

The Binding by Bridget Collins

5 Stars

One of the most beautiful and profound stories to ever come into my life.

Emmett Farmer, son of Robert and Hilda, is supposed to take over the family farm. That is until Seredith, the Book Binder, summons him to become her apprentice. The family can't deny the request, and within days of the letter arriving, Robert takes his son to where the Book Binder lives amongst the marshes.

Lucian Darnay, the son of a very wealthy businessman living in Castleford, is lost and alone. He has a bad relationship with his father. His mother is distant. He feels as though something has been taken from his life, but what?

Binding a book was more than merely putting a cover over a novel or memoir, binding, done by specially trained people, could take memories from someone, and bind them into a book. The memory would be lost by the person, never to return, never to disturb the person again. To quote Seredith, ***"We take memories and bind them. Whatever people can't bear to remember. Whatever they can't live with. We take those memories and put them where they can't do any more harm. That's all books are."***

A very brief summary of one of the most profound stories, no, it felt more like a journey travelling alongside Emmett and Lucian as they discover what is most important in life, to know true love.

I had no idea what I was going to find when I opened the book. However, I very quickly got "bound" to it. I became resentful that other things like making a meal, were demanding my time, so to try to explain why I became a recluse for several days, simply burying myself as I followed the story. Let me quote a couple of lines that will hopefully give you some idea of what to expect from Bridget Collins' writing, ***"The darkness thickened, pooling under trees and in hedges, while the moonlight bleached the stars out of the sky."***

And ***"misery rose inside me, as strong as the stabbing pains in my legs. Before this, I'd never been ill in my life. I never knew that my body could betray me, that my mind could go out like a lamp and leave nothing but darkness."***

I sat for ages after I closed the book, thinking, "maybe this is what books are about. Maybe all storytellers are Binders. They take the memories of people and store them in books for us to read."

Bridget Collins has created possibly one of the most outstanding books of all time. The story of Emmett and Lucian is spellbinding, believable and I feel bereft writing this review that I've finished it. Where can I find the enthusiasm to start reading something else? I'll give it a few days and hopefully, my love of the written word will allow me to pick another author's binding of some story.

Treebeard

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review.

