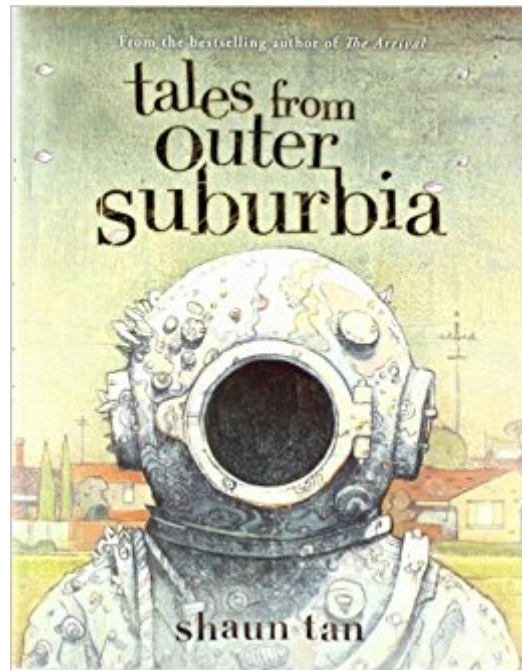




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Tales From Outer Suburbia



Synopsis

An exchange student who's really an alien, a secret room that becomes the perfect place for a quick escape, a typical tale of grandfatherly exaggeration that is actually even more bizarre than he says... These are the odd details of everyday life that grow and take on an incredible life of their own in tales and illustrations that Shaun Tan's many fans will love.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1100L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 96 pages

Publisher: Arthur A. Levine Books; American ed. edition (February 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0545055873

ISBN-13: 978-0545055871

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 7.8 x 10 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 84 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #133,579 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #36 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Australia & Oceania](#) #85 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories](#) #213 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Short Story Collections](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Grade 4 Up—•For those who loved Tan's surreal and evocative *The Arrival* (Scholastic, 2007), the Australian author follows up with a brilliant collection of illustrated vignettes. Fifteen short texts, each accompanied by Tan's signature black-and-white and full-color artwork, take the mundane world and transform it into a place of magical wonders. In the opening tale, a water buffalo sits in an abandoned suburban lot, offering silent but wise direction to those youngsters who are patient enough to follow his guidance. In "Eric," the title character (a tiny, leaflike creature) visits a family as a foreign exchange student and fascinates them with his sense of wonder. His parting gift to the family is sure to warm even the coldest heart. Other stories describe the fate of unread poetry, the presence of silent stick figures who roam the suburbs, or an expedition to the edge of a map. In spirit, these stories are something akin to the wit and wisdom of

Shel Silverstein. The surrealist art of Rene Magritte also comes to mind, but perhaps Chris Van Allsburg's beloved *The Mysteries of Harris Burdick* (Houghton, 1984) comes closest as a comparable work. While somewhat hard to place due to the unusual nature of the piece, this book is a small treasure, or, rather, a collection of treasures.

—Douglas P. Davey, Halton Hills Public Library, Ontario, Canada Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review After teaching the graphic format a thing or two about its own potential for elegance with *The Arrival* (2007), Tan follows up with this array of 15 extraordinary illustrated tales. But here is an achievement in diametric opposition to his silent masterpiece, as Tan combines spare words and weirdly dazzling images in styles ranging from painting to doodles to collage to create a unity that holds complexities of emotion seldom found in even the most mature works. The story of a water buffalo who sits in a vacant lot mysteriously pointing children in the right direction is whimsical but also ominous. The centerpiece, "Grandpa's Story," recalling a ceremonial marriage journey and the unnameable perils faced therein, captures a tone of aching melancholy and longing, but also, ultimately, a sense of deep, deep happiness. And the eerie "Stick Figures" is both a poignant and rather disturbing narrative that plays out in the washed-out daylight of suburban streets where curious, tortured creatures wait at the ends of pathways and behind bus stops. The thoughtful and engaged reader will take from these stories an experience as deep and profound as with anything he or she has ever read. Grades 7-12. --Jesse Karp

I loved this book from first sight on . I had to order it and I was giddy/eager for it to arrive. When I first sat down to read this book I felt overcome with emotion. I felt that if someone had sat down specifically with the objective to make a book that would delight and please me, that they could not have done a better job. I am seriously infatuated with this book and blown away by Shaun Tan's expressive art and compelling stories. It feels like being thirsty, then drinking something so amazing that you never want to stop drinking it. I am so happy that there are minds like Shaun Tan's that create lovely, intricate, engaging art for our enjoyment. I have greatly enjoyed sharing this book with other people that I know and I keep it on my desk so that more people can enjoy it. The stories are intriguing/touching/thought-provoking. The art is deep with detail and nuance. I love this book!

Shaun Tan is an amazing author. His first critically acclaimed book, *The Arrival*, is a gorgeous,

wordless work of fiction that is supremely accessible but contains the depth of adult fiction; this book carries that trope forward in beautifully illustrated and sublimely-written fashion. It is a series of short stories that feel a bit more like loosely-linked vignettes, gathering together the many peculiar experiences that make childhood fascinating and a little bit frightening at the same time. As Secondary English teacher in public schools, I have found infinite uses for this book in the classroom; a personal favorite from the collection is "Our Expedition", which illustrates the difference between "literal" and "figurative" in an utterly approachable way and makes for a wonderful introduction to figurative language. While this book is definitely written at a roughly middle school level, it contains a depth that could certainly make it useful even in a high school setting, and enjoyable to read even as an adult. I highly recommend this book to anyone with a sharp wit and a love of the surreal.

I teach middle school English, and on a day I had to throw away a lesson plan that completely bombed in my first few periods, I needed to quickly come up with something to do with the next several classes. I had just purchased this book and decided to read a few of the stories to my 8th graders. After reading "Stick Figures," I had the kids write the story from the stick figures' point of view. Some kids loved the stories, and some thought they were "stupid," but all of them thought they were interesting and different. The stories made them think. Whether they liked the stories or not, they were all excited to do the writing assignment afterward and came up with some crazy stories!

I have been challenged with finding visually stimulating picture books for older students that have engaging and interesting stories but that are NOT graphic novels. The images needed to be one or two per page, not panes of storyline content that needed to be visually tracked. I have found a treasure trove within the works of Shaun Tan. I am very pleased with the purchase of this book and look forward to collecting more.

I love Shaun Tan's work more than most things. This book (and all his others) delight my soul and are a testament to artful learning and storytelling.

I recently stumbled across Shaun Tan's work and I love it and have been reading everything I can get my hands on. The artwork is wonderful and the stories just tickle my funny-bone and offer a quirky way of looking at the world. It may be a little hard to classify because although the picture book format suggests a children's book I think it may be a little off beat for most young children

but I love it.

Astonishing artwork

I have always enjoyed this author. This book is on my shelf, a good one for kids to discover on their own once they are older.

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