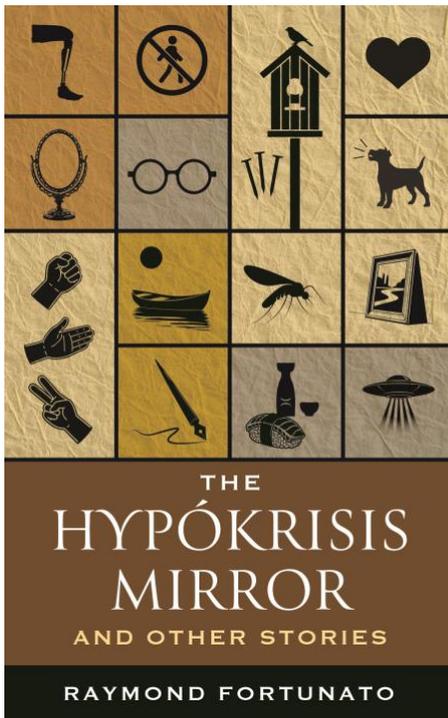


# The Hypókrisis Mirror and Other Stories

by Raymond Fortunato



The Hypókrisis Mirror and Other Stories  
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**Raymond Fortunato** writes in Westchester, New York. He has a B.A. in history and mathematics and two master's degrees in history and English Literature. He's interested in humans, how they relate to themselves, to each other and to the worlds beyond themselves, both seen and unseen. He is interested in and has studied many areas including but not limited to art, music, literature, history, writing, mathematics, physics, astrophysics, psychology, philosophy, religion, economics and politics. Fortunato has published two short story collections: *Joyful, Sorrowful and Ordinary Mysteries* (2021) and *The Hypókrisis Mirror and Other Stories* (2026). His play, "Nothing's Plenty for Me," a dramady about climate change was presented by the Xoregos Performing Company at Theatre Row in NYC. He has produced four music albums. His short stories have appeared in *Drunk Monkeys*, *Evening Street Review*, *The Scarlet Leaf Review*, *Every Day Fiction*, *The Write Launch*, *The Bangalore Review*, and other publications.

"Everyday circumstances ruffle the lives of family members, friends, and rivals in Fortunato's short story collection.

'At the Wedding or Haikus and Our-kus' finds computer programmer Peter falling for his co-worker Miryam; he even contemplates marriage, although the fact that he's a devout Catholic and she's Orthodox Jewish could make things difficult. The greatest problem, though, is that Miryam is set to wed someone else, and soon. In 'The Personal Statement,' college seniors Sam and Elizabeth apply to the same graduate school. Elizabeth's required personal statement aims for sincerity, but Sam tries something offbeat, which could make all the difference. On the surface, Fortunato's characters seem immersed in routine. A closer look, however, reveals their struggles and worries; for example, one man's familiar walk home from work turns into an unusual journey, as he's constantly lost in his head, and a New Yorker awaiting a meetup with a friend thinks back to the pair's lifetime of relentless competition. Along the way, friends do things that villains might do, and enemies prove they're not such bad people. In 'The Great Silence,' for instance, young Andrew and Maya's mother, Doris, takes them to a vacation cottage while their father is on a nuclear submarine tour. Most siblings would be pleased that Mom is happy, but it seems that nothing will shake Doris from her perpetually joyful state. For sport, Andrew and Maya decide to test her to see how long she'll stay content if they 'make her life miserable.'

Fortunato compiles 19 tales that share some similarities: many characters live in New York or New Jersey, and a surprising number work in computer programming. Nevertheless, the situations in which they find themselves are a lively assortment, whether they involve a lost loved one, a prisoner on death row [...] Several tales have intriguing hints of the supernatural, as well; the title story, for one, features a mirror that shows people who they really are—not just their superficial reflection. In one of the collection's best entries, 'Grythomoresome,' a 41-year-old nurse named James has an imaginary friend, who's also a Martian, and who acts as a voice of reason in James' life. What will the friend's advice be regarding James' fears about his adult nephew, who's been spending time with his 5-year-old daughter? The author's prose uses brevity to great effect at times, as in a description of a party: 'The music was low, there was a bit of subdued dancing, lots of drinking, Lorraine had made great food and there was lots of talking. I'm not sure how but she got more than forty people in at one time with people constantly leaving and arriving.' In the same vein, the book's shortest narratives most effectively showcase dynamic characters, such as the friends and co-workers in 'It Is What It Is,' who discuss marriage woes and quickly shift their focus to the banality of the story's titular expression. A relatable cast navigates familiar scenes in thoroughly absorbing ways."

~ Kirkus Reviews