



Bloodchild and Other Stories

Octavia E. Butler

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Bloodchild and Other Stories

Octavia E. Butler

Bloodchild and Other Stories Octavia E. Butler

The award-winning author of *The Parable of the Sower* explores the paradoxes of power and inequality in this highly imaginative collection of parables for the contemporary world. "Bloodchild," the title piece, has received both Hugo and Nebula Awards.

Bloodchild and Other Stories Details

Date : Published July 24th 2012 by Open Road Media (first published August 1995)

ISBN :

Author : Octavia E. Butler

Format : Kindle Edition 228 pages

Genre : Speculative Fiction, Short Stories, Science Fiction Fantasy, Anthologies, Feminism

 [Download Bloodchild and Other Stories ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Bloodchild and Other Stories ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Bloodchild and Other Stories Octavia E. Butler

From Reader Review Bloodchild and Other Stories for online ebook

Emily O says

Bloodchild is a collection of short stories by the famous science-fiction writer Octavia Butler. The problem with most short story collections is that they are usually a mixed bag, populated with mostly mediocre stories speckled with a few stinkers and a few gems. Well, I am happy to report to you that Bloodchild is not like that at all. Every single story in this collection is captivating, intelligent, and written in a style that is clear and accessible without losing any of its sophistication.

What really struck me about Bloodchild was the sheer emotional impact of each story. Because each story is such a perfect little world, and because the characters are so well realized, every story really packs a punch. I put down the book between each story, incapable of doing any real thinking because I was so blown away by what I had just read. I think the effectiveness of the stories comes from a mix of excellent writing and characterization and the way Butler uses those characters to explore complex ideas. One of Butler's strengths is in never letting her work become preachy or one-sided. Butler's ideas are as complex as her characters, and that makes her stories resonate in a very real and powerful way.

Usually, this would be the part of the review where I would tell you which stories were my favorite and which ones to skip, but I can't really do that with this collection, because they are all absolutely worth reading. I believe that Butler's most famous stories are Bloodchild and Speech Sounds, both of which are in this collection and both of which are absolutely mind-blowing. Bloodchild actually left me speechless and shaking by the time I finished it. Her other stories are more subtle, but are still incredibly well-written. There are also two essays included in the book, my favorite of which was Positive Obsession. Since I bought the updated version of the book, I got an extra two stories on top of the original five stories and two essays. If you are going to get it, I recommend getting the updated version, because the two added stories are both very good, especially Amnesty. In all of the stories Butler's characters are absolutely convincing, and her storytelling is so smooth that you never need time to get adjusted to the story, even when you are dropped right in the middle of the action. That is, to me, a sign of a great writer.

I know this review is vague, but that is only because Butler's stories are so good. I don't feel like I need to speak for them, and I'm not sure that I could even if I wanted to. If you want intelligent stories with concise yet vivid writing and realistic characters, then Octavia Butler is absolutely the writer for you.

Rating: 5 stars

Vivid writing, engaging plot, convincing characters, and intelligent world building. Highly recommended.

Rod-Kelly Hines says

I must now read everything she's ever written!

fromcouchtomoon says

Expecting the titular "Bloodchild" to be the pinnacle of the collection, I passed over most of these tales. Boy, was that stupid. "Speech Sounds" and "Amnesty" are equally fascinating and compelling. A personal and enthralling collection.

Kimber Silver says

"Once you go alien, you really do never go back."

—Gini Koch

Bloodchild outlines a symbiotic relationship between earthlings (Terrans) and the Tlic, native inhabitants of a new world that humans have fled to for safety. The Tlic, looking somewhat like crustaceans, provide Terrans with a safe haven in exchange for their willingness to assume a certain unsavory role. The story is told from the perspective of Gan, a young human male on the cusp of becoming one of those chosen. Gan explores what being selected means to him and his family, as the horror of becoming a (view spoiler) is made clear through a series of unexpected events. The tale is as touching as it is gruesome, but ends with a message of hope.

In true short story tradition, Butler masterfully captures the imagination of the reader in this brisk, gender-twisting tour de force.

It was brilliant! A big thank you to Kevin Ansbro and Apatt for the recommendation!

And this thought-provoking short is free to view via the following link:

[http://www.baen.com/Chapters/97816257... ..](http://www.baen.com/Chapters/97816257...)

