



Sandcastle and Other Stories: The Complete Edition

Justin Bog

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The Complete Edition of Justin Bog's First Collection of Dark Psychological Suspense Tales.

In the old incarnation, the book was a Finalist for the 2014 Ohioana Book Award, and picked as one of Suspense Magazine's Best of 2013 Books!

An award-winning collection, Sandcastle and Other Stories reveals twisted secrets that are mined like plutonium. These twelve literary tales are nothing short of an adventure through a roiling sea of emotion. With authenticity and eloquence, author Justin Bog holds a provocative and compelling mirror on the human condition.

"The stories are those of everyday people who might live next door or in the walk-up across the street . . . A man with a personal crisis takes a singles cruise --- a woman leaves her toddler girl at the beach while having a romantic tryst --- a B-list actor's character is killed off --- a girl is sucked below the sand into an underwater chamber . . . an old gardener who has dark secrets interacts with the boss's daughter in a most unforeseen way. The only commonality in these tight, little stories is they are unexpected. Having this book is like having a string of black pearls --- each one slightly different, but each a perfect, dark, little gem . . . Bog paints pictures with words as Titian did with oil paints -- startlingly detailed with deep perspective and rich complexity."

---Rosi Hollenbeck, San Francisco Book Review

Sandcastle and Other Stories details: These twelve literary, psychological, and suspense tales are nothing short of an adventure through a roiling sea of emotion. Meet: an old man twisted by fate and a lost love . . . a young girl playing on the ocean shore who becomes entangled in nets of a mercurial god . . . a divorced man mired in troubles who's coerced into taking a singles cruise . . . a Hollywood actor in a television drama who's always typecast as the bad boy . . . a child kept awake by night terrors, and a woman who hides her secretive personality from everyone on the beach one sunny day. Genuine voices of the characters, mixed with a clear-eyed tonal directness, make this a series with mesmerizing psychological interaction. Stories span a broad depth of human understanding and build a bridge between deepest chasms of pain and high portals of joy. Read these dark tales and stand witness to unspeakable hate sitting with cozy wife, right beside unconditional love --- a provocative and compelling mirror on the human condition.

Sandcastle and Other Stories: The Complete Edition Details

Date : Published May 29th 2015 by Booktrope (first published May 1st 2012)

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Author : Justin Bog

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From Reader Review Sandcastle and Other Stories: The Complete Edition for online ebook

Jane Isaac says

This enchanting short story collection deftly examines the psychology of life.

With elegant prose, each story leads the reader through a character's journey, requiring reflection on influential events in their lives, and finishes up with an unexpected twist at the end.

This anthology can be read as individual stories, or in its entirety, and I very much look forward to more work from this author.

Rachel Thompson says

If you think you're in for a happy-go-lucky group of stories about unicorns and rainbows people, leave right now. These are dark stories, amazingly detailed and well-thought out, to the point that I found myself holding my breath to discover where Mr. Bog would take us next.

Yes, he's that good.

My favorite is the title story, Sandcastle, a seemingly quiet tale of mothers and daughters on the beach. And then it's not. And it haunts me in the kind of way that I've read it repeatedly, thinking "How did he do that?" Wow.

I encourage you to buy this collection, read it, reread it, give it to friends, share with the world the talent that is Justin Bog.

Rachel Thompson, author, A Walk in the Snark and The Mancode: Exposed, Founder, BadRedheadMedia

Ben Ditmars says

Author Justin Bog, and I don't say this lightly, has written the defining collection of our age. I have not read a modern author interpret so many perspectives as eloquently or brilliantly. He is a master of every genre, every facet. If you like intelligent, deep stories with unmatched imagination behind them, Sandcastle and Other Stories is for you.

Lisa says

This is the first collection of short stories I have read since the Canterbury Tales in high school. And I've concluded that the short story genre just isn't something I am drawn to ultimately.

