

An American professor's review of The Kingfisher Story Collection

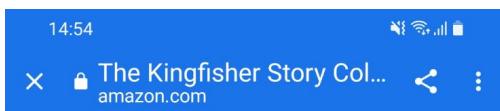
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**Editorial note:* This short piece reproduces Prof Nancy K. Napier's book review posted on Amazon.com. The references are added for clarity.



Top review from the United States

 Nancy K. Napier, Author

★★★★★ Verified Purchase

Modern Vietnamese fables

Reviewed in the United States 🇺🇸 on February 16, 2023

Fables have a long history, possibly thousands of years. Common elements are the use of symbolism, moral lessons, animals as the primary characters, and humor. They continue to fascinate: Master Class even has a class on learning to write fables.

Quan-Hoang Vuong's book, The Kingfisher Story Collection, joins this long running genre, and offers a Vietnamese slant. Vuong's main character in a series of twenty-one short stories, what Vuong calls "snippets," is a bird. The sage Kingfisher lives in a village of birds and other animals and over time, helps his colleagues learn lessons about society, relationships, pride, decency, and more. The stories are short, snappy, and feel like fables of old, with their lessons and humor. As with other fables, Kingfisher

Figure. The review on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BOBG2NNHY6>

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Quan-Hoang Vuong's book [1], [The Kingfisher Story Collection](#), joins this long-running genre and offers a Vietnamese slant. Vuong's main character in a series of twenty-one short stories, what Vuong calls "snippets," is a bird. The sage Kingfisher lives in a village of birds and other animals and, over time, helps his colleagues learn lessons about society, relationships, pride, decency, and more. The stories are short, snappy, and feel like fables of old, with their lessons and humor. As with other fables, Kingfisher exemplifies the sage village elder (or near elder) who stops and thinks and offers the best responses he can to challenges, problems, and deep questions.

I've spent years working in Vietnam and trying to understand the [people and culture](#) [2]. This book, which I read when I returned home from a trip to Hanoi, made me a little homesick for Vietnam. It is a lively read and offers a charming peek into Vietnamese culture, delightful for a person who knows a lot—or nothing—about Vietnam.

References

[1] Vuong QH. (2022). *The Kingfisher Story Collection*. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/BOBG2NNHY6>

[2] Napier NK, Hoang VQ. (2013). *What we see, why we worry, why we hope: Vietnam going forward*. Boise State University CCI Press. <https://www.amazon.com/dp/0985530588>

