



Happy Endings | A Book of Wizards | A Book of Ghosts and Goblins | The Trumpeter of Krakov and Other Stories from Poland

Books Reviewed:

[Happy Endings](#) [1]

Books Reviewed:

[A Book of Wizards](#) [2]

Books Reviewed:

[A Book of Ghosts and Goblins](#) [3]

Books Reviewed:

[The Trumpeter of Krakov and Other Stories from Poland](#) [4]

Issue:

[14](#) [5]

Reviewer:

[Colin Mills](#) [6]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

0

Good anthologies are often our lifelines in letting children in on what story and reading are all about. Of the four here, Wendy Craig's is the most uneven. There are some welcome inclusions from varied sources: **Ewungelema** from Zambia - a variation on the slow-but-steady-wins-the-race theme, but with special echoes of a culture which we know shamefully little about. I liked the Swedish **Old Lady and the Tramp**. When the Water **Disappeared**, from Australia (though there's a livelier pictorial retelling by Rob Roennfeldt in *Picture Puffins*). My favourite was a Polish tale **The Jester Who Fooled a King** But the original stories are twee, and sometimes, rambling.

Ruth Manning Sanders knows about the importance of balance and about making a collection into a coherent whole. The Wizard collection has 11 stories of diverse origin, and there are good and bad wizards! The foreword is intelligent, nimbly picking out common themes in a way which will fascinate top juniors. It's good also to have a marvelously told **Aladdin**.

Ghosts and Goblins is a more generous package: 21 stories. Again, sources are varied and, maybe because there is a richer supply of potential material, the storytelling is even more compelling. Ms Manning Sanders knows that the ghosts don't usually mean harm - and she's at her best when they're outwitted (**A Box on the Ears**) or just plain genial (**A Kindly Ghost**). Both collections are consistently poetic, exciting and valuable. Robin Jacques' pictures, especially the covers, are superb.

I was riveted by Agnes Szudek's eight stories from a culture rich in its own special kind of stories. There's a consciousness of the duality of a country straddling West and East, and often at the mercy of stronger powers. The resilience, patience and wit of the people and key themes, timely reminders. the title story, on the theme of the power of stories, is the best of a good bunch.

Running Order:

27

Source URL (retrieved on Feb '20): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/14/childrens-books/reviews/happy-endings-a-book-of-wizards-a-book-of-ghosts-and-goblins-the>

Links:

- [1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/happy-endings-0>
- [2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/a-book-of-wizards>
- [3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/a-book-of-ghosts-and-goblins>
- [4] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-trumpeter-of-krakov-and-other-stories-from-poland>
- [5] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/14>
- [6] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/colin-mills>