Apatt says

"I believed I was ugly and stupid, clumsy, and socially hopeless. I also thought that everyone would notice these faults if I drew attention to myself. I wanted to disappear. I hid out in a big pink notebook—one that would hold a whole ream of paper. I made myself a universe in it. There I could be a magic horse, a Martian, a telepath.... There I could be anywhere but here, any time but now, with any people but these."

This anthology includes two essays, one of which is autobiographical. I don't normally read biographies but I wanted to read every page in this book and I am very glad Ms. Butler decided to include this little essay. I get such a sense of her kindness, warmth, and generosity that I am surprised to learn she was a lonely child, if I had a friend like her I would have strived to make her my bestie. But she does mention that she was very shy, but she did mature into a pillar of strength and an inspiration for many writers and readers. This year's Hugo winner N.K. Jemisin, a black female science fiction author, calls Butler her "personal grandmaster" and that "left behind a lot of children, spiritually speaking".

Young Octavia

Bloodchild and Other Stories contains five (mostly great) short stories and a couple of excellent essays. There is also an "Afterward" after each story where she briefly talks about the inspiration that led to the story. When I read professional reviews of anthologies they do not generally go through each story one by one, I thought I would try to be more professional for the sake of skill development, but then I thought, Nah! I like doing it like this. So here we go!

Blood Child

Her most famous story (available to read free online , you can also download a PDF version if you Google

for it). It is something of a sci-fi body horror story where humans in a colony on an alien planet have a long running bizarre symbiotic relationship with an alien race called the Tlic.

It is a brilliant story, but also quite horrifying and gross, yet the underlying theme is love and sacrifice. According to the Afterward, Butler was inspired by something that frightened her and she coped by making the idea benign (in a gross sort of way), it is also a thought experiment on male pregnancy; don't worry, I am not giving anything away because there is no male pregnancy *as such* in the story.

"T'Gatoi liked the idea of choosing an infant and watching and taking part in all the phases of development. I'm told I was first caged within T'Gatoi's many limbs only three minutes after my birth. A few days later, I was given my first taste of egg."

The Evening and the Morning and the Night

"Then he began tearing at himself, through skin and bone, digging. He had managed to reach his own heart before he died."

Oh my gawd! Does that make you doubt the warm and fuzzy description of Ms. Butler earlier in this review? This story is about a disease called "The Duryea-Gode Disease" caused by drugs taken by pregnant women which lead to a genetic flaw in their children that will cause them to lose their minds later in life. How much later varies between individuals. Initially, it reminds me of the berserker madness like 28 Days Later, but this is decidedly not a zombie apocalypse story. There are no zombies and civilization is still fully operational. The situation is more analogous to the "Thalidomide" birth defects in the 60s. On a deeper level, it is about how genetic diseases affect the sufferers' lives and the value they put on their lives.

Near of Kin

This is a mainstream (non-SF/F) human drama story about the relationship (or lack thereof) between a girl and her now deceased mother, her closer relationship with her uncle and grandmother, the secret she always suspected about her mother, the mother's shame, and the regret of mutual rejection of each other until it is too late. This kind of introspective melancholy story is not usually my cup of tea but if Ms. Butler makes the tea I will happily have a few cups. It is also very short and it is certainly not bad, Octavia Butler does not do "bad"; I imagine her laundry list is also quite a good read. I like her Afterward for this story more than the story itself, she does not explain the nuances of the story (leaving that to the reader) but talks about what inspired it.

"She's dead," said my uncle flatly. "How much more time and energy are you going to waste resenting her?"

Speech Sounds

This is a post-apocalypse and a dystopia story. Civilization seems to be on its last legs here, the details are a little vague, some buses still run intermittently, but there is no law and order left. The apocalypse is caused by a disease contracted by everybody that causes "intellectual impairment", in the form of irreversible loss of literacy, speech or both. It is amazing how Butler can write such a poignant post-apocalypse short story. I have always expected post-apocalypse fiction to be epic in scope. Again a wonderful Afterward follows the story, there is a slightly chatty tone in this one that makes me feel as if she was telling me of the anecdote that inspired the story. How she felt mankind was hopeless when she started writing it and feels hopeful again when she finished. Writing was potent therapy for her.

Crossover

This is another very short mainstream story, full of sadness, alienation, self-loathing and passion. It is, of course, well written but is a completely miserable story. If it was not written by Butler I would have hated it. Again it is about an outcast woman who does not fit in, but the anti-heroine here is not the typical strong

resourceful Butler protagonist, quite the opposite. The Afterward to this story is great. Apparently, Butler was scared of weirdos.

