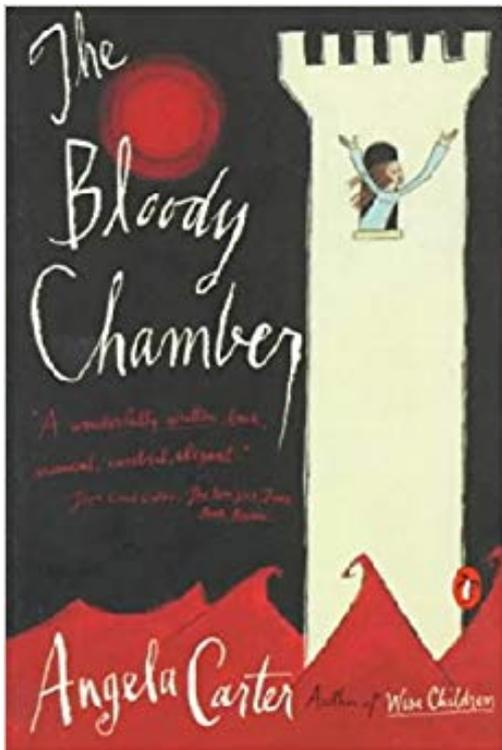


## The Bloody Chamber: And Other Stories (King Penguin) by Angela Carter



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Book by Carter, Angela



## Reviews of the The Bloody Chamber: And Other Stories (King Penguin) by Angela Carter

Darksinger

I like reading new takes on traditional fairy tales and this collection by Angela Carter was hair-raising and irreverently funny. Carter gives a modern twist to ten old tales like those of Bluebeard, Little Red Riding Hood and Beauty and the Beast. The stories are written in strong, vivid prose that brings them to life and makes them read like cliff-hangers. Carter's writing has a bold, sexually suggestive edge that makes more explicit the sexual subtext of the originals. "The Bloody Chamber" is a pulse-racing revision of the Bluebeard legend, and "Puss in Boots" had me laughing out loud at the bravado of the randy old cat.

Some of my favorite women writers (Emma Donoghue and Sarah Waters, for instance) cite the English writer Angela Carter as a big influence on their writing. Ms. Carter passed away at age 51 in 1992. I've wanted to explore her writing and this short story collection was a great place to start. I look forward to reading some of her other stories and novels. Emma Donoghue, by the way, wrote her own feminist version of fairy tales called *Kissing the Witch: Old Tales in New Skins*. It has a very different tone from this book by Carter but anyone who likes this would probably enjoy reading Donoghue's book as well.

Uleran

I'm only giving it 5 stars because the messages conveyed and how well written it is. However, I'm not a fan of the material nearly as much as I wanted to be. I understand that feminist novelists need to emphasize characteristics that break away from androcentrism, but I can do without the heavy sexually explicit scenes of most stories in this book. It's just personal taste, not a judgment on quality. Angela Carter is amazing and has helped usher many minds in a positive direction. My support goes to the cause and her writing.

Kinashand

Angela Carter set out for the odd task of rewriting fairy tales as (mostly) horror stories with a feminist slant. She succeeds quite well, with most stories in here being great and even the low points being pretty good. Probably the best versions of both the Bluebeard and Puss in Boots stories ever put to paper.

It's brisk read, and a classic for a reason. Check it out.

Vivados

I'll admit that I was a somewhat reluctant reader of *The Bloody Chamber*. I'd purchased it for a class and then ended up not needing to read it. I have a strange personal tradition, though, of reading one piece of horror fiction at Christmas time (a tradition that began in junior high when I happened to read J. Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*--a vampire tale that Carter references in *The Bloody Chamber*), and when this was what I had on the shelf come Christmas-time, I gave it a go.

I'll admit, too, that I was a little ambivalent about it when I began the first couple of stories. The stories tend to follow a pattern of opening with a long flood of elaborate, creepy descriptions before finally moving on to the story, and the language throughout the collection is not difficult, but is allusive, sometimes tortuous, and always ornate. It all, to be honest, felt overwritten.

But at the same time, after slogging through the opening of the first couple stories, I would reach the ending to find that the story opened up and culminated in something that was just startling. I won't give away any endings, but many of them, such as "The Werewolf" and "The Tiger's Bride," leave you with images that shock your intellect, and linger. And some of them, such as "The Bloody Chamber" and "The Courtship of Mr Lyon," end just beautifully. "The Bloody Chamber," especially, ends thrillingly, with the women of the story rejecting the passive roles typically assigned to them in fairy tales (this one based on Blue Beard) and washing the story in a beautiful bath of blood, in the process reshaping and reconstituting their community.

By the end of the book, Carter had totally won me over, and *The Bloody Chamber's* aspects that had seemed overwritten, instead, felt right. It felt like Carter had word-by-word constructed a concrete aesthetic world, an enormous gothic mansion complete with more than a few torture chambers and plenty of hidden passages still there to be explored. *The Bloody Chamber* was a fantastic book that I expect to enjoy even more on future readings.

Prinna

I bought this for class. The professor LOVES this author. I haven't enjoyed the stories very much, really don't see the appeal here, but if you like twists on classic fairy tales then you may enjoy this. Some of the stories, I just didn't get, and the professor admitted she didn't either. Still, she loves this author and everything she writes.

Phobism

Angela Carter is a genius! These short stories are woven magically with dark dramaticism and enticing sensuality. The last three stories ("The Werewolf", "The Company of Wolves", and "Wolf-Alice") were my favorites by far. These stories are more than new spins on old fairy tales; rather, they are psychological horror shows that delve into the sexual id of the human psyche. There is a lot between the lines concerning feminine coming-to-power, which as a feminist I loved! All in all, fantastic read and fabulous writing!

Falya

Was this poetry? A fairy tale collection? A feminist storybook? I feel like this is a book from a woman's point of view more so than almost anything else I've read. I am astonished by it.

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