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Russell Banks USA

A permanent member of the family

About the author

Russell Banks is the author of sixteen works of fiction, many of which depict seismic events in US history, such as the fictionalized journey of John Brown in *Cloudsplitter*. His work has been translated into twenty languages and has received numerous international prizes, and two of his novels—*The Sweet Hereafter* and *Affliction*—have been made into award-winning films. President of the International Parliament of Writers and former New York State Author, Banks lives in upstate New York.

Review

“Mr. Banks uses his sturdy gifts as a writer — his plain-spoken language, his sympathy for the downtrodden and depressed, his eye for detail (those unstrapped shoes, flipped off Ellen’s feet) — to give us visceral portraits of people trying to make sense of the past and the present.” **New York Times**

“While these exquisitely crafted stories are highly personal, they are also permeated by a sense of sadness about the death of the American dream, as the country struggles, out of work and seemingly out of hope.” **Publishers Weekly**

“Banks is a master of the kind of old-school, unadorned realism that hasn’t really been the fashion in short stories since the days of Raymond Carver.” **New York Times Book Review**

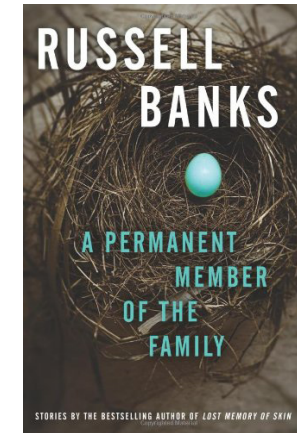
“It’s a gift to experience such expertly evoked pathos, to see how Banks meticulously picks out and exposes the strands of his characters’ muddled and suppressed feelings.” **Boston Globe**

“[T]he writing rings with the weight of decisions made in constrained circumstances, decisions that become more moving because of how common they are... There’s a reflective quality, a sense of choices made, of consequence, in which redemption and resignation may be two sides of the same coin.” **Los Angeles Times**

“All of these are good, strong, perceptive stories about individuals trying to make connections or find comfort in a world where they feel neither necessary nor desired.” **Chicago Tribune**

Zoom

A permanent member of the family (Ecco, 2013-2014) (240 p.)



Suffused with Russell Banks’s trademark lyricism and reckless humor, the twelve stories in *A Permanent Member of the Family* examine the myriad ways we try—and sometimes fail—to connect with one another, as we seek a home in the world.

The New York Times lauds Russell Banks as “the most compassionate fiction writer working today.” Long celebrated for his unflinching, empathetic works that explore the unspoken but hard realities of contemporary culture, Banks now turns his keen intelligence and

emotional acuity on perhaps his most complex subject yet: the shape of family in its many forms.

In the title story, a father looks back on the legend of the cherished family dog whose divided loyalties mirrored the fragmenting of his marriage. “A Former Marine” asks, to chilling effect, if one can ever stop being a parent. And in the haunting, evocative “Veronica,” a mysterious woman searching for her daughter may not be who she claims she is.

Moving between the stark beauty of winter in upstate New York and the seductive heat of Florida, Banks’s acute and penetrating collection demonstrates the range of both his narrative prowess and his startlingly panoramic vision of modern American life.

Banks is a virtuosic writer whose stories are profoundly humane, deeply—and darkly—funny, and absolutely unforgettable.

Links

[Interview](#) in the Paris Review

[Video](#) of Russell Banks on *A Permanent Member of the family*

[New York Times review](#) on *A Permanent Member of the family*

[Washington Post interview](#) on *A Permanent Member of the family*

The publisher’s [website](#) (sample of the book, more reviews...)