

Ship Fever: Stories

Andrea Barrett

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1996 National Book Award Winner for Fiction.

The elegant short fictions gathered hereabout the love of science and the science of love are often set against the backdrop of the nineteenth century. Interweaving historical and fictional characters, they encompass both past and present as they negotiate the complex territory of ambition, failure, achievement, and shattered dreams. In "Ship Fever," the title novella, a young Canadian doctor finds himself at the center of one of history's most tragic epidemics. In "The English Pupil," Linnaeus, in old age, watches as the world he organized within his head slowly drifts beyond his reach. And in "The Littoral Zone," two marine biologists wonder whether their life-altering affair finally was worth it. In the tradition of Alice Munro and William Trevor, these exquisitely rendered fictions encompass whole lives in a brief space. As they move between interior and exterior journeys, "science is transformed from hard and known fact into malleable, strange and thrilling fictional material" (*Boston Globe*).



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