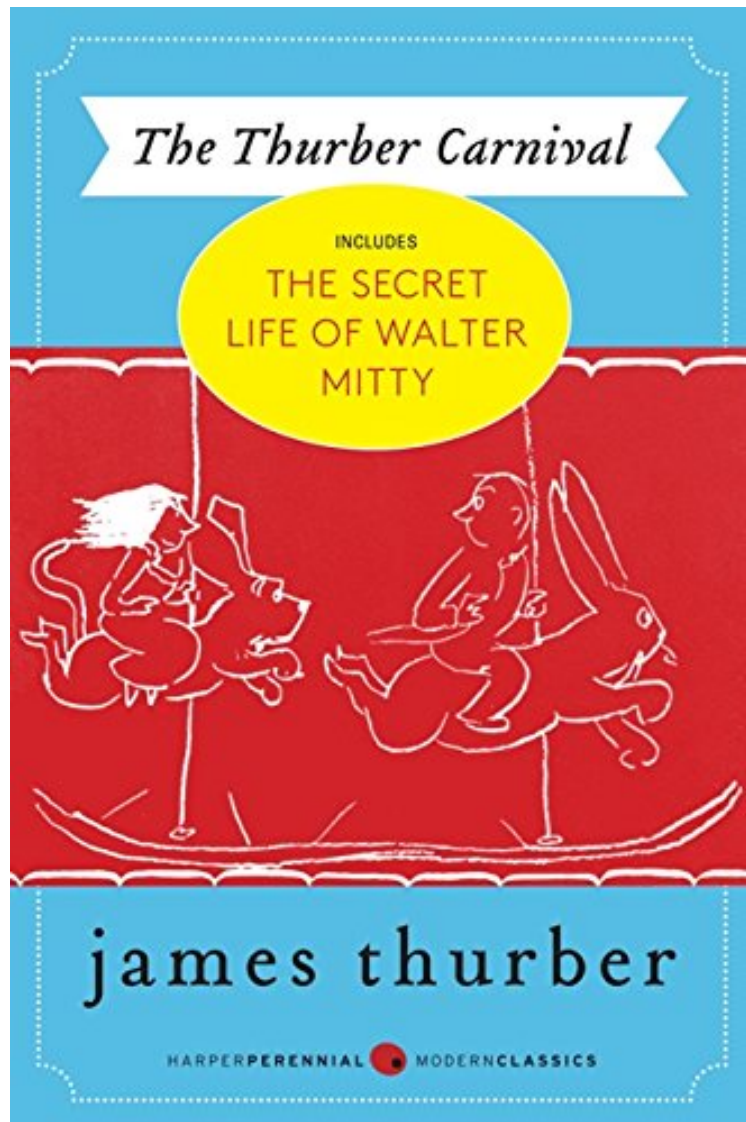


(Download pdf ebook) The Thurber Carnival

## The Thurber Carnival

*James Thurber*

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**James Thurber : The Thurber Carnival** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Thurber Carnival:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Life is a Carousel, Old Chum, Life is a Thurber Carousel By Owl Once upon a time, I got thrown out of the Fairmont Senior High School library because I was reading "The Thurber Carnival" and laughing like a maniac at the MANY hysterically funny stories. Or at least, at 14, I thought they were hysterically funny. I haven't had such an orgy of laughter since so I ponied up the price of a used book to see if Thurber was still as really, really, really funny. He was and he wasn't. His drawings are still psychologically amazing,

