



## A Scarcity of Love

*Anna Kavan*

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Rejection, betrayal and a girl's discovery of evil are the themes of this strange , haunting novel by the author of 'Ice'. As in 'Ice', Kavan discards such aids to realism as geography and mundane physical facts - even time seems to have halt in a menacing country of the emotions where the very ground is uneasy with seismic-like threats. 'A Scarcity of Love' tells the story of a young girl, rejected by her narcissistic and vengeful mother, whose life thereafter is a continuing series of betrayals that can lead only to the dead end of madness and death. Like Sylvia Plath, Anna Kavan was capable of nearly perfect control over language as she strove to describe, in the simplest and most ordinary of terms, her bizarre and hallucinatory landscape of derangement.

## A Scarcity of Love Details

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Author : Anna Kavan

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## From Reader Review A Scarcity of Love for online ebook

### **Sarah says**

This isn't quite so well constructed as her other works, in my opinion. It's essentially a novel-in-short-stories, though not exactly presented as such. I can't help but wish she had stayed with Gerda, throughout, as that's where the writing really comes alive.

The book does, however, have good momentum. The ending is well written, very Anna, and gathers all the floating fragments together beautifully.

Worth reading as it does shed some light on her other books and on Kavan, herself.

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### **K. says**

insinuations

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### **Jonathan Norton says**

I'm saying I "liked it" to mean something nearer to "admired it". I won't really be re-reading it anytime, and I won't recommend to anyone new to Kavan. It's really for a hardcore devotee who's made it through lighter fare such as "Ice" or "Asylum Piece". Perhaps some therapists might find value in prescribing it to clients with family-related problems.

A relentlessly oppressive journey through the lives of a cluster of upper-class narcissists and their damaged children. We now see the whole life of the dominating Regina (the same character as the one in "The Parson"? The latter could be an episode slotting in this narrative between the closing chapters). Her daughter Gerda who has a wretched life of illness and disappointments and rejections; her stepson is crushed in to a helpless piece of luggage. Fans of Foucault and Lacan will be fascinated by this universe in which characters are simply vertices in a framework of interlocking oppressions, and anyone interested in post-colonialism can note the awareness of race and imperialism in the structures of the tropical "paradise" estate that the wealthy nomads end up at in the closing section.

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### **Aveugle Vogel says**

"a goose on a string"

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### **Lily says**

A translated fragment:





indistinct, withdrawing from her.

Don't be afraid. I know how to put the monster to sleep. I don't believe in you. Make these words louder than all other words. Spells of make them love me, friendship, family and the kindness of strangers.

When Gerda runs away from her narcissistic bitch of a mother, the BEAUTIFUL Regina, her stone deaf purse of a husband and his (I guess?) a coin purse of a son I curled inside myself. Coins over my eyes I'll pay any price to cross the river styx to never see beauty again if it ever means this. I don't believe in you. Louder than is there such a thing as love? Come on, I know you saw This is Spinal Tap. All the way up to eleven. Gerda runs and never moves. The snow falls. If you never have to find out what you look like when you leave your body you may not ever find out that you sold yourself too low. I did that when I was a teenager too. Once I talked to a woman who didn't make eye contact when she spoke to me. I had a grave walking feeling of how I was not living with anyone else. It felt as if I had given up part of my soul when I imagined what I must have looked like in the class my 9th grade self prayed to a God I hoped for, sometimes, to please get me out of this dragon's belly. Snow day in Florida, perhaps? The teacher sat me behind a filing cabinet so she wouldn't have to see my sightless gaze on my desk. Patterns in fake wood with the secrets to absolutely nothing. I was conscious of her bright orange dresses and high heels to my dullness. I might not have run as far as Gerda for she doesn't wake up until she walks willingly into another mouth. If Gerda didn't kill herself this way so she could have the chance for another murder my feeling is still that Kavan did. The male monsters and the victim's white blonde hair could live on the edge of the knife from her later novel Ice. Save yourself or hide. I could tell you how to escape but maybe you wanted to die all along. Or say it slowly and give me the chance to change my mind, if I ever know how.

There is a princess that the books forgot about. Or maybe she never made it down the mountain to tell the tale of love, happiness and peace on Earth. Maybe it was a case of mistaken identity. The unwritten pages fell down from the top softly as fallen snow. The princess and the pauper. She takes the baby from the Countess on her resting place of never touch me again. Smoke and mirrors of little girl smiles. Take a picture. It'll last longer, give you time to change your mind.

She willed her baby to die from outside of her. Red, forced to come down from birth. Probably innocent of knives and dreams that don't know how to come down. Still dead, though, and can't tell you anything. The ones who can tell you speak in accents from some place far away. I could have saved you from eating alone. Is that all there is? If there's still time....

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## **William Eck says**

This book offers a vivid and harrowing description of a young girl's life under the thumb of a narcissistic mother. Anna Kavan is able, as usual, to defamiliarize everyday situations and infuse every scene with a nameless sense of dread. This was the first book I ever read by Anna Kavan and remains one of my favorites.

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## **Andrew says**

This is an intense, word-rich novel which takes some getting into, but persistence pays rewards. I would describe the story, the character relationships, and the settings as 'beguiling' which the dictionary states as 'charming or enchanting, often in a deceptive way'. Everyone in this novel is unfulfilled. Happiness is fleeting, only to be snatched away due to the evil inherent in others. The relentless trampling of dreams is often utterly heartbreaking, as the novel switches from ice-cold beautiful Regina to her discarded daughter,

Gerda. Is there any love to be found in this bleak world? Kavan doesn't seem to think so, yet her prose, her precise dissection of relationships, and the almost hypnotic way she describes emotions and places is at odds with this world view. It is the aberrant correlation between the subject matter and the telling which makes this a wonderfully sustained - if occasionally hard-going and irritating - novel.

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### **Aubrary says**

Dark and hypnotic.

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### **Nate D says**

Killing narcissism, unfortunately far more harmful to those it touches than to its source. A fleeting dream of lives that intertwine with others, some ending, some finding means of carrying on. The landscapes of psychology, deftly explored. Most of all: Kavan's scathing attempt to exorcise her own mother, just dead at the time of writing.

This somehow feels less pure and focused than most of Kavan's work under that name, for which I give it one less star, but it's still an essential part of Kavan's personal narrative progression.

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