Positive Obsession

This is an essay/autobiography about Butler's obsession with writing as a child, the first story she sold, the numerous rejections that followed and the eventual success. This is a beautiful autobiography, I don't normally read bios, and she did not enjoy writing it; she prefers writing fiction. In spite of all that she wrote something very special here that I will always remember. I love how much she loves the sci-fi genre and staunchly defends it, she is like an anti-Atwood.

"At college, I took classes taught by an elderly woman who wrote children's stories. She was polite about the science fiction and fantasy that I kept handing in, but she finally asked in exasperation, "Can't you write anything normal?"

Furor Scribendi

This essay is basically advice for aspiring writers, it reminds me a little bit of Stephen King's On Writing, but much shorter obviously, and it has that charming Octavia touch. Her drive and burning passion for writing are like a force of nature. The essay ends with a one-word paragraph: "*Persist*".

Amnesty

Back to science fiction. The basic concept is similar to *Blood Child*, there is even some kind of symbiosis going on, yet the theme is very different. Earth has been colonized, but not subjugated, by aliens. They set up colonies in deserts, vast areas not used by humans. Their technology is far superior and Earth's military forces can pose no threat to them. When the aliens first arrived they captured, experimented on and - unintentionally - tortured human beings, but only because they had no knowledge of human physiology. Once communication between the two species is established the aliens treat humans with respect due to sentient life forms. Some humans go to work for them, helping with research, experiments, and whatnot. One of the humans leave the alien colony after living with them for years and is immediately arrested by the military and treated as a traitor, imprisoned and tortured.

Ultimately this is a story of man's inhumanity to man; even with full understanding of what causes pain and suffering some of us are still quite happy to inflict pain that we would not want to be inflicted on us. In spite of her exasperation with the human race, Butler did love humanity and tried her best to help nudge it in the right direction.

The Book of Martha

"Don't you know what I see?" she demanded and then quickly softened her voice. "Don't you know everything?"

God smiled. "No, I outgrew that trick long ago. You can't imagine how boring it was."

This is a story about a woman who is tasked by God to make the world a better place in any way she can think of. It is not a religious story and God is not portrayed entirely positively. It is a story about the responsible application of power and possibly dire consequences from misuse. A story to ponder.

These are diverse stories (the two essays notwithstanding) they all have a moral center, depth and complexity. However, if you read her essays you will know how she loves stories and storytelling, so her fiction is not a platform for preaching. The themes of each story lend substance or meaning beyond the narrative, but I am sure she would be just as happy if you just read them as stories. This wonderful anthology is up there with Ted Chiang's classic *Stories of Your Life and Others*. The Afterward after each story is very much appreciated. She never over explains any of the preceding stories but gives some insight into her inspiration and thought processes. Read this for a thrilling, moving, thought-provoking experience.

Notes:

Here is an excerpt from Ms. Butler's notebook:

When you read top part it may seem like she was simply chasing fame and fortune, but by the end of the page you will get her humanity and compassion, and why she is such an inspiration and a great role model.

Another noteworthy - uh - note.

Kevin Ansbro says

['something' resembling a walking lobster/scorpion is casually cuddling up to a human on a sofa.
(Please excuse my flippancy, it's way more evocative and macabre

Althea Ann says

I think that everything Butler ever wrote deserves 5 stars.

This book is much too short (as was Butler's time on this earth).

It includes five previously published stories, an autobiographical essay, an essay on writing, and two new-to-this book stories.

As well, it includes brief 'afterwords' by Butler about each piece.

Everything in the book is superb, thought-provoking and fascinating.

Dylan says

Stories

Bloodchild: 5/5

The Evening and the Morning and the Night: 3.5/5

Near of Kin: 3.5/5

Crossover: 2/5

Speech Sounds: 3.5/5

Amnesty: 3.5/5

The Book of Martha: 4/5

Essays:

Positive Obsessions: Positive reaction

Furor Scribendi: Positive reaction

Britt says

I am floored. Every single story knocked me out. This is my first work by Butler. What I love about the 2 essays in particular is that she takes the most mundane happenstances and turns it on its head. She pulls this knotted, nasty, tangled web of characters out of anything from a bus ride or disease. I was enthralled the entire time.

