

★ **River Woman, River Demon****Jennifer Givhan**

Blackstone Publishing (Oct 4, 2022)

Hardcover \$28.99 (330pp)

978-1-66505-750-9

In Jennifer Givhan's riveting novel *River Woman, River Demon*, a bruja fights to discover the truth about the woman whom her husband found murdered behind their home.

Eva is haunted. When she was fourteen, her best friend drowned while they were swimming together; Eva was accused of murder. The trauma of the event caused her to experience blackouts. She does not truly remember what happened, but she mourns it still.

On a night when her husband, Jericho, is supposed to be working at their occult store, Eva hears a cry coming from the river behind their home. She goes outside to discover Jericho in the river with the store's co-owner, Cecilia, who is dead. Eva is thrust back into a nightmare scenario that she knows all too well, contending with the mysterious drowning of a friend. This time, her husband is the suspect. To protect herself and her family, Eva confronts her past and embraces her powers as a woman and a bruja.

Featuring lush, evocative prose and beautiful, detailed descriptions of people and places, the book is difficult to put down. Eva's past intersects with her present in unexpected ways, revealing small clues about the truth of both drownings. And the portrayal of magic is intelligent, respectful, and reflects multiple cultural traditions. Eva practices brujería and curanderismo, and her husband is a hoodoo practitioner. Eva's magical experiences are potent, guiding her through the murky quagmire of her tragic past, while also leading her toward the answers she needs to prove husband's innocence. Though they are often terrifying, she is strengthened by each mystical occurrence.

River Woman, River Demon is a seamless psychological and supernatural thriller about resilience and personal empowerment.

CATHERINE THURESON (September / October 2022)

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