



Blood

Tony Birch

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Blood

Tony Birch

Blood Tony Birch

From the moment he saw her wrapped in a blanket at the hospital, Jesse knew that he'd be the one to look after his little sister. When their mother's appetite for destruction leads the little family into the arms of Ray Crow, Jesse sees the brooding violence and knows that, this time, the trouble is real. But Jesse is just a kid and even as he tries to save his sister, he makes a fatal error that exposes them to the kind of danger from which he has sworn to protect Rachel. As their little world is torn to pieces, the children learn that when you are lost and alone, the only thing you can trust is what's in your blood.

Blood Details

Date : Published 2011 by University of Queensland Press

ISBN : 9780702239274

Author : Tony Birch

Format : Paperback 253 pages

Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Australia

 [Download Blood ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Blood ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Blood Tony Birch

From Reader Review Blood for online ebook

Travis Berketa says

So I'm beginning to think that the *"50 Books You Can't Put Down"* list is one that you can buy your way on. This is the second book from that list that I have read and with both I have been able to put it down and walk away... however, due to the fact that I like to finish books (no matter how gruelling the process may be), I picked it back up and kept at it. Helped a lot to take the book away on holidays, making it the only thing I could read while kicking back and relaxing.

Blood by Tony Birch is a story set in Australia about a thirteen year old boy, Jesse, who "lives" with his selfish, broke mother, Gwen, and his little sister, Rachel, as they move from one place to another; usually in pursuit of a man for Gwen or a job. Basically, the story takes us on a trip through Gwen's hapless love life - where she tries to force her children to get along with the man that she is currently following around, only to find that they are on the run again. (view spoiler)

As much as I understood what Birch was trying to put forward in the telling of this tale, I did not like the characters and therefore had no empathy for them. I know that people like Gwen exist - women moving from one violent relationship to another - however the fact that she only ever showed love for her kids with each failed relationship, made me totally dislike her.

The story moved very slowly and I got bored... a lot. However with the final chapter, things started to get my attention. The characters of Jesse and Rachel started evolving and showing some signs of building towards better things. Prior to that, they just seemed to be going through the motions. So, within the last 53 pages of the book, I began empathising with at least two of the characters, which made the book a little more enjoyable.

(view spoiler)

The ending was a little obvious, but the use of the tarot cards as symbols for what they were about to go through was a nice touch. Not sure how this was short-listed for a Miles Franklin Literary Award, as there was little in the story that was appealing.

Ursula says

Thrilling read, so hard to put down that I tore through it in a night. Birch really manages to depict milieu and language spoken. I developed strong visual images while reading and believe 'Blood' has all the ingredients for a great film. Maybe exactly because the plot is not always plausible, the ending's a tad too dramatic and the characters are very much drawn in black and white.

Attention screenwriters and directors.

Bec says

I don't know why I read books like this. Real, dark & gritty stories about kids being neglected & buffeted about by selfish adults, I know this world, was glad to get out of it so I don't know why I return there in

literary form, maybe because we return to what we know, again & again, even if we hate it. The familiar has a comfort, even if the comfort to be found is old & worn out, with his stuffing coming out, like Rachel's worn out old teddy bear.

My mother & Gwen would've been great friends when the money was there & the booze or drugs flowing, my mum was a great laugh when she was in a good mood. But she too liked bad men who threatened the world's order, even if it was inevitable she would be at the receiving end of his violence from time to time. I ran away when I was 13, same age as Jesse, but I left my brother & sisters behind. We were only half siblings after all, a distinction that means nothing to children, is just a reminder adults throw at you when they are jealous of your ties to each other. What other reason could there be for telling you your sister is only a 'half' sister. When Gwen throws that at Rachel & Jesse, Jesse bonds them in blood forever and it becomes a story to be retold in hard times, how Jesse & Rachel will always be together.

The only thing i didn't like about the writing style was that the prologue didn't become intergrated into the story, it happens after the book is finished. I think this book should be required reading for community service & social work students, when i was studying we had to provide a response to a crappy old 80s movie about children being removed from an English mother, as an Australian this would be much more relevant. This isn't a review, it's a walk down memory lane into the underbelly of being an unnoticed & unregarded kid in an adults world.