Claudia says

"Speech Sounds"

In a dystopian setup, people lost their abilities to read, understand words, speak, hear, etc because of a disease. Still, in such a dark, somber and depressing world, there is hope and humanity might still have the will to survive and to communicate with each other.

It is one of those short stories with a weight beyond words; loved it to pieces.

Cecily says

"My last night of childhood began with a visit home."

The short sci-fi/horror-lite story of the title, *Bloodchild*, opens thus. You know something significant, and probably not good, will happen. But at first, it's a pleasant enough domestic scene: among the family, sipping a soporific but rejuvenating egg, snuggling against the velvet underside of someone's (something's?!) embrace.

The awareness of mysteries and taboos grows slowly, seeded by careful choice of vague but uneasy words: the need for one's people to be "available", concern about thinness, "choosing" an infant, living in the Preserve... And then there is a gross-out scene.

That leads to a choice. A dreadful choice, but a newly-informed one. And choice, especially about family, is the beating, bleeding, bloody heart of the story. A story of coming of age, adoption, family, sacrifice, symbiosis, improbable love, impregnation, and birth, against a background of enslaved refugees. And it challenges our primeval assumptions about gender.

Search Google images for fan art, and you'll get more idea of exactly what it's about. (Clue: it's not about birds or crocodiles. The picture above is a loose analogy.)

There's an excellent profile of Octavia Butler: [HERE](#). It includes pictures of some of her notes, of which this is my favourite, especially the final exhortation:

Butler certainly made me feel as if I'd touched, tasted, and known, and above all, to feel, feel, feel!

This fully deserves its prestigious Hugo and Nebula awards from 1985 and 1984, respectively.

Amanda says

Octavia E Butler is one of the greatest writers I have discovered in a long while. Intelligent and thought provoking - I found myself in green-eyed envy of her skill at taking such a simple writing style and imbuing it with such depth and meaning. Her contribution as a black American woman is invaluable to the usually Caucasian male dominated Science Fiction genre and this collection is an example of how very good Science Fiction writing can be. Not shying away from difficult and heavy ideas, this collection contains stories that explore conflicts of love and trust in an exploitative symbiotic relationship between humans and an alien race that rely upon humans to be able to procreate, mankind trying to deal with the consequences of a cure for cancer that inadvertently creates a new and horrifying genetical disease and a future where it is necessary to come to terms with sharing the earth with a very different alien life form that has committed atrocities against the human race in the past. Butler's two essays - one autobiographical and the other advice for those aspiring to become writers - are every bit as well written and compelling as her fictional work and an invaluable addition.

Gabrielle says

Octavia Butler never fails to delight me, make me think about things differently and make me feel... well, an awful lot of feelings!

I will not attempt to summarize the stories in this collection of short fiction: that whole book can be devoured in a couple of settings, and if you enjoy speculative fiction, you owe it to yourself to check this out. These are stories about survival, love, family, language, intimacy, dreams and faith. Sometimes there are aliens, sometimes there is a disease and sometimes there is just a mystery that hovers lightly over the characters, like a veil. But in every case, the question of what it means to be human and how we can be better at it is deeply pondered. The prose is clean and elegant, never didactic but always thought-provoking.

My edition also includes two essays about writing, which would honestly be worth the price of the whole book, because anyone who has ever even thought of writing can benefit from Ms. Butler's thoughts on the matter.

These stories are truly beautiful and not a single word of them is wasted. Highly recommended!

Negativni says

Bloodchild - ljudska kolonija na nepoznatom, naseljenom planetu mora "platiti stanarinu" tako što će biti doma?in larvama parazitske rase koja tu živi. Osvrt.

- 5/5

The Evening and the Morning and the Night - genetska bolest DGD izaziva samoozlje?ivanje i psihozu pa se oboljele ve? na prve znake bolesti zatvara u institucije gdje mogu samo sebi nauditi. U odga?anju završnog stadija pomaže posebna dijeta, a oboljeli moraju nositi i posebne ambleme. U pogovoru Octavia kaže da je ova pri?a nastala iz njezine rastu?e fascinacije biologijom, medicinom i osobnom odgovornoš?u.

Po?ela ju je pisati pitaju?i se koliko smo poticani, obeshrabreni i na druge na?ine vo?eni onim što je u našim genima. Kako je napisana u osamdesetima pretpostavljam da je htjela kritizirati i društvo koje diskriminira i osu?uje oboljele od HIV-a. Vrlo dobra pri?a sa odli?no definiranim glavnim likom, ali ?ini mi se da bi do kraja zaživjela tek u obliku kratkog romana.

