



# Mirabilis

*Susann Cokal*

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## **Mirabilis** Susann Cokal

In a French village beset by plague and under siege, something incredible is about to happen. Her name is Bonne Mirabilis, the illegitimate daughter of a saint burned at the stake. And she will provide deliverance in ways that will spark dread, awe, scandal, and secret delight...

"Once in a while a first novel introduces a writer with the unsettling confidence to climb very high and jump right in. Susann Cokal...went ahead and did it. An absorbing medieval novel...a bounty of storytelling zest and a delight for readers...original and convincing...unsettling and bold." (*Chicago Tribune*)

"Evocative...vivid." (*New York Times Book Review*)

"Cokal's tale of miracles, magic, and madness is a double-decker coup: making the [14th century] seem real...and making it matter." -San Francisco Chronicle "[A] tender, touching, voluptuous book." (*Washington Post*)

"This beautifully crafted story about miracles and belief will not soon be forgotten. The characters are wholly believable, and the medieval world is presented in all its rich brutality. One expects to stay up late to finish the latest John Sandford, but a book about medieval wet nurses with dwarfs and monks and exotic, Sapphic witches? Yet readers will, for it is that compelling." (*Library Journal*, starred review)

## **Mirabilis Details**

Date : Published May 7th 2002 by Blue Hen Trade (first published June 25th 2001)

ISBN : 9780425185322

Author : Susann Cokal

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## From Reader Review Mirabilis for online ebook

### Ivani Torales says

Interesante novela medieval. Mucho misticismo, milagros, personajes con rasgos sobrenaturales de carácter, aún así el catolicismo y el paganismo van de la mano.

Relata la vida milagrosa y siempre al límite de Bonne, muy creyente pero a la vez obligada a cometer 'herejías' para sobrevivir.

La novela es bastante misteriosa en partes, de no tan fácil lectura en otras, pero termina encerrando bien la historia de la protagonista.

Punto positivo por los hechos históricos y la trama desarrollada.

Punto negativo por caer en el abuso de elementos lésbicos para mantener la atención del lector. No es que me disguste, pero podría haber abordado por otro lado y aburrir bien menos.

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### Louisa says

The miracle of Woman has me on a life long mission. This books proves this.

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### Seth says

Naturally, with my affinity for medieval women mystics and visionaries, I was drawn to this work. The levitating mystics, disappearing anchoresses, and persecution of "witch's" material was all wonderfully rendered. The hardcore lesbian sex passages were a bit of a surprise.

I appreciated each chapter being marked by what saint's day it was and the short passage about the disinterment of the artist's object of affections is ... well, grotesquely beautiful.

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### Sarah says

i gave it ~50 pages and still had no idea what was going on or why i should care. i wanted to read it, but damn, it was confusing and boring and i didn't want to read any more of it ever in my life. so i put it down, promptly pbs'd it and picked up something else.

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### Kim says

I felt that the first 300 some pages were a bit of a slog to get through however there was a turning point towards the end of the book that changed my opinion. If all of the book had been as good as then ending I would have given it 4 stars. I can see though that if there wasn't all the background and narrative that occurred in the beginning, I would not have felt as invested in the fate of Bonne and her benefactor. I was a little disappointed that the end had come so quickly after I felt the book had gotten good.

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## **Catt says**

While told in the same style as "Catherine Called Birdy" - journal entries with the names of Saints Days- this book was a bit on the weird side for me.

The only way i can sum this book up is "Spiritual Lactose Smut."

Burp this one baby, because i just can't stomach it.

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## **Sandra says**

I'm always interested in saints, religion and female protagonists, so overall this book appeared to be something I would naturally enjoy. I did find it strange at first, but I quickly let go and let the author set the stage... reading the book almost like a script as opposed to a novel and it became a much easier read for me. Even still, the book took me a long time to finish - two and a half weeks or so. The characters are rich, the story is full of surprises and it is complicated. I enjoyed it. Glad I read it and am very impressed with the author for the many layers and kinds of characters she portrayed.

