

Spotlight on Books



Admittedly, I was attracted to Carleigh Baker's *Bad Endings* by the beautiful water-coloured salmon courtesy of Katie Green. That said, I think bees wound up playing a more significant role in this collection of short stories than fish, but that's neither here nor there.

I thoroughly enjoyed these tales. As the title would suggest, they are sometimes bleak but more often (and surprisingly) not. While the characters in these stories were all experiencing endings of sorts, and there was always the stress associated with said endings, there was typically a sense that it was for the best and that it was but the end of a story, not of a book.

This perhaps suggests that the stories didn't feel complete in their own right, and I've heard this from non-short story fans, that short stories leave them wishing for a novel. However, I did not sense that with *Bad Endings*. Baker has an art with characterization and with observation and the end result are fully realized snippets of life. The characters learn. They grow.

I read these stories over a few lunch breaks and I would highly recommend short story collections for such a clumped period of time. They provide a thoughtful and satisfying diversion to help wake up the brain and stir the emotions.

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