

One Hundred Days of Rain

Carellin Brooks

Review By *Stephanie Talbot*



“Today it rained. Yesterday it rained. The day before it rained.”

One Hundred Days of Rain written by Carellin Brooks is a work of fiction following the unnamed narrator's year after her separation from her wife whose known only to us as M. While our narrator deals with the legal proceedings that surround her separation with M we are also introduced to her 5 year old son, her lover from Seattle called S, her ex and son's father, and of course the rain. There are no subtle hints to the pathetic fallacy in this novel, set in Vancouver, our narrator tells us about her tremulous year starting with an introduction of her arrest and the 99 rainy days throughout the next year. These days are presented to the reader as 99 chapters, ranging from a short paragraph to a few pages in length. Nearly all include the description of the current day's rain, or how the rain was falling when she shares a memory.

While the rain inconveniences her some days, she does not loath it, biking throughout the city with her son attached to the back on a buddy-bike, forgoing a hat, or even umbrella to protect herself from the elements, instead describing how the different types of rain falls on her body. Throughout the novel our protagonist deals with the difficulties of beginning a new life on her own. Finding adequate housing for herself and her son, juggling, and dealing with custody issues that now include not only the father of her son but also her estranged wife. While reading we learn very little about these people in her life. Her former wife, had short hair, wore polo shirts, is dramatic, stands 5 foot 3 and enjoys rum and coke. Her son is a picky eater who once told his teacher he drinks beer, simply because he likes to pretend. S has trouble sleeping, while the father of her son, once in a jealous fit of rage, destroyed her old apartment, but since then has been helpful during her recent separation. These are simple, brief descriptions of those in her life but are nothing compared to how she describes the rain. She accounts the lack of rain in New York City, how she wished for it to come and wash away the stench of urine in the hot summer. The rain in Salt Lake City, its sudden appearance then in minutes over, and within the hour all evidence of it gone as the sun dried the sidewalks. And in Birmingham, where the rain and wet did not matter anymore, it rained for so long it had taken the heart and spirit out of the people and they consoled themselves with drink, till they were drunk enough that the damp no longer mattered. One could quote her many different descriptions and types of rain within this novel. Not all of them are dreary, though one short passage that stood out to me in particular read not so much about describing the rain but rather describing her failed relationship. Or any failed relationship that has lingering ramifications.

“This is what is worst about the rain: the getting inside, the wet left on her. She is stained by her journey, short as it was; the marks of passage are upon her. It is all very well to say that she will dry but what nobody counts are these silent dripping hours in between, the shiver. Rain has ruined her.”

Carellin is foremost a poet and this book reads as such. There is an uncomplicated and simple plot, no elaborate storyline or multiple characters, it is simply a woman going through a difficult time, that she does eventually overcome, and while you may not fall in love with her, you will fall in love with the way she portrays the many forms of rain.

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