The writing style is fantastic. The author clearly is talented (and I'm not just saying that because he

personally thanked me for rating his book on Goodreads....which I was frankly very surprised about!) The writing was not the problem for me. I am just not a short story person. I like to really take the time to invest myself in a story and its characters...and by the time I did that with one story...POOF....it was over. I can imagine how the short story genre is appealing to many readers. I'm just not one of them. Within a few seconds after I read one story, I forgot practically all the details. After I read the entire book, I can hardly remember anything. Maybe I need to get my memory checked! Haha. I'm just able to retain more when the focus is on a main storyline, it seems. However, two stand out stories for me from the bunch were Poseidon Eyes (a crazy descriptive acid trip) and On The Back Staircase (I read it late at night which had me channeling the main character's paranoia...that's for sure!)

An analogy just came to me...for me...the short story genre is like taking a trip on a cruise. You get to stop at a ton of different ports and experience many different places and it's exciting and new, but you don't ever really get to truly immerse yourself in each destination. Some people LOVE to cruise. I have never enjoyed cruising myself though ;)

Bottom line, I appreciate the creativity of Bog's writing style and I would recommend this book to anyone who gravitates towards short stories. But if you prefer a more focused book with the same characters throughout for the most part, like me, this probably isn't the book for you. And major props to Bogs for reaching out to his readers. I appreciate his accessibility.

Justin Bog says

It's filled with characters who spoke to me, some very loudly.

Mindy says

These stories are not for the casual reader. The stories are convoluted, confusing, and often upsetting. Initially I had thought that a collection of short stories would make for an easy before bed read, when you want to read something but not anything too long. However these stories are not relaxing or entertaining. They seem to be written in a laissez-faire style, but that is misleading. The stories are purposefully pushing the envelope of acceptable and seem designed to cause conflict mentally and emotionally.

The stories are well written technically, but I had a hard time enjoying them as they brought much conflict and emotional turmoil. When I read stories, I do so for the enjoyment that they bring not to test my internal or external code of ethics and personal boundaries. I did that in school. While I may occasionally choose a book that I know will challenge me mentally, emotionally, or spiritually, I found these stories to border on irritating.

As I stated the stories are well written technically and if you are looking for a read that will test your mental fortitude, emotional balance, and spiritual boundaries then this is the book for you. However, it was not for me. I give this book 2.5 stars due to the excellence in writing despite my lack of enjoyment of the subject matter.

This product or book may have been distributed for review; this in no way affects my opinions or reviews.

Charity Parkerson says

Terrifyingly brilliant, unique, and memorable are just a few of the words that I can think of to describe the stories contained inside this book. Don't let the bright happy cover fool you. Things are very deep inside of Sandcastles.

Elite Indie says

Justin Bog writes stories that are chilling in an uncanny and uncomfortable way. His stories have very other-world qualities to them, while being very contemporary. Bog is a fantastic writer, with a literary bent. It's been a long time since EiR has read a book that is so engaging. You can read this book quickly, but I found myself slowing down, re-reading sentences that were too delicious to pass up. Entertaining and challenging. Some of these stories flow like poetry off the page, some of them are fast paced and some are introspective. You will not go wrong with this collection. Easily, an Elite Indie Read.

Mohanalakshmi says

I started reading this collection late at night, while I had jetlag. Halfway into the first story, I found myself sitting up straighter in bed, and leaning closer to the light as I flicked through the pages (on my Kindle app for the iPad). I fell in love with the strong narrative voice, the characters put in awkward situations, and a writer who is not afraid to make the tough decisions for bad things to happen to good people -- as is the case in real life.

The grimness of these stories may turn some readers away (not everyone likes a thought provoking pre-bed time read) and maybe earlier in my life I would have called these depressing. Now I see them for what they represent: a flawed world where things don't often turn out as they should or could.

You feel empathy for some characters and hatred of others. That's the beauty of a short story collection - the shorter narrative allows the writer and reader to experience a wide variety of narratives, themes, and settings.

