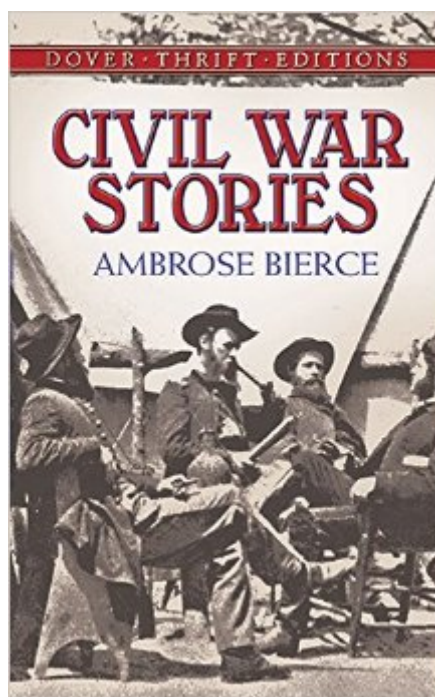


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Civil War Stories (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

Newspaperman, short-story writer, poet, and satirist, Ambrose Bierce (1842â€“1914) is one of the most striking and unusual literary figures America has produced. Dubbed "Bitter Bierce" for his vitriolic wit and biting satire, his fame rests largely on a celebrated compilation of barbed epigrams, *The Devil's Dictionary*, and a book of short stories (*Tales of Soldiers and Civilians*, 1891). Most of the 16 selections in this volume have been taken from the latter collection. The stories in this edition include: "What I Saw at Shiloh," "A Son of the Gods," "Four Days in Dixie," "One of the Missing," "A Horseman in the Sky," "The Coup de Grace," "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," "The Story of Conscience," "One Kind of Officer," "Chickamauga," and five more. Bierce's stories employ a buildup of suggestive realistic detail to produce grim and vivid tales often disturbing in their mood of fatalism and impending calamity. Hauntingly suggestive, they offer excellent examples of the author's dark pessimism and storytelling power.

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Customer Reviews

I know fans of Poe, Hemmingway, Thurber, and others could argue with me on the above title and the review below. However, please keep in mind that these are simply my opinions and reflect my respect for this excellent writer. Bierce's Civil War stories are simply the best in that genre, with "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" possibly being the most famous American short story ever written. The "surprise ending" was often exercised by him in many of his stories and many first-time readers

will undoubtedly be jolted by his prose. This is a man who personally experienced the horror of the war he so vividly describes and the anguish of its inevitable aftermath. Bierce fought in some of the bloodiest, most ferocious campaigns of the Civil War, nearly losing his life in several of them. He was duly decorated for his heroism, but it certainly left an indelible scar in his mind which is reflected in his writing. Bierce's stories are not war stories; they are indictments of war and its immense madness. None of them reflect any glamour or glory; they are coldly realistic. The protagonist in each case experiences some form tragedy and/or anguish resulting from the war's effects. One of Bierce's final Civil War stories entitled, "A Bivouac for the Dead" is not fictitious, but a testimony to the soldiers who fought in the war and a tribute to their memories. It is a rare instance of a positive story coming from a writer who made his reputation as a solemn, sardonic, often negative-thinking person. No matter what people think of Bierce, every story I've read by him is vivid in their contents: setting, character development, plot.

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