



The Hotel Eden

Ron Carlson

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Prepare to be amused, moved, and disturbed. With these twelve exceptional tales, Ron Carlson takes readers to a world where wit has heft, charm has shadow, and human beings act out all the complicated nuances of love. In the title story, a young man waiting in the Hotel Eden discovers -- as many others have -- that Eden is not a permanent domicile. In "Zanduce at Second", a baseball player turned kille by accident undergoes a surprising transformation. We root for escaped felon Ray in "A Note on the Type" and drive through the sweltering summer streets of Phoenix as a nineteen-year-old narrator goes through an unsettling sexual awakening in "Oxygen".

Carlson's work has always made a difference. Whether his characters are getting sabotaged by nightcaps or encountering nudists on a rafting trip, he takes us to a generous array of places in a new way.

The Hotel Eden Details

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Author : Ron Carlson

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From Reader Review The Hotel Eden for online ebook

Lindsey says

Okay so I really only read Keith. But that was why I bought the book. Keith is an amazing story and its only 20 pages long! I will probably read the rest sometime. But for now I am living a life inspired by Keith.

Val says

I admittedly didn't read the whole book. The content of some of the stories I just wasn't comfortable with. Others just didn't interest me. Of the stories I did read, I loved "Keith." I also found "The House Goes Up" and "Zanduce at Second" really well written and interesting. Carlson's writing style is amazing.

Reda says

Given that I almost always like novels better than short stories, I very much enjoyed this set of short stories. Some were good, but most were fantastic. Carlson is an excellent writer, with a creative talent I really appreciate. If short stories are your literature of choice, this should be on your shelf. The only way it could have been better is if he had developed them into book length.

Megan says

I didn't give this book a star rating because I had complicated feelings about it. I think Carlson is a good writer, but sometimes his stories were too gimmicky for me. The stories I liked in this collection, I really liked; but I strongly disliked an equal number. How am I supposed to rate that?

Nicole says

One star for "Keith" and only Keith

Brett Starr says

"The Hotel Eden" was my first reading by Ron Carlson and I found him only due strictly to the fact that I read a rave review for his new book, "The Signal" and wound up getting this one instead.

I love short stories and I have read several in the last few months, this book is right at the top as far as pure originality and stories that put you through the range of emotions. Ron Carlson could probably write about anything and make it so magical and interesting you couldn't put it down.

The book has twelve stories, all of which really, really impressed me. I'm looking forward to reading the rest of Mr. Carlson's short stories soon.

this outstanding collection includes:

Keith - a great story about unexpected, unusual friendship
(amazing story that has now been made into a movie)

The Prisoner of Bluestone - a man, a gas station and his ex wife (one of my favorites in the book, hard to describe without giving anything away)

Oxygen - a college student who takes a summer job as an oxygen delivery man, learns a lot more about himself and the world

Dr. Slime - a man teamed up w/ his brothers actress girlfriend, are on a mission to find out where he's getting the money he's bringing home, why he's so bruised up and why there are so many pills over the house (one of those stories that doesn't quite make sense, then at a certain point, gives you that wonderful ah ha moment)

A Note On The Type - a criminal on the run, learns about respect in an unusual way

The Chromium Hook - a spooky, yet very well crafted tale told by several different characters

The House Goes Up - a woman has an all too flawless plan to make things go her way, everytime w/ men

What We Wanted To Do - they have a plan and it's a good plan, but so far it's just not working

The Hotel Eden - a young couple in London meet a new friend, who has all the wildest stories, all the right answers and knows all the right people/places, but who is he really

Zanduce At Second - a professional baseball player has killed eleven people now, by way of foul ball

Nightcap - a man has a fling, an unusual fling

Down The Green River - a man and an old friend and her son take a journey down the river in a raft, only to face a hole in the raft and nudists

I highly recommend this collection to anyone that likes short stories and great writing!

Nilu says

4.5 Stars.

A few years ago I stumbled in to an Independent Movie called 'Keith' , which got stuck in my memory from the second the end credits started rolling. That movie haunted me for some time and made me find out more about it.

That's when I stumbled in to Ron Carlson's short story collection called ' The Hotel Eden".

'Keith' was just one story out of a dozen.

Recently , a memory down the lane incident triggered me in to picking up the book and giving it a go. More accurately , finding the link and reading it on my Tab.

Ron Carlson has a nice way of relating his stories. They were mostly set in the 70's and flowed along unhurried with enough description to conjure up the scenes in your head. No matter how quirky the tales are, you really needed to find out what happened next.

His narrative wrapped me up in a Nostalgic blanket and made me miss the good old days which didn't have mobile phones, Internet and Apps.

