

# Smiles of sadness: Review of “The Kingfisher Story Collection” from a nihilistic perspective

 **Tam-TriLe**

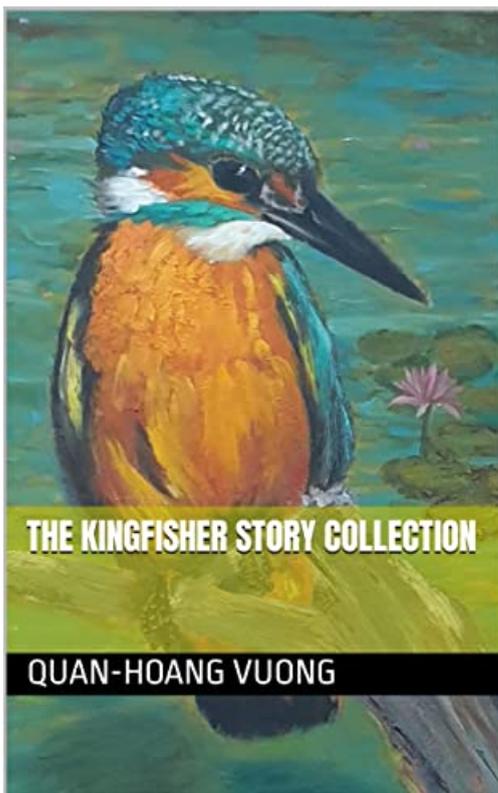
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3384-4827>

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*\*Author's note: This essay contains references and language expressions of modern Internet culture.*

The book “[The Kingfisher Story Collection](#)” [1] contains many short stories about observations of psychosocial patterns accompanied by the author’s underlying deep thoughts. These are presented in the form of comedic representations using anthropomorphic birds’ society.

I believe that if a story is beautiful from whatever perspectives and contexts, then it is a good story. Therefore, instead of going deep into the content’s sociopolitical, philosophical, and comedic values, as seen in normal reviews, I choose the approach from the opposite direction(s).



**Figure:** front cover from the [Kindle Edition](#) of [1]

This review will be conducted from a highly sensational subjective interpretation using the multi-layered irony of Millennial or Gen Z humor for comparison, structuring, and commentary in contrast to the well-ordered, logical nature of the book. The review will paint a pessimistic, nihilistic atmosphere in contrast to the light-hearted comedic nature of the stories. Thus, for the part of the new generation who could not care less about the rotten side of humanity, you can still create your own time of appreciating aesthetics when reading this book.

### **Not an escape from reality**

Reading the stories in "[The Kingfisher Story Collection](#)" will probably make one crack a few smiles due to the unpredictable silliness of the events and characters. Depending on one's background and personal experience, this will slowly or quickly turn into a "doomer" smile when one realizes the meanings behind the stories. Then, hidden negative emotions may emerge under one's smiling face, including but not limited to sadness, desperation, anger, disgust, shame, and hatred. Apathy may soon take over again as the usually employed defensive mechanism. Why? Because one has just read about not only the nasty modern state of society but the sad truth about human nature throughout existence.

### **Slaves of instincts**

The birds in these stories take little time to reveal their ugly mundane motives. Most people act as if they are the hollow puppets of the universe: simply existing, eating, and breeding. Sadly, even for those who want to get away from these materialistic chains, the laws of nature will not let them. How can one escape prison when one is oneself the prison? Even worse, many willingly follow the "animal" life. We cannot blame them because, after all, many write endless whining about how pet dogs are happier than human owners.

### **Shells of virtue**

A pretty mud cake is still mud. Throughout most stories in the book, a clear shared pattern can be seen: self-interested intentions and behaviors are covered by beautified noble appearances. But that is just human culture. Billions are worshipping brain-dead celebrities every single second. Few humans in this forsaken mortal realm care about making something truly beautiful. So, feed them mud cakes, and most would be happy.