- 4/5

Near of Kin - ova pri?a je, kako Octavia piše u pogovoru, inspirirana pri?ama o incestu u Bibliji. Htjela je napisati suosje?ajnu pri?u o incestu, ali meni je ovo kao scena iz neke saponice.

- 2/5

Speech Sounds - postapokalipti?ni svijet gdje je epidemija nepoznatog podrijekla ljudima oduzela sposobnost ?itanja i pisanja ili govora. Iako kratka pri?a Octavia u njoj uspjeva do?arati svijet gdje verbalna komunikacija nije mogu?a, suptilno, bez *infodumpova*. Stvorila je pamtljive likove (glavnog muškog sam neizbježno zamišljao kao Mela Gibsona iz prvog Mad Maxa), a unato? tome što ju je po?ela pisati daju?i malo nade ljudskoj rasi završila ju je s tra?kom nade. I ova ?e mi kao i *Bloodchild* ostati dugo u sje?anju.

- 5/5

Crossover - ovu pri?u o ?eni koja radi repetativne, naporne fizi?ke poslove i koju progoni demon iz prošlosti (u obliku halucinacije - nema nadnaravnih, fantazijskih ili SF elemenata) Octavia je napisala kad je i sama radila takve poslove, progonjena "demonom" sumlje, jer nije uspjevala prodati pri?e i bojala se da ?e poludjeti. Možda zbog tako (pre)osobne teme napisana je lošije nego ostale - zvu?i kao ljuti teenager koji traži pažnju. Zanimljivo, s ovom me zbog teme i likova, pa dijelom i stilom podsjetila na Bukowskog.

- 2/5

Nakon pri?a tu su i dva eseja: *Positive Obsession* - autobiografski, o tome kako se Octavia borila da postane pisac, te *Furor Scribendi* namjenjen mladim piscima, o pisanju i o tome kako objaviti pri?u. Oba eseja su zanimljiva za ?itanje i informativna.

Reizdanje iz 2005. sadrži i dvije dodatne, novije pri?e: *Amnesty* i *The Book of Martha*.

Amnesty - Octavia E. Butler briljira u pri?ama o vanzemalcima, koje uspije osmisliti tako da zvu?e strano i izgledom i ponašanjem, ali ne toliko strano da u njima ipak ne možemo vidjeti obrise ljudskih osobina, a ta kombinacija poznatog/stranog je ono što ih ?ini uzneruju?ima i uvjerljivima. Ovdje je rije? o Zajednicama, velikim simbioti?kim organizmima, koji su zaglavili na Zemlji i koje su ljudi zainteresirali i njima ?e se pozabaviti dok ne naprave svemirski brod koji bi ih odveo nazad na rodni planet. Odli?na pri?a u kojoj Octavia progovara i tome kako u demokratskoj Americi vlast lako može nekoga lišiti slobode i držati ga zato?enog samo temeljem sumlje u zlo?in. Inspirirana je stvarnim progonom doktora Wen Ho Leeja od strane ameri?ke vlasti u devedesetima prošlog stolje?a.

- 5/5

The Book of Martha - ova je više misaoni eksperiment nego pri?a. Glavnog lika, Marthu posjeti bog i traži od nje da smisli na?in kako spasiti ?ovje?anstvo. Ona je u biti Octavia koja pokušava smisliti jedini oblik utopije koji bi mogao funkcionirati. Piše o idejama za svoj idu?i roman i o tome kako je teško odbaciti nau?ene navike. "*That's the trouble with habits. They tend to outlive their usefulness.*". Ovo je i njezin obra?un s Bogom i krš?anskom dogmom uz koju je odrasla.

- 4/5

U ovoj kolekciji su gotovo sve kratke pri?e koje je Octavia E. Butler i napisala - u predgovoru je napisala da joj koncept kratke pri?e jednostavno ne odgovara, pa ih zato i nije napisala mnogo. Ovo je odli?na kolekcija i

skoro bi dao peticu, jer su ?ak i dvije pri?e kojima sam dao dvojku - Near of Kin i Crossover s razlogom ovdje - iako su osjetno slabije od ostalih, i u njima se nalazi dio Octavije.
No, neka bude ?vrsta ?etvorka.
