

A Great Source of Nifty Stories on the Internet

I grew up with the word "nifty" as a standard descriptor in my vocabulary. It alluded to the uniqueness and stylishness of the subject being described. As I grew older I heard the word being used in a wider range of topics: a nifty song, a nifty concert, a nifty evening out. Later still, it cropped up in conversations about more "cultural" experiences: nifty books, nifty poems, and [nifty stories](#).

Whenever I heard the word I assumed it meant something good, something attractive. However, it was only when I found myself using the word in my description of my own stories that I needed to define it. Actually, it was a listener who called my material "nifty stories," and that comment sent me to the books. The current Wiktionary defines the word as "good; a general term for anything that is good, useful or beneficial." A thesaurus gives synonyms such as "peachy, smashing, dandy, great, keen, and groovy," all of which strike me as exchanging one jargon term for another!

So how do I define nifty stories? The stories I tell always have a message, a lesson, a bit of perspective, and they are, indeed, particularly good and rather effective at making their point. To me, nifty stories are a blend of entertainment and education, or what some call "edutainment." I look for stories with certain underlying values that help the listener to set their internal compass when sailing through life.

For example, a story with a moral is one that provides a clear message. It teaches by example. On the other hand, many stories are not so obvious in the lessons they offer. The meaning is hidden in the actions of the characters. Listeners are left to figure out the message for themselves. And different listeners will carry away different messages. This kind of story is generally attractive to a wider audience. The subtler lessons tend to come from longer tales. One can learn many lessons from epic stories. Just compare a tale from the Arabian Nights to a fable by Aesop to see the difference. Which one appeals to you? My personal penchant is for finding my own lessons when I listen to a story. The stories I chose for my Fables in Four Minutes and World Full of Stories CDs are good examples of nifty stories with subtle messages.

Nifty stories are stories that teach. Nifty stories are memorable. Nifty stories carry a message that applies to all people. Nifty stories are always stylish, regardless of the era that spawned them. Stories such as these hold the listeners attention long enough to send their message effectively. Stories that are nifty are stories that are priceless!

About the Author

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