



## Nancy Culpepper: Stories

By *Bobbie Ann Mason*

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Kentucky native Nancy Culpepper boldly left home to attend school in Massachusetts, married a Yankee, and raised her son in the Northeast. “One day I was feeding chickens and listening to Hank Williams and the next day I was expected to know what wines went with what,” she tells her husband, Jack. Yet no matter where she travels, her rural southern heritage is never far from her thoughts, her habits, and her heart.

Nancy is on a lifelong quest to understand her place in the world. Returning home to the family farm, she searches for photographic evidence of an ancestor bearing her own name. Still in her jeans, she brings home strange ideas and an assertiveness she learned up north.

Always adventurous, Nancy travels far and wide—searching, seeking. The narrative sweep of her life traverses the turbulent sixties, the Vietnam War, the eighties and the foreboding death of John Lennon, and finally the new millennium—when a self-assured Nancy finally emerges. These humorous and often touching stories recount her courtship and marriage to Jack, her relationship with her precocious son, and the deep, loving bond between her parents, Spence and Lila Culpepper. Eventually Nancy’s marriage is threatened by a cultural divide that plagued her and Jack from the start. But when she inherits the Culpepper family farm and discovers more pieces of her ancestral puzzle, she realizes that her life is assuming its proper shape. Later, standing on a lonely mountain in England, she sees the world from a surprising perspective.

Bestselling author Bobbie Ann Mason’s prizewinning Nancy Culpepper chronicles have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Boston Globe*, *The Southern Review*, and other distinguished literary anthologies. She has compiled these stories into one definitive collection, which includes the novella *Spence + Lila*, two new, never-before-published stories, and one Pushcart Prize winner. Heartfelt and thought-provoking, Nancy Culpepper is a poignant depiction of change and growth in a modern-day heroine.

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

A somber, slow-going drama in stories by award-winning author Mason (*An Atomic Romance*) follows a Kentucky farm family's quiet changes over the decades. When the first story begins in 1980, Nancy, the elder daughter of the Culpepper family, is in her late 30s, has an eight-year-old son with husband Jack Cleveland (a Yankee) and lives outside Philadelphia. Returning to the family farm to help her parents, Lila and Spence, move Granny into a nursing home, Nancy concerns herself with old photographs buried in Granny's house that feature Nancy's namesake, a long-lost aunt whom no one seems to know anything about. Subsequent stories deal with Granny's death, the decline and death of Jack's dog, the building tension between Nancy and Jack—both yearning for the spontaneity of their swinging '60s courtship—and the fate of the Culpepper farm. In the longest story, Lila is diagnosed with breast cancer, undergoes surgery and is lovingly nursed by Spence, Nancy and her sister, Cat. Though detailed and honest in its depiction of illness and loss and skillful in handling Nancy's lingering discomfort with the North, Mason's novel-in-stories lacks her usual sparkle.

(July)

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From [Booklist](#)

Kentuckian Nancy Culpepper first appeared in a 1980 short story, and she has resurfaced in Mason's much-loved fiction ever since. In a volume similar to Ellen Gilchrist's collections of stories about her recurring characters Rhoda Manning and Nora Jane Whittington, Mason collects her Nancy Culpepper stories, including the powerful novella about Nancy's mother's bout with cancer, "Spence + Lila" (1985), and several potent new tales. Mason writes with a swinging, country-road gait and a sunny transparency that belie the emotional weight of her tender and bittersweet tales of family, home, and loss. A calm, reticent, and subtly charming historian married to an intense photographer, Nancy harbors a deadpan wit. When we first meet her, she is looking through her granny's long-neglected family photographs. In "The Heirs," a flat-out masterpiece, she is once again sorting through her family's belongings, this time finding a stick of dynamite and a cache of letters that proves far more explosive. Mason sends her stories aloft like kites on the wind, expertly working the string, her feet planted firmly on the sustaining earth. *Donna Seaman*

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About the Author

**Bobbie Ann Mason** is the author of *In Country*, *Shiloh and Other Stories*, *An Atomic Romance*, *Nancy Culpepper*, and a memoir, *Clear Springs*. She is the winner of the PEN/Hemingway Award, two Southern Book Awards, and numerous other prizes, including the O. Henry and the Pushcart. She was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, the American Book Award, the PEN/Faulkner Award, and the Pulitzer Prize. She is writer-in-residence at the University of Kentucky.

### Users Review

**From reader reviews:**

**William Bellard:**

Spent a free time and energy to be fun activity to try and do! A lot of people spent their down time with their family, or their particular friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Do you need to something

different to fill your free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book might be option to fill your cost-free time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to consider look for book, may be the book untitled Nancy Culpepper: Stories can be excellent book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

### **Robyn Pugh:**

Why? Because this Nancy Culpepper: Stories is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap this but latter it will surprise you with the secret it inside. Reading this book beside it was fantastic author who write the book in such awesome way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining way but still convey the meaning completely. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This amazing book will give you a lot of rewards than the other book get such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking approach. So , still want to postpone having that book? If I were you I will go to the e-book store hurriedly.

### **Joshua Molina:**

Reading can called brain hangout, why? Because if you are reading a book specifically book entitled Nancy Culpepper: Stories the mind will drift away trough every dimension, wandering in every single aspect that maybe unfamiliar for but surely will end up your mind friends. Imaging each word written in a guide then become one form conclusion and explanation this maybe you never get previous to. The Nancy Culpepper: Stories giving you yet another experience more than blown away your mind but also giving you useful data for your better life within this era. So now let us present to you the relaxing pattern the following is your body and mind will probably be pleased when you are finished studying it, like winning a sport. Do you want to try this extraordinary shelling out spare time activity?

### **Adam Mathews:**

In this period globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The health of the world makes the information quicker to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, classifieds, book, and soon. You can view that now, a lot of publisher that will print many kinds of book. Often the book that recommended for your requirements is Nancy Culpepper: Stories this publication consist a lot of the information in the condition of this world now. This specific book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The words styles that writer value to explain it is easy to understand. Typically the writer made some study when he makes this book. This is why this book suitable all of you.

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