



[Home](#) > The Look

The Look

Books Reviewed:

[The Look](#) [1]

Issue:

[193](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Here's a heady mix. While beautiful sister Ava is diagnosed with cancer, gangling Ted (short for Theodora) Trout is talent spotted in the street by a model agency, and seems set to start a new international fashion trend. One way or another, this could be hard to take; but told by Ted, self-deprecating and with a vulnerability that has given her a sceptical view of easy promises and a sensible approach to life's frustrations, it works surprisingly well, except perhaps for a late development in a subplot about their father which seems an improbability too far. Sophia Bennett moves convincingly between school rivalries and friendships, the trauma of chemotherapy, and the pressures of a New York fashion shoot. She touches critically on the importance attached to appearance, money, possessions and fame as badges of success, on women as objects and creators of beauty and speculates on where fashion ends and art begins. She creates interesting characters that, in the case of the fashionistas, stay just the right side of caricature; and opts, finally, as you might expect, for family, love and life's simpler but no less demanding pleasures. It's a book that's funny and thoughtful, glamorous and sensitive, romantic and down-to-earth in equal measure and that kept someone like me, who wouldn't recognise a Jimmy Choo shoe if he saw one, eagerly turning the pages. Will also be enjoyed by older teenagers.

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[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-look>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/193>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>