A wonderful debut from a writer who shows a lot of promise.

M.E. Franco says

Personally I love a good short story. I don't have a lot of time to read, so I like being able to sit down and read an entire story in one sitting. Writing a good short story is difficult given the size limitation. The author has to develop the characters, story line and ending all within the space of what would roughly count as one chapter in a novel. Each word has to be chosen with care.

Justin Bog not only wrote one amazing short story, but he wrote ten of them. This collection is an incredible roller coaster of psychological twists and turns. I like to read one story at a time, but after I read The Virtue

of *Minding Your Own Business*, I sat stunned, staring at my iPod. Did that really just happen? Without hesitation, I immediately started reading the next one, *Sandcastles*.

As I read these stories, I felt sadness, anger, shock, surprise, amazement, and even a little fear. Not a single one of them left me feeling neutral. If you are looking for a light, entertaining read with no emotional investment, this isn't for you. If you want something more, something to stimulate your brain and your emotions, then this collection is an incredible read that I would highly recommend.

Abigail says

"As he's walking away I know he's still thinking about trains, wondering what a really big train crash would look like, the first car striking something twisted on the tracks and dragging the following cars off the rails, tumbling over on their sides with a world-stopping screech."
location 2227

Everybody loves a good train wreck, though personally I vote for the roller coaster because I can get my fill of other people's misfortunes, the Schadenfreude, bright bloody and visceral. But wait, is this what the collection is about? No but there are a few train wrecks in it, a few boundaries pushed. This is not a light festive read, the *Sandcastle*? Well I am betting there is a foot print smack dab in the middle of it.

I read a couple of the stories out loud to my fiancé, one of which had him so excited we ended up getting into a two hour discussion on this particular form of story telling. After finishing *Mother of Twins*, he immediately said, "Read the next one, I am really enjoying this, it reminds me of Flannery O'Connor's writing!" This is the third story in the collection and starts off with a creepy *Stepford Wives* feel. As with all the other stories in this book, the door is opened a bit more as it progresses, the jaws of life prying apart the wrecked side of the last car and contents revealed. In the end the grotesqueness of the human spirit is revealed in a form that is also a desperate beauty, a justifiable need. Her weakness exposed like a pile of intestines, we cannot turn away and yet we want too, we can't. Again, train wreck!

But train wrecks are not always ugly, bloody and a mess. Sometimes you are riding a train when it happens, the cars ahead start to brake before smashing into a wall and jostle you a bit. Instead of having your leg ripped off you fall into the lap of the man or woman in the bench in front of you. You know the one, the sunlight hitting their glasses, preventing you seeing their eyes? The beauty seems real and you are like, wow how lucky I am, then the blinds are dropped and as beautiful as they are ... there is something different and disturbing. Beauty you cannot look away from, as dangerous as it maybe, drawing you into its clutches. The story *Poseidon Eyes* is a little like this. Just look beyond the fins and see what I mean when you read it.

If I were to pick a favorite, I would be hard pressed. I can't. Each one is its own train wreck, in fact there are a few roller coaster accidents, which as I said are my favorite. *When the Ship Sinks* probably is the one that gave me the most pause and qualifies as a roller coaster accident. The parallels and hidden metaphors are so lovely, disturbing and addictive I just did not want it to end, but FEMA was able to clear the tracks and I had to move along.

Sandcastle and Other Stories pushes the boundaries making you think. It is not cotton candy, a BLT or even a steak. It is complex Seafood Paella with muscles, spicy chorizo, clams, chicken, shrimp, sofrito, short ribs

and more. Blended perfectly and placed over rice you dig in, experiencing joy, sweat breaking out from the spice as you gulp water and shovel more into your mouth unable to stop because of an evocation of pleasure and pain you received knowing the next time you get a chance to eat it, you will with even more splendor and abandonment!