like the one of a man cowering before a 1920's standard three story substantial house whose back side morphs into a predatory-looking woman's face. The wit elegance of his wording brought the laughter would get me tossed from a 2016 library except I read it at home. The Thurber classic stories such as "The Night The Bed Fell on My Father" and the glorious "Secret Life of Walter Mitty" are here, not much dated because many were looking back half a century even when he wrote them. My much older self found something even better reading this splendid book: the precision, the deftness, the power of his psychological insights. In "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," he nails the man trapped by the conventions of his day which included continuing in marriage with an insufferable person who finds his own way out in heroic fantasies. We have different conventions in 2016 and fewer such traps (IMHO) yet are drawn to heroic fantasies, such as "Star Wars". ANY NEGATIVES: Yes. The references to Black Americans are wince-worthy at their patronizing best and can be book-closers at their worst as in the story of the wreaths and Deliah. We have miles to go before we can sleep in this regard, but reading this book can remind us of the miles already traveled, thanks to truly heroic women and men. And yes 2: women are often menacing in Thurber's world, such as his comic-style, "The War Between Men and Women." If not menacing, they are often ditzy. And yet and yet and yet, doggone it, this is one man's view, an honest one readers can feel, and like Aristophanes, he can write very funny stories about not-so-funny times. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A Thurber sampler of different styles and degrees of humor in classic pieces with comic illustrations By Phred It is possible that I had first come to enjoy the works of James Thurber from before I could read. We had several of his books including the 1945 addition of The Thurber Carnival. In the course of flipping through them I would've found and certainly enjoyed his childlike drawing style long before I came to appreciate its sometimes subtle and sophisticated humor. Some years later I would've read the several Thurber books we had and then for some reason not return to him for decades. What I remember most from that first reading was how many of the stories I found quite funny. What struck me most forcibly in this newer edition is how many stories were not intended as humor. Early in his career James Thurber was taken on as a writer for then brand-new magazine the New Yorker the joke was that he came in as an editor and worked his way down to be a writer. How much the character and personality of the New Yorker in 2015 is a continuation of traditions that James Thurber and his editor and friend Harold Ross ( for whom the book is dictated) built in the 1930s is a subject more appropriate for English major dissertations. If these pieces are foundational they speak of an editorial policy that had for clever New York sophisticates and simpler Ohio country people. The Thurber Carnival is divided up into several pieces a few not before published in book form but most drawn from earlier collections. Of course we have The Secret Life of Walter Mitty and one of my own favorites The Unicorn in the Garden. Although possibly the single funniest piece is his one-page rewrite of Little Red Riding Hood. What I had forgotten for my original read those several decades ago was how many of these pieces are not intended to be humor. When speaking of the family bulldog there is a certain respect bordering on reverence some of the other pieces are more profiles but not quite caricatures. This speaks to Thurber's ability to hone his language. There is care and precision in Thurber's use of the language such that he can sneer or lightly satirize with very small shifts in word choice. He certainly can be heavy-handed and there are pieces where one suspects his various medical histories and swiftly failing eyesight were more in command of what is on the page than what a less physically frustrating life would've produced. James Thurber seem to be one of those who is best able to praise every era except his own. In this respect it is interesting to see a man of almost 100 years ago complaining about the eminence of the collapse of civilization in many of the same terms one can find in 2015 or an 1815. Much of the last 50 or so pages of this book highlight Thurber the cartoonist modern critic might speak to his economy of line in his impressionistic representation of intent rather than literal photographic reproduction of figures and animals. This would suggest that he was capable of photographic reproduction. Likely he had no interest in attempting photo-realism. He drawings only appear to be crude. A few curves create a period style woman's cloth hat, or a dogs worried expression. In one cartoon a disheveled woman, carrying a pistol has barged into a couples flat to ask if `You folks have any .38 cartridges? How well his pre-World war II humor translates into the 21st century may be a matter of taste. Little of what he says about marriage should be taken literally but it rarely assumes the woman's point of view. Alternately he seems to have little use for weak overly accommodating women. In his cartoon story, the War between Men and Women, he has the men winning, but his women are not bowed by defeat. Thurber women smash the ball in Croquet, or throw it when bowling. The Thurber Carnival does not strike me as consistently clever as an equal quantity of Mark Twain, or as slick as early Woody Allen College Comedy. I rarely found myself laughing. There much in The Thurber Carnival that should have you smiling and the rest will help you to see into a period of time before now, but not that far removed. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Turn off your television and enjoy this book By C. Wagner Frankly, this is about the best book I have ever read. I find it astonishing that at this time (February 2016) less than 70 reviews have been posted on of the various editions. Such anecdotes as "The Catbird Seat," "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," "The Day the Dam Broke," and "The Night the Bed Fell," to name only a few are memorable bits of merriment. And, what about the thinger for the things contained? We are just getting started on the fun! Thurber's doodles are a joy to behold! So, order this book, turn off your television and enjoy yourself.