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## **Rowan says**

Fucked up Catholic imagery, medieval lesbians, and a sea of bodily fluids. Definitely not a book for everyone (or most people, actually), but I rather liked it.

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## **Alethea says**

This tale is based on the scant thing known about Blessed Bonne/Mirabilis who lived in 14th c. France and later became a saint. She was a wet nurse who fed the people of Villeneuve during the English siege of their town. The story itself was very interesting; the writing, however, was at times very vague and ethereal, rather like eating cotton candy, when it just dissolves into nothingness. It took me a while to feel immersed in the book. Interesting foundation for a historical novel, but I feel it could have been written in a more palpable way.

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## **Miss Kitty says**

I tried to read this y'all. I did. The premise is totally interesting-like: young woman of uncertain parentage is a maybe-saint's daughter. There's a dwarf magician dude and a rich pregnant sorceress and an ascetic sculptor dude. The maybe-saint's-daughter's breast milk has magical healing powers. What's not to like? I wanted to read this before I read *The Kingdom of Little Wounds* because I heard all sorts of glowing praise for *Kingdom*. Plus, the plot reminded me of *A Stolen Tongue* by Sheri Holman and I loved *A Stolen Tongue*. But I gave up around halfway through and started re-reading bad Lois Duncan eBooks on my phone (*Summer of Fear*, represent!!!!). Maybe I just wanted to think less? Not sure but this is due back at the library and I just don't care enough to check it out again. Meh.

### **Roberto says**

Saints , sinners , miracles, lesbianism, dwarfs and breast feeding. Yes, I agree with those who say that this is a weird book. It is but is also a strangely compelling read. I admit I thought tossing it aside at the beginning of it but I persevered and it got better as I read further. So at the end , despite all the weirdness of it, I say that I enjoyed this novel and I will read more books from Susann Cokal...

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### **Christine says**

I was looking for something 'different' to read, and Boy!, this girl had some amazing Boobs! She could shoot enough milk out to feed two ravaged bears!

It was hard to continue reading after the first 40 pages, I just couldn't get into the story. One reason was how the secondary characters were given quotes of odd thoughts and ideas. The story would have flowed so much better without these interruptions.

When the English surround the town, Bonne, with her breasts of unstoppable flow, fed them all...(those who she deemed worthy that is).

She lets her "Uncle" feed from her every evening. She speaks of her pregnancies but there is a cloud of mystery about the whole ordeal. When the rich pregnant lady, who has an abundance of food, hires Bonne to be her wetnurse, she has enough food to keep herself healthy. The sick and starving go to her for the nourishment her breasts can give them. (a dwarf even starts to grow taller)

Strange book, strange characters, and Mega-Boobs. I won't be reading this one again.

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### **Saleh MoonWalker says**

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### **Aili says**

I just don't get it. I think there's a literary convention for this type of book based on Catholic history of Saints, but I am really out of the loop. I'm not going to finish this book.

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### **Jo Oehrlein says**

This is a truly strange story set in the town of Villeneuve in 14th century France. The main character, Bonne, is the illegitimate child of a girl who miraculously "flew" in church one day. Throughout most of the novel it's unclear who her father is – was this Immaculate Conception or not? Bonne's grandmother says that her father is Pierre, one of the town priests. The priests are almost exclusively concerned with food, money, prestige, and power. The village people are seen as gullible, mean, and prone to mobs. The secondary

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characters include a dwarf, a sculptor who is trying to dedicate himself to God, and a merchant's wife who wants to hire Bonne as a wet nurse. Much of the book discusses adults feeding at Bonne's breasts – first the sculptor does as a way of maintaining Bonne's milk, then she feeds the dwarf to help cure his ills, then the rich woman demands tastings to verify the quality, then Bonne feeds many in the city because a siege has caused a famine. After the siege Bonne uses her milk to feed the orphans in the city home and when the merchant's wife's daughter is born, Bonne feeds her. The rest of the book is sensuality, including a description of Bonne's first girl-on-girl with the merchant's wife and Bonne's discovery of masturbation, as well as various guys (most prominently the sculptor and the dwarf) lusting after Bonne. Very odd. I wouldn't read it again.

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