



The Best of Shonagh Koea's Short Stories

Shonagh Koea

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Blackly humorous yet poignant and multi-levelled, finely crafted and thoroughly entertaining, this short-story collection is from a unique writer with a rare and distinctive talent. *Reading Shonagh Koea's stories . . . is like sampling a box of good, rich chocolates. Read (or eat) too many at once and there's a risk of sensual overload; restrict yourself to one or two, and you miss the pleasure of indulgence, and the subtle distinction of each offering.* So a reviewer in *New Zealand Books* summed up what another called Shonagh Koea's *'always stylish and scrupulously crafted'* writing. Her short stories have been widely admired for their dexterity with language, startlingly original imagery, a fine sense of irony that slices through any pretence and a wicked, black humour. Shonagh Koea's first short stories were published in such magazines as the *Listener* and *Metro*, and in 1981 she won the Air New Zealand Short Story Competition. Two collections followed: *The Woman Who Never Went Home and Other Stories* and *Fifteen Rubies by Candlelight*. While she is best known as a novelist, her short stories have a wide following, as the *Nelson Evening Mail* commented: *'Shonagh Koea is as addictive as nicotine or coffee - with, perhaps, major withdrawal symptoms.'*

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