James Thurber was one of the finest humorists of the twentieth century (and a crack cartoonist to boot). A bestseller

upon its initial publication in 1999, *The Thurber Carnival* captures the depth of his talent and the breadth of his wit. The stories compiled here, almost all of which first appeared in *The New Yorker*, are from his uproarious and candid collection *My World and Welcome to It*—including the American classic "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"—as well as from *The Owl in the Attic*, *The Seal in the Bathroom*, and *Men, Women and Dogs*.

.com After the chuckles and amidst the chortles, the first-time reader of *The Thurber Carnival* is bound to utter a discreetly voiced "Huh?" Like *Cracker Jacks*, there are surprises inside James Thurber's delicious 1945 smorgasbord of essays, stories, and sketches. This festival is, surprises and all, a collection of earlier collections (mostly), including, among others, gems from *My World--and Welcome to It*, *Let Your Mind Alone!*, and *The Middle Aged Man on the Flying Trapeze*. Needless to say, there are also numerous cartoons that, by themselves, are worth the price of admission. While redoubling Thurber's deserved reputation as a laugh-out-loud humorist and teller-of-gentle-tales, it reintroduces him as a thinker-of-thoughts. To wit: his 1933 "Preface to a Life," in which he observes himself while discussing "writers of light pieces running from a thousand to two thousand words": To call such persons "humorists," a loose-fitting and ugly word, is to miss the nature of their dilemma and the dilemma of their nature. The little wheels of their invention are set in motion by the damp hand of melancholy. Enjoy the surprises, certainly, but revel in the candy-coated popcorn and peanuts. As in "More Alarms at Night," in which a teenaged Thurber intrudes upon his sleeping father, a skittish man named Charles, because he can't recall the name Perth Amboy, New Jersey. Coincidentally, his father has just been frightened half to death by Thurber's brother, who had earlier stalked into his room saying coldly, "Buck, your time has come." "Listen," I said. "Name some towns in New Jersey quick!" It must have been around three in the morning. Father got up, keeping the bed between him and me, and started to pull his trousers on. "Don't bother about dressing," I said. "Just name some towns in New Jersey." While he hastily pulled on his clothes--I remember he left his socks off and put his shoes on his bare feet--father began to name, in a shaky voice, various New Jersey cities. I can still see him reaching for his coat without taking his eyes off me. "Newark," he said, "Jersey City, Atlantic City, Elizabeth, Paterson, Passaic, Trenton, Jersey City, Trenton, Paterson--" "It has two names," I snapped. "Elizabeth and Paterson," he said. Of course, things turn out fine, as well they should. And why not? The best of Thurber, which *The Thurber Carnival* arguably is, is sublime; surprising insight and wry observations tossed lightly and served constantly with effortless good humor and an obvious love for all things gently eccentric. --Michael Hudson "It is time that we stopped thinking about James Thurber as a mere funny man for sophisticates and recognized him as an authentic American genius. And the "Carnival, by offering the cream of his work in a handy and attractive volume indicates impressively the scope of his gifts. . . . Mr. Thurber belongs in the great line of American humorists which includes Mark Twain and Ring Lardner. "-- "Philadelphia Inquirer""One of the absolutely essential books of our time."-- "Saturday of Literature"From the Publisher7 1.5-hour cassettes