



The Real Thing and Other Tales

James Baar

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"The Real Thing and Other Tales" is a mosaic of short narrative fiction attempting to refine golden reality from leaden spin. The 28 individual tales pieced into the mosaic move forward in four phases: Fog and Spin, Icy Water and Cold Turkey, Signs and Portents, Epiphanies. These tales probe many of the same ancient dilemmas: free will, corruption, perversion of truth, God and chance, honor and risk, hinges of history. Art and fakery emerge as a major leitmotif. All of these tales live in the context of human history and confront successfully and unsuccessfully in our time the challenges of evil, cultural relativism, hope and faith. Occasionally, the gods intervene. The cast of players is broad: old and new warriors, politically correct academics, princes, pols, saints, nukey-boat commanders, nerds and quants, spies. Scenes shift across the last two millennia from Chartres to Venice to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; from the ruins of the Twin Towers to the ruins of Berlin; from St. Petersburg and London to Rome, Jerusalem and Los Angeles; from the mid-Atlantic floor to Manhattan and the primeval woods of Upstate New York. Like all mosaics, pieces of The Real Thing and Other Tales can be observed separately. But, like all mosaics, it is best observed as a whole.

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