(NOTE - I gave this collection to one of the professors at the University and he recently wrote me saying this book will probably be used as part of his lecture series on the world of self publishing he is doing to help dispel the stigma attached.)

August Is Azathoth The Haunted Reading Room says

Review on July 2: REVIEW: SANDCASTLE AND OTHER STORIES by Justin Bog

A richly imaged, literate dozen of psychological suspense, the stories collected here are like invisible nerve gas: you won't realize at first, but each story will change you, commemorate itself in your memory, and days, months, later, you will find yourself recalling a note, a passage, an image; and you will be impelled to dive into the collection again.

Zoë says

I received this book in exchange for an honest review.

I was pleasantly surprised by this. I picked it up, was interested to see the short stories that featured, and there were some solid reviews about it. I had no real idea what to expect from the author, who is someone I had not heard of before, or his style of writing or the type of content. Something I am going to draw attention to from the off is the fact that Justin Bog can write. I mean it, really well. It flows quite well, each story brought something different to the table, even though a lot of them had repeating themes (such as oceans, twins, waves, paranoia, trees, psychological issues, names, etc). Bog's writing style is engaging and creepy, and all his stories featured here are quite unsettling and psychologically creepy, crawling in under your skin. This might not appeal to the average reader, or someone who does not like some twisted tales, and it will upset those thinking they are getting a light, happy-go-lucky read. However, it totally ticked all my boxes for a short story. Doesn't give away too much, but just enough to make you think, to wonder, and the way that Bog concludes the stories is also quite good, leaving a world of possibilities open to explore. *Sandcastle and Other Stories* is a really fast read, so it won't demand an overkill of your time, and offers a great alternative to the average lot of short stories, something I am not usually a fan of. I looked forward to every story, and even when my mind went wandering, it never strayed too far, and always whipped back to the moment. Each story contains a darkness that is executed very well, and some of these stories linger long after you have moved on. I am so glad that I took a chance on this, as I am certainly looking forward to reading more of Bog's work, I would love to see how a full fledged novel from him would play out. If you are into short stories, or would like something that is quick but different, I would highly recommend *Sandcastle and Other Stories*.

Jen La Duca says

I don't typically read a lot of short stories; I've always carried this misconception that unless you had at least 300 pages in a book then there was no true way to connect to a story or its characters no matter how talented an author is. Last year I re-read some of my favorite Stephen King books and at some point stumbled across a little book of his called *Full Dark, No Stars*, I decided to give it a try and was totally blown away and realized how wrong I'd been all these years in my refusal to read short stories. Since then I've read almost all of his collections but I still hadn't ventured on to any others because let's face it, King is the king of storytelling and I typically think anything he writes is gold :) When I was recently offered an opportunity to be part of the review tour for *Sandcastle and Other Stories* I took a look at the blurb that cited this as a "collection of dark psychological suspense tales" and knew this could be something I really liked so I jumped on board.

Justin Bog has written an incredible collection of short stories! These are stories that really force you to think, some will even cause you to re-read the ending just to make sure that what you think just happened, really did just happen. Each of these stories are not what they initially seem, they start out ordinary enough and center around everyday people, yet somehow along the way Bog twist and turns the characters or story into something far darker and more sinister. It's brilliant when an author pulls this off flawlessly and here Bog hasn't just done it once, but over and over again. I personally find this style more satisfying and far more frightening than anything in the horror genre! There's a sense of everydayness that makes you feel like these situations could actually happen and Bog impressively writes each character in such a way that's raw and completely organic. Whether he's writing as a mother, an aging man, or a small child; the voice he gives to each is believable and true to human nature.

There wasn't one story in this collection that I didn't like but of course some of the stories I loved or connected more with than others. A few of the standouts for me were *Mother of Twins*, *Sandcastle* and *On the Back Staircase*. I honestly can't say which one is my favorite but I know I definitely want to read more from this highly talented author! I would absolutely recommend *Sandcastle and Other Stories* to fans of short stories and psychological suspense and I look forward to seeing what Justin Bog has up his sleeve for us next!

