



## The Coral Bride

**Roxanne Bouchard**

**David Warriner, Translator**

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(300pp)

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A woman's drowning brings deadly and uncomfortable truths to the surface in Roxanne Bouchard's *The Coral Bride*.

Angel, one of the only fisherwomen in the Gaspé Peninsula, goes missing just before her tenth wedding anniversary. Over the following days, her family and friends scour the area, hopeful of a happy ending. Still, they are not surprised to find her body, clad in her wedding dress. It is up to Joaquin, a troubled detective sergeant, to pierce the veil of this close-knit fishing community and find the killer within a tangled net of lies, jealousy, and family feuds.

After a gut-punch of an opener, the story takes on a wistful tone. Angel's family mourns her loss while guarding their own secrets. Joaquin's relationship with his wife, and with women in general, is in flux, but he does not allow his personal troubles to distract him from his job. Joaquin's son Sébastien joins the search for Angel, hoping it will distract him from his own relationship troubles and his issues with Joaquin. Their interactions are awash with unanswered phone calls and drowning metaphors.

The setting—Canada's isolated, windswept Gaspé Peninsula—almost serves as a character in its own right. Its gorgeous landscapes and pristine ocean views hide all manner of resentments and conflicting perspectives. Joaquin investigates the suspects one by one, picking up important clues along the way. He learns about the power of family for both good and ill, and about the dangers that confront every woman who is unafraid to show her strength. The case concludes in a tense finale that draws out its suspense to the very last moment.

*The Coral Bride* is a haunting murder mystery about how human nature is every bit as dangerous and inscrutable as the sea.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (November / December 2020)

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