author

Bernard Malamud (1914-1986) also wrote eight novels, he won the Pulitzer Prize and a second National Book award for *The Fixer*. Born in Brooklyn, he taught for many years at Bennington College in Vermont.

Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

The Magic Barrel

THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS

Feld, the shoemaker, was annoyed that his helper, Sobel, was so insensitive to his reverie that he wouldn't for a minute cease his fanatic pounding at the other bench. He gave him a look, but Sobel's bald head was bent over the last as he worked and he didn't notice. The shoemaker shrugged and continued to peer through the partly frosted window at the near-sighted haze of falling February snow. Neither the shifting white blur outside, nor the sudden deep remembrance of the snowy Polish village where he had wasted his youth could turn his thoughts from Max the college boy, (a constant visitor in the mind since early that morning when Feld saw him trudging through the snowdrifts on his way to school) whom he so much respected because of the sacrifices he had made throughout the years--In winter or direst heat--to further his education. An old wish returned to haunt the shoemaker: that he had had a son instead of a daughter, but this blew away in the snow for Feld, if anything, was a practical man. Yet he could not help but contrast the diligence of the boy, who was a peddler's son, with Miriam's unconcern for an education. True, she was always with a book in her hand, yet when the opportunity arose for a college education, she had said no she would rather find a job. He had begged her to go, pointing out how many fathers could not afford to send their children to college, but she said she wanted to be independent. As for education, what was it, she asked, but books, which Sobel, who diligently read the classics, would as usual advise her on. Her answer greatly grieved her father.

A figure emerged from the snow and the door opened. At the counter the man withdrew from a wet paper bag a pair of battered shoes for repair. Who he was the shoemaker for a moment had no idea, then his heart trembled as he realized, before he had thoroughly discerned the face, that Max himself was standing there, embarrassedly explaining what he wanted done to his old shoes. Though Feld listened eagerly, he couldn't hear a word, for the opportunity that had burst upon him was deafening.

He couldn't exactly recall when the thought had occurred to him, because it was clear he had more than once considered suggesting to the boy that he go out with Miriam. But he had not dared speak, for if Max said no, how would he face him again? Or suppose Miriam, who harped so often on independence, blew up in anger and shouted at him for his meddling? Still, the chance was too good to let by: all it meant was an introduction. They might long ago have become friends had they happened to meet somewhere, therefore

was it not his duty--an obligation--to bring them together, nothing more, a harmless connivance to replace an accidental encounter in the subway, let's say, or a mutual friend's introduction in the street? Just let him once see and talk to her and he would for sure be interested. As for Miriam, what possible harm for a working girl in an office, who met only loud-mouthed salesmen and illiterate shipping clerks, to make the acquaintance of a fine scholarly boy? Maybe he would awaken in her a desire to go to college; if not--the shoemaker's mind at last came to grips with the truth--let her marry an educated man and live a better life.

When Max finished describing what he wanted done to his shoes, Feld marked them, both with enormous holes in the soles which he pretended not to notice, with large white-chalk x's, and the rubber heels, thinned to the nails, he marked with o's, though it troubled him he might have mixed up the letters. Max inquired the price, and the shoemaker cleared his throat and asked the boy, above Sobel's insistent hammering, would he please step through the side door there into the hall. Though surprised, Max did as the shoemaker requested, and Feld went in after him. For a minute they were both silent, because Sobel had stopped banging, and it seemed they understood neither was to say anything until the noise began again. When it did, loudly, the shoemaker quickly told Max why he had asked to talk to him.

"Ever since you went to high school," he said, in the dimly-lit hallway, "I watched you in the morning go to the subway to school, and I said always to myself, this is a fine boy that he wants so much an education."

"Thanks," Max said, nervously alert. He was tall and grotesquely thin, with sharply cut features, particularly a beak-like nose. He was wearing a loose, long slushy overcoat that hung down to his ankles, looking like a rug draped over his bony shoulders, and a soggy, old brown hat, as battered as the shoes he had brought in. "I am a business man," the shoemaker abruptly said to conceal his embarrassment, "so I will explain you right away why I talk to you. I have a girl, my daughter Miriam--she is nineteen--a very nice girl and also so pretty that everybody looks on her when she passes by in the street. She is smart, always with a book, and I thought to myself that a boy like you, an educated boy--I thought maybe you will be interested sometime to meet a girl like this." He laughed a bit when he had finished and was tempted to say more but had the good sense not to.

Max stared down like a hawk. For an uncomfortable second he was silent, then he asked, "Did you say nineteen?"

"Yes."

"Would it be all right to inquire if you have a picture of her?"

"Just a minute." The shoemaker went into the store and hastily returned with a snapshot that Max held up to the light.

"She's all right," he said.

Feld waited.

"And is she sensible--not the flighty kind?"

"She is very sensible."

After another short pause, Max said it was okay with him if he met her.

"Here is my telephone," said the shoemaker, hurriedly handing him a slip of paper. "Call her up. She comes home from work six o'clock."

Max folded the paper and tucked it away into his worn leather wallet.

"About the shoes," he said. "How much did you say they will cost me?"

"Don't worry about the price."

"I just like to have an idea."

"A dollar--dollar fifty. A dollar fifty," the shoemaker said.