David says

Sandcastle and Other Stories is a book of beautifully crafted character studies. Justin Bog's writing style flows as he delves deep in the minds of his creations and shares their innermost thoughts and deeds. Most of the characters in this ten-story collection involve the type of person you'd pass you on the street and not give a second glance to. Yet, like everyone, they have complex thoughts, feelings, and dreams. Bog makes these everyday nobodies into people you have feelings for (some good, some bad). Although the language is wonderful, I did feel that in some of the stories, plot took a back seat to description and observation ~ but that's me. I'm more of a genre, plot-driven reader over literary, character-driven. Still, many of the stories grabbed me. The end of *Sandcastle* washed in like a tidal wave. *Poseidon Eyes* read like an LDS trip but written with elegance and style. Overall, a fun read that will really put you in tune with the inner workings of the human mind.

Helle Gade says

This collection of short stories takes you on a psychological journey through human nature in all its diversity. I highly recommend it.

Michael says

In this fast-paced world of modern writing it can be hard for an up-and-coming author to find other, more experienced, authors whom we can look up to and learn from. A while back it was suggested I read *Sandcastle and Other Stories* penned by Justin Bog. This book is an amazing work of short stories that are more emotionally dark, deep and thoughtful than many I have come across. This isn't just some quick publication of shorts which are thrown together and have no real tie like you often see coming out these days. But rather stories with connected themes and ideas that we all can relate to, feel awkward about and enjoy in some way. The writing is elegant and beautiful and is some of the best I have read. Justin has amazing talent and I'm sure we will be seeing big things from him.

Michael Melville

books are love says

Each story is more complex and written with more intensity than the last. Each an unexpected look at different concepts. The gardener who has dark secrets and shows us we all have something to hide and that everything around us influences us even if we don't know how. The actor who is okay with who he is but has others wanting him to change because it helps them. The girl on the beach who has Poseidon change her life, the single's cruise that shows loneliness but also how some who are lonely get ornery and judgemental, the girl at the beach left by her mom all little tidbits of stories to show us different aspects of life. The twin club story was wow the woman started out doing something good but it morphed into being about exclusivity.

Bog gives us vignettes that open our eyes as they entertain us. The perspective is deep and colorful in the prose used. It's like a Dali or Picasso painting the brush paints a complex chaos that turns into something deep and meaningful with a beauty that blows the mind.

Giuliana says

What an assortment of short stories! In a daring departure from the typical trajectory of the American writer Justin Bog's *Sandcastle and Other Stories* takes no prisoners, spares no one and yet holds you captive in the wondrous web of his craft! His subject choices are bold, strange, almost stunning in their range of flavors. Each and every one a perfect morsel served on a spotless mirror reflecting each and every one of us deepest inner fears.

Kathy says

This is a collection of stories about ordinary people living ordinary lives. The author has developed persona you might meet anywhere on the street in your home town and has given them a new, enriched meaning. Many of their experiences and thoughts are unique, almost other worldly. His descriptions are raw and clear to the reader from start to finish. The one thing that bothered me a lot was the way the stories touch on violence, cruelty and general lack of empathy for the characters themselves or others they encounter. I particularly enjoyed the way the author began the stories and, after numerous twists and turns, moved through events and experiences that the reader might not have seen coming at first glance. I particularly enjoyed the story about the woman/voyeur on the beach, watching how a young mother moves chameleon like from a caring mom to seductress so effortlessly. In addition, the story about one young girl's imaginings about wicked killers coming to get her and her family reminded me of some of the things I experienced in my younger days. There was a definite theme throughout; one never knows what will happen or how things will turn out in the end. I have not read anything else by the author, but, after reading this collection of short stories, I will look out for more he has written because I would probably enjoy reading them. I received this from the publisher, through Net Galley to read and review.
