

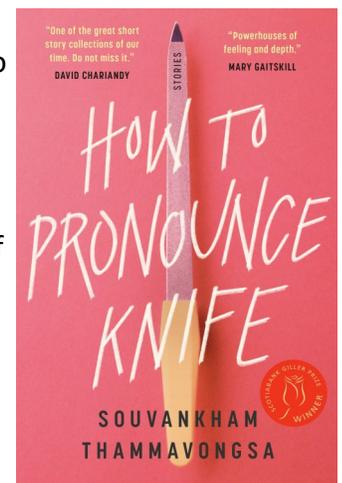


How To Pronounce Knife

Souvankham Thammavongsa

Discussion Questions

1. The opening story is about a child who doesn't know how to pronounce a word. Are there words you've had trouble with or that you find unusual?
2. In the story "Paris," no one ever goes to Paris and it does not take place in Paris. Why do you think the author decided to title this story "Paris"?
3. Many of the stories have main characters who are not named and other who are but then their names end up changing. What is the value of a name? How do you feel about a character that is not named?
4. Work is an important theme in this collection. Have you worked a job you were terrific at, but no one noticed, or did you have a job you loved but others didn't see the value of the work?
5. The stories often refer to the setting as simply "here." Why do you think the author did this with the setting of a story?
6. In the Audiobook, "Edge of the World" is narrated by a male voice. Does this change the meaning of the story for you, and how?
7. In "The Gas Station," Mary believes there are two kinds of people. Those who are seen and those who are not. Do you agree with this? Which one do you feel you are—someone who is seen or someone who is not? Is being seen something important to you? Discuss.
8. There are many meanings of laughter. List and discuss the descriptions of laughter in this story collection. Why do you think the author took such care with this?





About the Author

Souvankham Thammavongsa's fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Granta*, *The Atlantic*, *The Paris Review*, *Ploughshares*, *Best American Non-Required Reading*, *The Journey Prize Stories*, and *The O. Henry Prize Stories*. Her debut book of fiction, *How to Pronounce Knife*, won the 2020 Scotiabank Giller Prize, and was named a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, the PEN America Open Book Award, the Danuta Gleed Award, and the Trillium Book Award, and one of Time's Must-Read Books of 2020. The title story was a finalist for the Commonwealth Short Story Prize. Thammavongsa is also the author of four poetry books: *Light*, winner of the Trillium Book Award for Poetry; *Found*; *Small Arguments*, winner of the ReLit Award; and, most recently, *Cluster*. Born in the Lao refugee camp in Nong Khai, Thailand, she was raised and educated in Toronto, where she is at work on her first novel..

This book is available for download as an eBook. For more information, please visit lpl.overdrive.com or call 519-661-4600.

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