You should read this book, there are no scenes to give you nightmares but a lot to give you pause in your daily life.

Jess says

It was easy for me to picture the film adaptation of this as I read, as *Blood* evokes the same dry summer heat, dusty landscapes and expanses of blue sky that are familiar in Australian film. Birch's depiction of both rural and (sub)urban landscapes is one of desolation and emptiness from the farmhouse, to Pop's run-down working class neighbourhood, to the ghost town and the silo where Jesse and Rachel wait futilely for the return of Gwen.

I don't think the book's plot is terribly original - a troubled mother gets tangled up with the wrong kind of men, which leads to her fleeing across the country with her two kids in tow, and ends in a bloody showdown - but I felt Jesse and his sister were such well-drawn characters and that Jesse's narration was so engaging that I didn't care. These kids are realistic enough to carry the story and sympathetic enough to make you hope that it all turns out alright for them. There is, however, a ruthlessness to Jesse, particularly in relation to his mother, Gwen, but there is some hope that he will not harden completely.

Tony's writing is nicely sparse, with wonderfully evocative dialogue, and his pacing is terrific - I was getting a little bit jittery as the novel reached its climax.

Benjamin Solah says

I had come across Tony Birch during a class last semester on short fiction. We were introduced to *Shadowboxing* and I was struck by his well written working-class characters and his ability to impart meaning and depth of character in simple things like a father trying to teach his son boxing. It was also a realisation that I was beginning to enjoy this 'minimalist' style that I've been reading. I was also surprised to find that *Blood* is Birch's debut novel, which seems like an inexact label given his experience with short fiction and notable collections.

Blood reminds me a lot of MJ Hyland's *This is How* for the use of minimalist prose, very exact and simple yet conveying a lot in the actions of the characters, but also for Birch and Hyland's ability to say a lot whilst a lot of the plot surrounds everyday things. There is something about the style that makes reading the text addictive and able to read it very quickly. The events seem to happen at the level of the individual characters rather than worldly events, perhaps this is something I've noticed as I read less 'genre' fiction and more 'literary.'

In *Blood*, Jessie, with his sister Rachel, narrates their lives of moving about a lot with their mother, Gwen, who doesn't like to be called 'mum', and trying to grow up, whilst Gwen lives in hope with each new partner and they essentially have to look after themselves. You really get a sense of how shit it is to live a childhood so unstable, unable to root yourself anywhere. The two kids don't seem to have any friends other than each other. It is an experience coming out of their class background and the nature of Gwen only being able to find casual work in bars.

And whilst in some senses the family can be seen as an institution that holds people back, for Jessie and Rachel, their bond is all they really have. It is their only hope when everyone and everything around them doesn't seem to care about them or what happens to them. This is symbolised in both of them cutting into their fingers and rubbing their blood together so they can be 'whole' brother and sister after their mother reveals that they are born to different fathers. Their family histories to Gwen are often treated like accusations of how they are not normal, like when Gwen refers back to Jessie's indigenous father.

It is out of the story of their transitory lives and getting to know Jessie and Rachel, that Birch is able to impact us as readers so successfully when the stakes of the plot become much higher. The ending, though open ended and leaving you raw, hits you with the contrast as it all escalates beyond something so ordinary, like we could have lived that life ourselves to make you feel that perhaps your own life could unravel and be thrown upside down like that. Birch says in his acknowledgements that he has no idea how it ends. I might have felt a little cheated after I turned the last page, but it seems apt. Where do Jessie and Rachel live now? I wonder about them as I would a real pair of siblings.

Robyn says

This book is a raw affecting read. It is narrated by thirteen year old Jesse. Jesse has a strong, almost parental, bond with younger half sister Rachel and a cynical eye for their mother Gwen. The story revolves around the trio, their transient lifestyle and the damaged characters Gwen introduces into the children's lives.

Author Tony Burke is brilliant at using a child's voice to portray this dysfunctional adult world. The book is at once compassionate, suspenseful and tragic.

Whilst I loved this book, the edition I read (not pictured) was poorly edited with missed words and words out of sync in sentences.

Bloggers From Down Under says

** Review by Gayle from Bloggers From Down Under **

What a story.