Most of the stories in the collection could be used as good material for Indie Movies. The title story which is first in line , will make it or break it for you. If you loved 'The Hotel Eden', the chances are high that you'll finish the book in one sitting.

My favorites are Keith (but of course), Down the Green River, Oxygen, The Hotel Eden, Chromium Hook and The House Goes Up. Actually the remaining six stories are good too, but he could've still been a memorable author with the aforementioned six.

This book is best enjoyed on a rainy day, with a hot cuppa by your side , while the stereo softly plays the most nostalgia inducing music.

Recommended to anyone in search of good stories.

Lizzie says

"Cooking, they say, uses a different part of your brain and I know which part, the good part that's not wired all screwy with your twelve sorry versions of your personal history and the four jillion second guesses, backward glances, forehead-slapping embarrassments. The cooking part is clean as a cutting board and fitted accurately with close measurements and easy-to-follow instructions, which, you always know, are going to result in something edible and nourishing, over which you could make real conversation with someone, maybe someone you've known since college." –page 181

Sara Watson says

I read this as part of the #24hourbookclub in one day. I didn't have much in terms of expectations, except the trust in the team that chose it for the day. I thoroughly enjoyed each piece in turn, and loved it even more as details threaded through in subtle ways. The stories certainly stand on their own, but I think they do a lot as a set, which was a delightful surprise. I also started to enjoy the patterns of the form, the pivot point where something changes for the characters.

The voices are predominantly male, and the only piece written from a female perspective seems more unhinged and vindictive than the rest. That being said, these male voices, dabbling often between adolescence and adulthood, are compelling and vulnerable.

It is a good work of art that inspires you to play with its form and medium, and that's the impression I was left with after reading Carlson today. At the very least it will motivate me to pay more attention to the fiction in the New Yorkers that have been piling up on my coffee table.

This was a pleasure, and I'm itching to read more.

Brian says

Lovers of short fiction rejoice, for if you have yet to sample the wondrous writing of Ron Carlson, you are in for a treat.

There's not a mediocre story in this collection. Carlson channels many of my favorites: Vonnegut (Zanduce at Second), Carver (The Hotel Eden), Munro (Keith), Baxter (Down the Green River), Shepard (Mr. Slime). His characters are rich, stories polished and engaging, his prose taut and filled with deep meaning.

Highest recommendation.

Kylah Polidore says

Only read Keith, I'm obsessed with the Movie so I decided to give the book a whirl, it was good I wish it was longer. The writing style got me confused it seemed to intellectual same for the other stories I tried reading them but the writing just seemed to stiff and boring and more for adult readers than someone on my reading level and I think I would enjoy this if I re read it when I'm older and I'll understand it much more better.

Benjamin Bryan says

Excellent literary short stories.

Angel Cade says

The rating is based on only one short story: Keith

Twenty pages. Just twenty paged short story and it still hit me like a huge bowling ball. The author is simply amazing, with his skills to connect us with the character with succinct words. Truly beautiful.

The movie, based on this short story, broke my heart but to see Keith in his element, in words that the author chose to bring him to life with, it was phenomenal. I'd deffo read this over and over again.

"Haven't lied to you this far, not gonna start now."

OneSarcasticGirl says

Keith!

gwayle says

NOTE: This review is for a single story in this collection.

"I haven't lied to you this far, and I'm not going to start now."

I got this to read "Keith"; I saw the movie based on this short story recently. To say I loved the movie is a gross understatement, so I was naturally curious about the story. It's more subtle than the film, more restrained, but it still hit me with a ton of bricks. I read it about four times: it's charming and bittersweet and romantic. It's the story of the relationship between high school seniors Barbara Anderson, "president of half the school offices and queen of the rest," and her lab partner, Keith Zetterstrom, "the window, wallpaper, woodwork. He'd been there for years and they'd never seen him." The friendship is extremely unlikely--the entire alphabet comes between them--and yet utterly destined.

There is a lot of telling in this story, which creates an emotional distance; simultaneously, there are subtle and quirky details--mainly having to do with physical objects (a trophy, a key, a valise, a pair of bowling balls)--that take on huge emotional weight. I'm frankly stunned with what Carlson was able to do in twenty pages.

You'd think, given my reaction to "Keith," that I'd be curious about the other stories in the collection. Try as I might, though, I couldn't read any of the others without drifting back to "Keith." It's like when I become single-repeat-obsessed with a song on an album: often it takes me years to listen to the other songs. But the book is due back to the library tomorrow, so I think I'll read "Keith" one last time and send it on its way.