At once he felt bad, for he usually charged two twenty-five for this kind of job. Either he should have asked the regular price or done the work for nothing.

Later, as he entered the store, he was startled by a violent clanging and looked up to see Sobel pounding with all his might upon the naked last. It broke, the iron striking the floor and jumping with a thump against the wall, but before the enraged shoemaker could cry out, the assistant had torn his hat and coat from the hook and rushed out into the snow.

So Feld, who had looked forward to anticipating how it would go with his daughter and Max, instead had a great worry on his mind. Without his temperamental helper he was a lost man, especially since it was years now that he had carried the store alone. The shoemaker had for an age suffered from a heart condition that threatened collapse if he dared exert himself. Five years ago, after an attack, it had appeared as though he would have either to sacrifice his business upon the auction block and live on a pittance thereafter, or put himself at the mercy of some unscrupulous employee who would in the end probably ruin him. But just at the moment of his darkest despair, this Polish refugee, Sobel, appeared one night from the street and begged for work. He was a stocky man, poorly dressed, with a bald head that had once been blond, a severely plain face and soft blue eyes prone to tears over the sad books he read, a young man but old--no one would have guessed thirty. Though he confessed he knew nothing of shoemaking, he said he was apt and would work for a very little if Feld taught him the trade. Thinking that with, after all, a landsman, he would have less to fear than from a complete stranger, Feld took him on and within six weeks the refugee rebuilt as good a shoe as he, and not long thereafter expertly ran the business for the thoroughly relieved shoemaker.

Feld could trust him with anything and did, frequently going home after an hour or two at the store, leaving all the money in the till, knowing Sobel would guard every cent of it. The amazing thing was that he demanded so little. His wants were few; in money he wasn't interested--in nothing but books, it seemed--which he one by one lent to Miriam, together with his profuse, queer written comments, manufactured during his lonely rooming house evenings, thick pads of commentary which the shoemaker peered at and twitched his shoulders over as his daughter, from her fourteenth year, read page by sanctified page, as if the word of God were inscribed on them. To protect Sobel, Feld himself had to see that he received more than he asked for. Yet his conscience bothered him for not insisting that the assistant accept a better wage than he was getting, though Feld had honestly told him he could earn a handsome salary if he worked elsewhere, or maybe opened a place of his own. But the assistant answered, somewhat ungraciously, that he was not interested in going elsewhere, and though Feld frequently asked himself what keeps him here? why does he stay? he finally answered it that the man, no doubt because of his terrible experiences as a refugee, was afraid of the world.

After the incident with the broken last, angered by Sobel's behavior, the shoemaker decided to let him stew for a week in the rooming house, although his own strength was taxed dangerously and the business suffered. However, after several sharp nagging warnings from both his wife and daughter, he went finally in search of Sobel, as he had once before, quite recently, when over some fancied slight --Feld had merely asked him not to give Miriam so many books to read because her eyes were strained and red--the assistant had left the place in a huff, an incident which, as usual, came to nothing for he had returned after the shoemaker had talked to

...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Mike Hendrix:

As people who live in the particular modest era should be up-date about what going on or facts even knowledge to make them keep up with the era that is certainly always change and progress. Some of you maybe will update themselves by studying books. It is a good choice for you but the problems coming to you is you don't know what type you should start with. This The Magic Barrel: Stories is our recommendation so you keep up with the world. Why, since this book serves what you want and want in this era.

Alta Valentin:

The event that you get from The Magic Barrel: Stories will be the more deep you rooting the information that hide inside the words the more you get interested in reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to comprehend but The Magic Barrel: Stories giving you buzz feeling of reading. The article writer conveys their point in certain way that can be understood by anyone who read the item because the author of this book is well-known enough. This kind of book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. So it is easy to understand then can go with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We highly recommend you for having this The Magic Barrel: Stories instantly.

Ross Adams:

Your reading 6th sense will not betray you, why because this The Magic Barrel: Stories guide written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to make book that can be understand by anyone who read the book. Written throughout good manner for you, still dripping wet every ideas and publishing skill only for eliminate your own personal hunger then you still skepticism The Magic Barrel: Stories as good book but not only by the cover but also by content. This is one e-book that can break don't judge book by its cover, so do you still needing yet another sixth sense to pick this specific!? Oh come on your examining sixth sense already told you so why you have to listening to another sixth sense.

Troy Cochran:

You are able to spend your free time to see this book this publication. This The Magic Barrel: Stories is simple to bring you can read it in the playground, in the beach, train along with soon. If you did not possess much space to bring the particular printed book, you can buy the actual e-book. It is make you quicker to read it. You can save the actual book in your smart phone. Thus there are a lot of benefits that you will get when one buys this book.

Download and Read Online The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud #16WK2T4I9JR

Read The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud for online ebook

The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud Free PDF d0wnl0ad, audio books, books to read, good books to read, cheap books, good books, online books, books online, book reviews epub, read books online, books to read online, online library, greatbooks to read, PDF best books to read, top books to read The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud books to read online.

Online The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud ebook PDF download

The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud Doc

The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud Mobipocket

The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud EPub

16WK2T4I9JR: The Magic Barrel: Stories By Bernard Malamud