### **Stupidity is the norm**

Some people are aware of the stupidity in others; few are aware of one's own stupidity. Unfortunately, many are not even aware of stupidity at all. People are led by stupid leaders. Leaders

have to lead stupid people. Each person hates one's own mud-show but points fingers at other mud-shows, oblivious to the fact that the whole society is a giant mud-show.

## **Clown world**

At least the circus is funny, right? After all, the stories in the book are hilarious because they point at clowns in society, a lot of clowns. One's pain is another's meme. Big Smoke from the video game GTA San Andreas said: "Same things make us laugh, make us cry", which is not as deep as the holes people dig for themselves to get a good view of the circus of life.

## **Living among but alone**

Everyone has their own mindsets, and these mindsets often collide and go out in a blaze of what is the opposite of glory. Sometimes reading the lines in one of these stories, I could feel a strange melancholy within the birds. They do not belong there. In fact, they just might not belong to existence. Now, humans with self-awareness, how do they know if they really are not alone? In a world full of NPCs, most choose to become one, too, because why would anyone want to walk in the cold illusion alone?

## **Grinding for clout**

This aspect can be picked up almost instantly regardless of what type of media – comedy, documentary, horror, etc. Fictional birds and real humans alike are exceptionally sensitive to the smell of power. People try so hard to gain social influence and recognition because most have none of the "real stuff". But it is not the "sigma grindset" if one accepts the boundaries of oneself. Instead, many keep grinding for that juicy clout, whether by sophisticatedly crafted political tactics or a bunch of steroids.

## **Moral dilemma**

Sometimes, the birds are put in situations when all available options are morally bad. It is okay, though, because even saints cannot be sure what is good and what is bad. Everything is relative. Fortunately, social norms (here: herd mentality) often come to the rescue when one gets stuck for hours in a single trolley problem. Besides, there are always reliable backups: naiveness, idiocy, impulsiveness, suicidality, etc. Ethical concerns are not relevant when "Luigi did nothing wrong" and "Luigi won by doing absolutely nothing".

## **Aimless and endless pursuit**

Some birds' main purposes in their whole characters are plainly shallow and ridiculous. For humans in the non-fictional world, just replace the word "some" with "many". Probably you have

known about at least a few cases of such humans throughout the course of your life that simply make antinatalism a little bit more attractive. Again, maybe we can just blame nature for installing these weird tendencies into the minds of helpless (?) organisms of the *Homo sapiens* species.

## **Betrayal**

This subject is simply too bitter to remind ourselves and discuss. Even for the lucky guys living in fairytale conditions, in the end, society wins, not any individual. One can go watch the recent animation [Cyberpunk: Edgerunners](#) for the same effects and additional punches in the guts.

## **Bottom-of-the-well wisdom**

Unlike the book's author, who tries to convey real wisdom, his fictional bird characters in some stories only possess the counterfeit variety: bottom-of-the-well wisdom. This kind of "divine knowledge" shows people the most efficient ways to do the most worthless (or evil) things. In human society, fake gurus are a sight to behold. These people preach things that, at best, ruin others' whole lives and, at worst, turn others into the next generations of fake gurus. Millionaire lifestyle self-help memes are faithful representations of the human civilization's spiritual implosion.

## **Saddening nihilism for a few fleeting smiles?**

This seems like a relatively fair trade considering the scam world we are living in (?). The natural beauty of the birds' world is mixed with the tragic beauty of human society. At this crossroads, we have some time to reflect upon the fake and the real self, as well as its fake and real power within what it means to be a human [2].

In all seriousness, the book is a good read, even if you come in from quite a strange viewpoint.

## **References**

[1] Vuong QH. (2022). *The Kingfisher Story Collection*. <https://books.google.com/books?id=ne-KEAAAQBAJ>

[2] Nguyen MH, Le TT. (2022). Ecomindsponge theory: positioning humans in the ecosphere. <https://mindsponge.info/posts/84>

