



BETWEEN TWO SEAS

Setting: present day Georgia; social situations in different cities, towns and villages.

Themes: age, life, and death; family quarrels; animals; crime and punishment; self-image; social media.

Genre: comedy, absurdist fiction, satire.

Adaptation: an anthology film.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

A collection of witty, humorous, slightly absurd stories introducing memorable protagonists and characters who appear in each other's plots. The stories are interlinked with their reappearance. The author tells about failed bank robbery; rekindled marriage after the wife's boycott; the neighborhood community obsessing about investigating the malicious case of vandalism on their premises (as they discover a pile of human feces in the building); a story of a drunk bus passenger determined to bring all the fellow passengers over to his place.

MOVIE REFERENCES:

Relatos Salvajes (2014) a film by Damián Szifron

Il Bisbetico Domato (1980) a film by Franco Castellano and Giuseppe Moccia

Night on Earth (1991) a film by Jim Jarmusch



CHARACTERS:

Antonio Garuchava – a kind and troubleless man

Kosta – Antonio's naughty twelve-year-old neighbor

Marina Begtabegashvili – a middle-aged tired working mom gone rogue

Amiran Mchedlidze – Marina's husband

Givi – a wannabe illusionist

Nako – a young girl

Nanuli Shengelidze – a strict schoolteacher

Bulbuli – a 44-year-old woman with anxiety

Emzar – a fanatic Christian

Mikho – overly friendly and cheery drunk

A bank robber

A man with a bandana – a man who can save the world with his lack of luck

SUMMARY:

Between Two Seas is a collection of remarkably funny stories with characters who end up in absurd situations and interactions. Each story is dedicated to a certain hero or heroine, but they visit one another's stories as well.

First up, we have a troubleless man named Antonio Garuchava. He lives in the countryside. He has a beautiful house, yard, and vegetable garden. He believes in everything good in the world, and he also believes everything is usually well. One day he hears a voice from around the bushes behind his vegetable garden, who asks him for some cash. Convinces it is the voice of his newly deceased neighbor, Antonio doesn't dare to check where it's coming from. The voice keeps appearing and asking him to leave out cash or sometimes weed at the church door, or other public village spot. Just when Antonio has become so annoyed that he is about to succumb to the dead man's will, the reader finds out the voice belongs to Kosta, the 12-year-old mischievous grandson of the deceased neighbor. But Antonio still has no clue, and the boy plans to come back.

In the next story, we meet Marina, a middle-aged woman who has tirelessly performed her wife's duties for almost twenty years now. One day she decides that it has been enough, she gets tired and stops doing anything. Her husband is stunned, upset, and with her continuing boycott becomes annoyed and angry. But Marina goes on with her life and starts to try out new things and experiences. She goes to a casino, to a concert. Her children also seem surprised, but Marina is her own woman now. The marital feud slowly accelerates, but in the end, her husband starts to see and appreciate Marina in a new light. "I am sorry, I do not need your cooking, or anything, just forgive me!" - he says in the end. And their marriage rekindles for good.

In the story called *A Catastrophe That's Unheard Of* the author tells a mad story of an apartment building, whose neighborhood community has been shocked. Someone left a pile of human shit in their parking lot. The easy and wise thing would be to remove it from there, but none of the neighbors want to do the deed, all they care about is messaging in a group chat and endlessly discussing the case of vandalism. The Catastrophe becomes their obsession, but one day the pile of shit disappears. From one of the other stories, we find out that it was one of the neighbors who did it out of spite of all of these crazy people, knowing it would in a strange way disappoint them.

Next up we have a story of Givi, a guy from a remote village who wants to be an illusionist and believes that he is one day when he walks into a pharmacy with automatic doors - he thinks he opened them telepathically; a girl named Nako, who goes to the same pharmacy with a pregnancy scare; a woman names Nanuli Shengelidze, strict school teacher of Georgian literature, she beats up her husband, Noshrevan with a turkey bird that the man

was keeping on their balcony.

Another middle-aged female character named Bulbuli (nightingale) falls unconscious at work one day. She is being told she might be having anxiety attacks because he is becoming menopausal, but she knows it's not true. As Bulbuli is still unmarried at 44, some doctors tell her it's the neurosis caused by sexual frustration, but nobody is taking her own opinion seriously. At the end of the story Nanuli meets Antonio after a Sunday mess at a church, and they seem to have hit it off.

We also meet a character named Nugo, who has a feud with the black cat in the neighborhood, convinced that the cat is plotting something vile; a man named Emzar, who decides to test if his priest is a true Christian by slapping him, believing he would "turn the other cheek", but gets beaten up in the end.

The two funniest stories of the collection are the one of the failed bank robbery, where the burglar has ridiculous conversations with his hostages, and the one where Mikho, a happy drunk tries to hijack the bus he is riding on because he is on a friendly mood and wants to take all the passengers to his home to a feast. There is a cool man with a bandana among the passengers, who also witnessed the bank robbery. Once Mikho gets arrested and the "bandana man" gets off the bus, he calls a friend and tells him he has thought of a solution for the country. He thinks that his bad luck is strong enough that he could take it to different places, where it is most needed - he could go to the Kremlin for example, and wait until something happens to Putin. "You should go." - says the friend.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Mari Bekauri (b. 1990) graduated from Tbilisi State University with a Masters in Social and Cultural Psychology in 2014. She entered the literary scene with her short story, *Sisters*, in 2008 and subsequently her stories were selected for the 15 Best Short Stories collection six times in a row. She has won a number of literary awards over the years. Bekauri has written four novels. The latest, *Invisible Game*, was published in 2022, followed by a story collection *Between Two Seas* in 2023. Mari has worked as a screenwriter since 2015. She's written several shows for the Georgian Public Broadcaster and the TV station, GDS. Her scripts were selected for Eurimages, the Georgian National Film Centre, the Batumi International Film Festival and the Vilnius International Film Festival. She is co-writer of the short, *8 Minutes*, that claimed the main award at one of the prestigious Manhattan Short Film Festival, and which made it eligible for the 2018 Academy Awards.