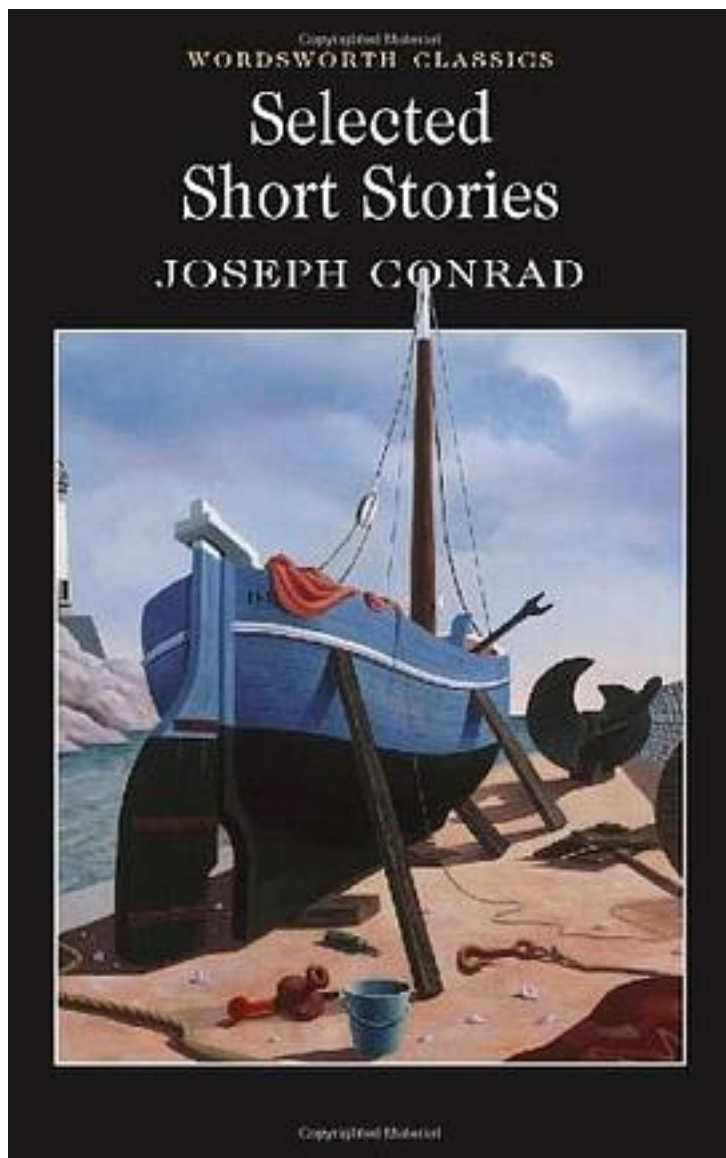


Selected Short Stories



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One of the greatest French novelists, Balzac was also an accomplished writer of shorter fiction. This volume includes twelve of his finest short stories many of which feature characters from his epic series of novels the *Comedie Humaine*. Compelling tales of acute social and psychological insight, they fully demonstrate the mastery of suspense and revelation that were the hallmarks of Balzac's genius. In *The Atheist's Mass*, we learn the true reason for a distinguished atheist surgeon's attendance at religious services; *La Grande Breteche* describes the horrific truth behind the locked doors of a decaying country mansion, while *The Red Inn* relates a brutal tale of murder and betrayal. A fascinating counterpoint to the renowned novels, all the stories collected here stand by themselves as mesmerizing works by one of the finest writers of nineteenth-century France.

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