We get to meet Jesse (the main character), his sister Rachel, his mother Gwen and his grandfather Jon. We also meet with Ray, Limbo and Magic. Ray being Gwen's boyfriend and Limbo and Magic being associates of Ray's.

Blood is told from Jesse's point of view and his story growing up with his little sister, Rachel and his Mum Gwen.

Life for Jesse and Rachel is extremely hard. With Gwen not having any money, she leaves the children to look after themselves while she goes out to work. Some days Jesse and Rachel don't see her at all. They are constantly on the move.

Moving from town to town, Jesse and Rachel don't have a home to call their own.

Gwen has nothing left, no job, no money, so she makes the decision to leave them with their grandfather Jon.

Both Jesse and Rachel love it there. They have a warm bed to sleep in, food to eat, and even get to share a Christmas. It's the first time that they are truly happy.

But Gwen returns and with her return takes the kids away again.

Again they are on the move.

They end up in Adelaide.

And they end up having to share a hotel room with not only Gwen, but her new boyfriend Ray.

An abusive man, Jesse hates him. Rachel likes him, but Jesse protects Rachel at every turn. He won't let anything happen to her.

One day, Jesse and Rachel find Gwen, beaten and bruised at the hands of Ray. So Gwen, Jesse and Rachel are on the run. Gwen wants to go back to Melbourne.

But with them Jesse stumbles across money and lots of it, which belongs to Ray and Limbo. Jesse packs up their money and off they go.

But it's not long before Ray and Limbo catch up with them.

Limbo is killed.

Ray takes Gwen.

And Jesse and Rachel are left on their own again either the money.

Jesse does the only thing he can think of and that's head back to Melbourne themselves and go to their Pop, Jon.

On their return, they walk in to find Ray already there with a beaten up Jon and Gwen.

Ray wants his money.

But Rachel has other plans.

Stashed with the money was a gun, a gun that Rachel uses to shoot Ray and save her family.

I must say I absolutely loved this novel. From beginning to end it held me captive, page after page. It was raw, highly emotional and at times quite confronting.

A sad tale about two young children and what they have to go through. To go hungry, to go dirty, and to go days left on their own.

I found it heart-warming because of the bond that Jesse and Rachel shared, brother and sister always looking out for each other.

Overall a beautifully written, thought provoking novel about two young children and their fight for survival, and their journey along the way.

5 stars

Chelsea says

What a stupid fucking book. Kids are raised and neglected by trash mom. Trash mom meets bad guy. Bad guy does bad shit. Insert any b rated TV movie plot you want. Bad guy is dead. End of story.

I'm glad it was free.

Lisa says

Blood, a debut novel by Tony Birch, has been shortlisted for the 2012 Miles Franklin Award.

In the blurb at Fishpond, it's described as 'an epic moral fable, a gothic odyssey set on the back roads of Australia'. It's the story of two kids, thirteen-year-old Jesse and his little sister Rachel, aged eight. They have the kind of mother they'd be better off without. Her name is Gwen.

That's not me, sitting in judgement. It's Jesse, who narrates this story, who tells us so. Gwen's life is a disaster, and her adolescent son has finally given up on her. She's been on drugs and drink throughout his whole life, there's been a succession of men but the relationships never last, and she makes endless promises that she never keeps. She has occasional dead-end jobs but they never have any money, and he's learned not only not to have any qualms about skipping out on the rent, but also how to steal petrol, food from supermarkets and anything else they need.

There's no affection in these kids' lives. They have no friends their own ages, no extended family to offer support except a pallid grandfather. They have no amusements except obsolete TVs scrounged from nature-strips: Gwen doesn't even do Christmas. She's always angry, and constantly bawls commands at the kids. Jesse has learned the hard way that for now, he has to just keep quiet, and do what she says.

What Jesse craves is a quiet, routine sort of life. But apart from a transient episode when Gwen takes up with an ex-con called Jon, and a sojourn at his grandfather's, he doesn't get that. This is a bleak life indeed.

