

## The Blood Year Daughter

**G.G. Silverman**

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G. G. Silverman's dark, inventive story collection adapts horror and fairy-tale tropes to explore motherhood and the repercussions of misogynistic violence.

Women's bodies herein are imperiled by sadistic men and acts of self-sacrifice. Blood is a symbol of desire or power. In a reversal of Snow White, an unloved narrator envies her perfect sister; drops of her blood curdle her sister's custard and curse her pregnancy. Another story is voiced by the dead wives of a wealthy Italian doctor who drank their blood. Yet another focuses on mysterious storms that sap people's souls; a new preacher believes that a baby might be traded for the lost.

Motherhood and sisterhood are vital bonds in these tales. In one, a wolf-girl who was orphaned when hunters shot her mother is raised by Second Mother, who teaches her human language. Elsewhere, women band together for solidarity; in "All Hail the Boy King," Cat, Tia, and Letty demand the head of the boy who instigated Cat's gang rape. Resurrection and metamorphosis offer magical possibilities for revenge in stories like "And the First Shall Go Last," in which a woman avenges her own murder when she's reborn as the daughter of a medium. Elsewhere, an assaulted pole dancer morphs into a vengeful snake, and shape-shifting promises escape for an adolescent girl expected to tend fields and bear children for her elders.

Among bleak storylines come flashes of morbid humor, as in "Namesake Day," where teenagers reenact the torture and martyrdom of the saints and warriors they emulate. One rehearses her burning at the stake, while another decides that bloodshed is not for him.

*The Blood Year Daughter* is a remarkable short story collection that mixes feminist horror and twisted fairy tales into potent concoctions.

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