



## The Wicked Wood

*Isobelle Carmody, Nan McNab*

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In this companion to The Wilful Eye, six much-loved writers - Catherine Bateson, Victor Kelleher, Cate Kennedy, Maureen McCarthy, Nan McNab and Kate Thompson - give fresh voice to age-old stories of abandonment, desire and entrapment.

## The Wicked Wood Details

Date : Published October 2011 by Allen & Unwin (first published September 22nd 2011)

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Author : Isobelle Carmody , Nan McNab

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## From Reader Review The Wicked Wood for online ebook

### Renee Thomas says

Bloody hell, I love fairytale anthologies and intelligent, mature, detailed fairytale retellings! I am so glad these collections exist

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### Liz says

I'm about halfway through by now, and am utterly hooked. These stories are less "fantasyish" and less recognisable (to my eye) than the first volume, but they are amazing tales in their own right.

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Finished - wow! There are some fantastic stories in this volume, as there were in the first.

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Review is up at <http://ticon4.com/2012/03/review-the-...>

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### Nomes says

The stories in this collection were quite different in feeling to those in Book 1, but they were nonetheless well written and interesting.

The majority of the stories had intriguing approaches to tales that often come across as being a little trite and I really appreciated the ideas they portrayed.

I found Cate Kennedy's Seventy Two Derwents had an interesting twist on both the original Seven Little Kids and the hinted fears of grooming and abuse intimated by the older sister, which was nice as it originally seemed to be heading in a rather cliched direction.

Nan McNabb's Glutted was an interesting analysis of social manipulation and the decisions people make when they are lonely, it was well written, but not my favourite.

Catherine Bateson's Little Mermaid was nothing special, other than being written in verse.

The three stories that I enjoyed the most were the last three in the book, each of which explored an area of a tale and of the human psyche that is traditionally poorly represented in faerie tales. Maureen McCarthy's The Ugly Sisters in particular was a fascinating read.

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### Nicole says

3.5 stars.

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### **Grace says**

Pretty durn good, but I think it has a lot to live up to with Tales From The Tower. I do hope they continue this series. I'm having a lot of fun reading feminist adaptations of freaky-ass-fairy tales, and I think the authors represented in the books do a good job of it.

I wish I had a better background in fairy tales. I understood most of the allusions in the first book, but this one is....mostly obscure folk tales.

Either way, I hope the editor keeps up the good work.

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### **Jillian -always aspiring- says**

(Actual rating: 3.5 stars)

Though I enjoyed *The Wicked Wood*, companion to *The Wilful Eye*, I can't say I always got the feeling these were retellings of fairy tales, and there was a decided lack of magic or otherworldliness, which left the collection a bit wanting in my eyes. Out of the stories therein, "Birthing" and "The Ugly Sisters" were by far the strongest in my opinion.

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### **Jayne Lamb says**

Like most short story anthologies, this was a mixed bag - unfortunately more weighted toward less successful pieces. I loved the tone of Cate Kennedy's '72 Derwents' and Catherine Bateson's version of The Little Mermaid (a poem called 'Learning To Tango') was pretty enough. But the rest! Nan McNab's 'Glutted' and Kate Thompson's 'Glamour' were just awful, pretentious and tedious as well as totally unengaging. On the whole the first book in the series, *The Wilful Eye*, was better, but not by much.

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### **Caitlin says**

In this book I read the story 'The ugly step sisters' I really enjoyed this story because I loved how we could hear the story of cinderella from another person perspective. We got told about what happened and why they were so mean to Ella. I really liked how the story kept unraveling and kept me interested through our the whole story! I highly recommend this story for anyone who has been enchanted by any fairy tale!

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### **Samantha-Ellen Bound says**

I was very impressed with Volume 1 of Tales from the Tower (*The Forbidden Eye*), and so have been looking forward to Volume 2: *The Wicked Wood* ever since. The fairytales in Volume 2 are not as well

known, and some are just folk-tales rather than classic fairytale re-imaginings. There is still the same creativity, mix of dark beauty/terror and great writing from Australian authors – but I didn't find it as 'bewitching' an experience as Volume 1. I don't know if the fantastic concept had just worn off a little, or if the stories just weren't as good. Maybe a bit of both.

