



The Heroes & Other Stories

Kat Hausler

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Set against the colorful, yet sometimes strangely cold, backdrop of Manhattan, the stories in this collection are peopled with a very particular breed of heroes, not quite what they're fighting for. Here you will find characters in progress, people still getting to who they are: a self-conscious student who feels incomplete without a partner, a talented artist blind to the beauty of his own work, a couple who can't bring their love of an idealized past into the present, and an unstable woman whose breakdown causes those around her to realize their own frailty. These everyday heroes all have their own flaws and failings, all fall short time and time again, but struggle on, after worthy but elusive ideals: a sense of self, and a connection to the world around them.

The Heroes & Other Stories Details

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Author : Kat Hausler

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Maria says

'The Heroes and Other Stories' is a well composed collection of short stories. Kat Hausler has a wonderful talent for describing and portraying the nuances of human behaviour. For me this collection included absolute gems and then some stories which could do with a bit of work. Two stories in particular stood out for me, in that they grabbed my attention from the first page and would not let go: 'Peripeteia' and 'La Fee Noire'; and I think the reason these two stories 'work' more than the others in the collection is because there are only two main characters. All of the other stories have a multitude of characters playing important roles and this can become tiresome having to remember who is who; and in short fiction there is no time to develop characters, so less is more. This isn't to say that I didn't enjoy the other stories, but I did so to varying degrees. I fact I would go as far as to say I enjoyed all of the stories very much but felt that some of them needed to be tightened up. For example, 'The Heroes', which is the last story in the collection, is a poignant tale of a girl who sacrifices her own happiness for a friend, and the way the author develops the characters is wonderful, but some of the action in the story is very monotonous and slow moving; I was almost wanting to hurry it along, getting impatient as I read, sometimes losing interest. Similarly, I found I felt this way when reading the first half of 'Over' the story of a young couple who have reached a turning point in their relationship. The author does manage to turn this story around however, and the second half of the story is attention grabbing, and exciting. I loved the ending of the first story 'What Makes Us Happy', a study of self-imposed loneliness; the ending is very fitting and thought-provoking, and that is one of the better stories in the collection too. 'The Victory of The Flanges' is very slow moving and I think half of the dialogue between the characters could have been cut out without actually taking away anything from the story.

All in all, I would recommend this book to anyone who is a fan of short fiction. Many of the stories are so intricately detailed that I am sure I would enjoy reading them again and again. This is a promising debut from a talented author.