To read the rest of my review please visit <http://anzlitlovers.com/2012/05/17/bl...>

Elaine says

This was supposed to be a bit of a filler read for me, while I waited to start a Buddy read, so I certainly didn't expect to enjoy it so much. Narrated by thirteen year old Jesse, it is a suspenseful read, as you follow brother and sister, Jesse and Rachel, as they are dragged around by their selfish and heartless mother from Melbourne to Adelaide and back again. Her actions place the children in danger and you read on in dread knowing something bad is going to happen and at the same time willing it not to. I loved the characters of Jesse and Rachel and their maturity and resilience as they go through experiences that no child should have to endure. Jesse's loyalty to his sister and Rachel's devotion to her brother is truly endearing. One thing is for sure; that if you begin you will not stop reading until the nail biting end.

Mish says

This story is told by Jessie, a mature and intelligent thirteen year old boy who single-handedly raised his younger sister Rachel from birth.

Jessie has not had a stable life and is often left alone for long periods of time with his sister, while his delusional mum, Gwen, is sleeping off the effects of drugs or alcohol from last night party or hooking up with shady men. There is hardly any food and they are constantly hungry. As a result they resort to stealing and lying to get by.

It is when his mum meets Ray Crow that things take on a dangerous turn. Ray is charming and generous man by appearance but Jessie can see behind the façade to Ray's evil intentions. Jessie is feeling uneasy so does something irrational that puts his family on a dangerous path.

Blood is a terribly sad and moving story which delves into the life of neglect, poverty and the strong bond between siblings. This is so wonderfully written and very much in tune with peoples emotions, especially Jessie; he goes from hope, sadness, and disappointment to desperation. It captures the harshness of the Australian landscape while the family are on the move, and the bleak, dark life style that Jessie lives.

It was an emotional book but I did enjoy it. The ending turned out to be rather gripping and nail biting.

Tegan says

Exactly what young adult fiction should be.
Compelling and tragic.

Anne Fenn says

A very powerful slice of life in the tougher parts of modern Australia, seen through a child's eyes. Jesse is 13, moving around the country with his mother and young sister Rache. Birch creates the most moving, compelling voice in Jesse, a tough, hardened boy who never gives up. The absolute powerlessness of children in the most abysmal family circumstances is cruel, the only thing worse for them is being separated. There's a lot of action in the plot, dangerous people, silence, secrecy and chases. Other strengths include the authentic depiction of country landscape and towns, and the author's fantastic recreation of how people speak. His dialogues subtly show such a lot about the characters . A heartbreaking read, full of tension and sorrow. I couldn't put it down.

Jen says

Jesse and Rachel live with their mum, Gwen, who leads a dysfunctional lifestyle, making money behind a bar, selling her body, or dealing in drugs. She has a series of boyfriends to help her make ends meet. When things get really bad, she leaves Jesse and Rachel with her father, from whom she is estranged. Both the children relish this time with their Pop, as the only time in their lives with some routine, and where they are both shown some love. This break from the grittiness of their lives proves shortlived, as Gwen moves to

Adelaide and takes up with a new man. Jesse knows that Ray is trouble. He is violent, involved in crime, and shows too much interest in Rachel. One day, Ray takes the family to visit a colleague, Limbo, who is equally scary. They head off on a job and return with a bag stuffed with money. When Ray loses his temper with Gwen and beats her up, she finally decides to do a runner back to Melbourne. As they leave, Jesse decides to take the bag of money with them, which proves fatal as Ray and Limbo pursue the family to retrieve the money, and to punish Gwen and the children. The plot builds up to a confrontation in Melbourne at Pop's house. A well-written narrative, with lots of tension. The relationship between Jesse and Rachel is especially poignant, as Jesse knows that he must leave his mum, so that he is not dragged down by her life, but can't escape the ties of blood with his half sister.

Trevor says

The story of Jesse and Rachel, and how they survive the trauma of their mother and her various no good boyfriends, is a wonderful read. The journey they take from Melbourne to Adelaide and back again is full of excitement, especially the trip back when they are attempting to get back un-noticed by boyfriends, hangers on and the police is tense and full of surprise. The story gripped me from the first page, and as the story unfurled it got better and better, and the ending was not quite what I was expecting - which is always a good thing in a novel.

Tony Birch has a lovely turn of phrase, and his characters are well drawn, all of which leads to an enjoyable, easy and satisfying read.

This is a great story by an Australian author, which I would recommend to everyone.