On the whole I think publishing the Tales from the Tower concept was a brilliant idea, and it was really fantastic to have that kind of calibre of Australian writers in one collection. Some of the stories were hit and miss, and I do wish that all the stories had been based on classic fairytales, as I think it would give the collection a greater sense of unity. But still wonderful. And absolutely gorgeously designed too.

Full review at:

<http://bookgrotto.blogspot.com.au/sea...>

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### **Kathleen Dixon says**

Great modern takes on old fairy stories.

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### **Katharine (Ventureadlaxre) says**

Katharine is a judge for the Aurealis Awards. This review is the personal opinion of Katharine herself, and does not necessarily reflect the opinion of any judging panel, the judging coordinator or the Aurealis Awards management team.

~~To be safe, I won't be recording my review here until after the AA are over.~~

I honestly didn't really enjoy the poem, the other parts to this anthology felt stronger, though the longer story took a while to engage with.

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### **Maureen says**

I didn't find this short story collection as engaging as the first one, *The Wilful Eye*. Both collections were mixed bags, as is to be expected with a collection of its ilk, but this one had more miss than hit stories for me.

I really loved *Seventy Two Derwents* by Cate Kennedy with its distinctly Australian and distinctly child-like flavour. I also loved *Learning the Tango* by Catherine Bateson- a retelling of *The Little Mermaid* in feminist verse form. *The Ugly Sisters* by Maureen McCarthy reminded me of *Wicked* and I am beginning to wonder if the fairy story revisionism mixed with recasting the evil villain trope is now getting too predictable. I found *Birthing* by Victor Kelleher to be forgettable and I found *Glamour* by Kate Thompson to be a bit pretentious in a creative arts degree kind of way. And then we get to *Glutted* by Nan McNab- something about this story just really put me off. I thoroughly disliked it. I couldn't engage with the characters and I didn't particularly care about the plot. This may just be a personal preference thing as I don't like horror much and this story definitely had horror overtones.

I liked that more of these fairy story revisions went off the regular map, but I just couldn't connect with the stories in the same way. Maybe it's just the amount of stories I read, but I found most to be predictable and boring, regardless of the new spin on an old tale premise.

The Wicked Wood: 2.5/5 stars

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### **Tony Sullivan says**

Fairy tales traditionally stirred a sense of wonder and engaged with vague but powerful longings, or occasionally loathings. By these standards the current collection fails. For me the only story with any impact was 'Glutted', in which the dwarf man evoked revulsion. Today there seems to be an irresistible temptation to give the wicked witch a grudging respect for the kick-ass heroine, and the cruel ugly sister a moral learning curve. This is understandable, but it misses the source of the fairy tale's emotional power.

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### **Al says**

Six of the world's most exciting and best - loved writers have chosen six fairytales as inspiration for their own stories in this second volume of Tales from the Tower.

In this companion to *The Wilful Eye*, six much - loved writers - Catherine Bateson, Victor Kelleher, Cate Kennedy, Maureen McCarthy, Nan McNab and Kate Thompson - give fresh voice to age - old stories of abandonment, desire and entrapment.

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### **Claudia Piña says**

6 cuentos de hadas e historias folklóricas reimaginadas en el estilo de 6 autores contemporáneos.

Al igual que en su antecesor, *The Wilful Eye*, las historias originales no son muy populares, así que tienen un aire misterioso que perdura incluso con los cambios.

Me da la impresión de que en varias de las historias se trató de dar mas profundidad a los personajes, dándoles motivos mas realistas y evitando juicios definitivos sobre el bien y el mal, pero en general se perdió un poco el sentido de aventura y el tono fantasioso que caracterizó al libro anterior.

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