

The Story, Victorious by Etgar Keret

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This story is the best story in the book. More than that, this story is the best story in the world. And we weren't the ones to come to that conclusion. It was also reached by a unanimous team of dozens of unaffiliated experts who - employing strict laboratory standards - measured it against a representative sampling taken from world literature. This story is a unique Israeli innovation. And I bet you're asking yourselves, how is it that we (tiny little Israel) composed it, and not the Americans? What you should know is that the Americans are asking themselves the same thing. And more than a few of the bigwigs in American publishing stand to lose their jobs because they didn't have that answer at the ready while it still mattered.

Just as our army is the best army in the world - same with this story. We're talking here about an opening so innovative that it's protected by registered patent. And where is this patent registered? That's the thing, it's registered in the story itself! This story's got no shtick to it, no trick to it, no touchy-feely bits. It's forged from a single block, an amalgam of deep insights and aluminum. It won't rust, it won't bust, but it may wander. It's supercontemporary, and timelessly literary. Let History be the judge! And by the way, according to many fine folk, judgment's been passed - and our story came up aces.

"What's so special about this story?" people ask out of innocence or ignorance (depending on who's asking). "What's it got that isn't in Chekhov or Kafka or I-don't-know-who?" The answer to that question is long and complicated. Longer than the story itself, but less complex. Because there's nothing more intricate than this story. Nevertheless, we attempt to answer by example. In contrast to works by Chekhov and Kafka, at the end of the story, one lucky winner - randomly selected from among all the correct readers - will receive a brand-new Mazda Lantis with a metallic gray finish. And from among the incorrect readers, one special someone will be selected to receive another car, cheaper, but no less impressive in its metallic grayness so that he or she shouldn't feel bad. Because the story isn't here to condescend. It's here so that you'll feel good. What's that saying printed on the place mats at the diner near your house? ENJOYED YOURSELF - TELL YOUR FRIENDS! DIDN'T ENJOY YOURSELF - TELL US! Or, in this case - report it to the story. Because this story doesn't just tell, it also listens. Its ears, as they say, are attuned to every stirring of the public's heart. And when the public has had enough and calls for someone to put an end to it, this story won't drag its feet or grab hold of the edges of the alter. It will, simply, stop.