

★ **Lilith****Nikki Marmery**

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Roaring through a divine origin story with righteous feminist fury, *Lilith* demands a revision of what many think of as the truth.

Lilith was not made for Adam—they were made for one another. Once, Adam knew this. But he began to crave control. He made a sword and committed rape. In turn, Lilith ate from the Tree of Knowledge and became immortal. Banned from Eden, she began a millennia-long quest to free Asherah, YHWH's once-partner, and restore balance to the world.

Nikki Marmery's novel is both infuriating and life-giving. Entrenched in biblical criticism and a thorough understanding of extrabiblical stories and texts deemed heretical, it rewrites patriarchal dogmas. For Lilith, Asherah, and those who remember and cherish their names: war, oppression, cruelty, and small-mindedness are the true abomination, not myriad beliefs. Wisdom, though suppressed, lives on—passed down by the unsung women whose names were excluded from the record, because “who cares about wombs.”

Here, Jezebel is vain but otherwise maligned—a gorgeous and inclusive queen. Noah only survives because of the wisdom of his brilliant wife. And Mary Magdalene taught Jesus everything he knew (had only he listened!). Lilith proclaims the goddess's silenced truths with them all, traveling to the Underworld and back to preserve them. She is a sardonic, alluring narrator—one who insists that “immortality has little to recommend it” and who snipes about Eve's malignment “What an achievement—to invent *Death* against the wishes of an ever-loving god!” She is also unstoppable—empowering women across the centuries, waiting for the opportunity to undo Eden's undoing.

Prepare your feathers for a ruffling: *Lilith* makes *The Red Tent* seem tame. It is “speech that cannot be silenced”—a ferocious, heterodox mythic novel that upends notions of divinity, femininity versus masculinity, and human beings' responsibility toward one another and the earth.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (September / October 2023)

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