



A FALL 2020 RELEASE

Mannequin and Wife

Stories

JEN FAWKES

In *Mannequin and Wife*, the debut story collection from Jen Fawkes, sharp and imaginative tales trip seamlessly across borderlands, navigating comedy and tragedy, psychological and magical realism, the mundane and the marvelous.

Readers of these adventurous fictions will encounter a flock of stenographers, the strongest woman alive, a taxidermist with anger issues, an Elephant Girl, a fairy on her lunch break, and a married couple who live with a department store mannequin. Elsewhere, an American actor impersonates a code-breaking Britisher during World War II. A mother awaiting her son's return discovers his personal ad soliciting the services of a cannibal. A criminal mastermind's protégé plots the destruction of Mount Rushmore from within an extinct volcano. A man buys a drive-in theater and transforms it into a carnival sideshow. And an attorney puzzles over how to leave someone his deceased client's heart.

Fawkes's award-winning stories examine the vagaries of human relationships—mother and child, husband and wife, mentor and protégé—to tease out the startling complications that arise from our entanglements with those we loathe, and those we love.

JEN FAWKES Jen Fawkes has published fiction in *One Story*, *Crazyhorse*, *The Iowa Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Best Small Fictions 2020*, and elsewhere. Her story collection *Tales the Devil Told Me* won the 2020 Press 53 Award for Short Fiction, and is forthcoming in May 2021. Jen is a four-time nominee for the Pushcart Prize, and her stories have garnered awards from *The Pinch*, *Washington Square Review*, *Harpur Palate*, *Salamander*, and others. She lives in Little Rock, Arkansas, with her husband and several imaginary friends.

SEPTEMBER 2020

210 pages, 5 ½ x 8 ½

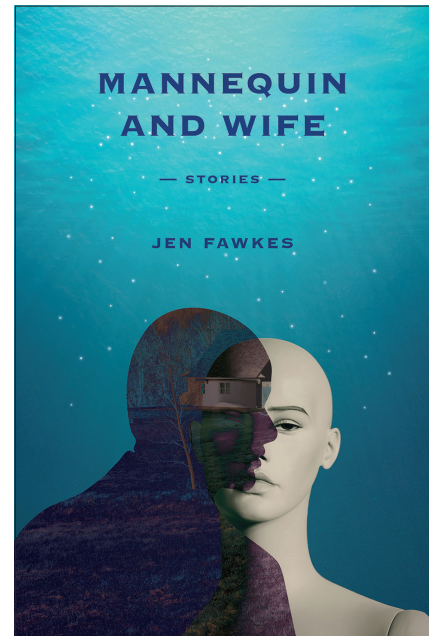
978-0-8071-7391-6

Paperback \$24.95, ebook available

LSU Press Paperback Original

Fiction

Yellow Shoe Fiction | Michael Griffith, Series Editor



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338 JOHNSTON HALL | BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA 70803

225-578-6294 | FAX 225-578-6461 | Orders/Customer Service 800-848-6224 | www.lsupress.org

Advance Praise for *Mannequin and Wife*

“The stories in *Mannequin and Wife* are lapel-grabbers, brimming with urgency and conviction. They are also deeply imagined, elegantly constructed, and emotionally rich. Jen Fawkes is a lively and most convincing storyteller, and her debut deserves attention.”

—Chris Bachelder,
author of *The Throwback Special*,
a finalist for the National Book Award

“*Mannequin and Wife* is magical in every sense of the word. These stories are eerie, funny, sharp, strange, devastating, joyous, brilliant—larger than life. I loved each one so much I never wanted it to end, until the next one started. A bravura debut from a bold new talent.”

—Clare Beams,
author of *The Illness Lesson*

“These stories are deep dives into dark waters, full of both treachery and beauty. Jen Fawkes has a boundless imagination, and these stories, full of ghosts, carnival performers, murderers, seekers, lovers, and even talking piñatas, surprise and enchant.”

—Caitlin Horrocks,
author of *The Vexations*

“Jen Fawkes’s stories have the blaze of immediacy about them, like creatures from some other plane of reality who have broken temporarily and all at once into being, displaying the whole of their life in a single burst. How fortunate for us that Fawkes has her eyes open wide, trained in just the right direction to see the things that no one else is seeing.”

—Kevin Brockmeier,
author of *The Brief History of the Dead*

Excerpt from *Mannequin and Wife*

From the story “Come Back, Rita”

“So when you said,” Mickey says, “that your husband is out chasing his monster . . .”

“I meant,” she says, “that Frank’s spent the last six months in his basement lab, constructing a pseudo-human out of body parts he’s stolen from cemeteries and morgues. Four nights ago, during that record-breaking cloud-to-ground lightning storm, he managed to harness electromagnetic impulses and channel them into his creation, bringing it to life. Two days ago, his creature broke free of its restraints. It tore the basement door off its hinges, staggered through the garden, and vanished into that cypress stand out back. When Frank got home from the farmers market, I told him what happened. He took off after his monster, and I haven’t seen him since.”