



Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked

Christa Carmen

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked

Christa Carmen

Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked Christa Carmen

A young woman's fears regarding the gruesome photos appearing on her cell phone prove justified in a ghastly and unexpected way. A chainsaw-wielding Evil Dead fan defends herself against a trio of undead intruders. A bride-to-be comes to wish that the door between the physical and spiritual worlds had stayed shut on All Hallows' Eve. A lone passenger on a midnight train finds that the engineer has rerouted them toward a past she'd prefer to forget. A mother abandons a life she no longer recognizes as her own to walk up a mysterious staircase in the woods.

In her debut collection, Christa Carmen combines horror, charm, humor, and social critique to shape thirteen haunting, harrowing narratives of women struggling with both otherworldly and real-world problems. From grief, substance abuse, and mental health disorders, to a post-apocalyptic exodus, a seemingly sinister babysitter with unusual motivations, and a group of pesky ex-boyfriends who won't stay dead, *Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked* is a compelling exploration of horrors both supernatural and psychological, and an undeniable affirmation of Carmen's flair for short fiction.

Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked Details

Date : Published August 21st 2018 by Unnerving (first published July 30th 2018)

ISBN :

Author : Christa Carmen

Format : Kindle Edition 188 pages

Genre : Horror, Short Stories

 [Download Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked Christa Carmen

From Reader Review Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked for online ebook

Alex findingmontauk1 says

Thank you so much to the author and publisher for sending this book in exchange for an honest review!

Can we first take a moment to acknowledge, appreciate, and worship this cover?! The cover is the first thing that drew me to wanting this book; I won't lie. I had just finished a huge marathon of the Saw movies and then I come across this book where a woman has this pig head or mask... SOLD!

I am going to go ahead and say, too, that short stories are not my favorite. I like a little more meat on the bones. Short stories usually leave me wanting more. There have been a couple of great collections I have read this year (this being one of them), but the majority of them have been 3 stars and left me wanting more and more. Christa Carmen's collection, however, engaged and shook me to the core! I absolutely loved these stories and never once felt cheated or left wanting.

One of the best features of this book is how Carmen just writes. I want to have a conversation with her. The words and the sentences that come out of her mouth are just pure dark poetry. She uses a wide vocabulary of delicately chosen words and I loved it. I found myself getting lost in the prose and I really feel it helps this collection stand out from others I have read.

My favorite stories include: Red Room, Something Borrowed Something Blood-Soaked, Liquid Handcuffs, and The Girl Who Loved Bruce Campbell. But all thirteen stories in the collection resonate with me on a horror-loving level and I truly recommend this collection! 5 stars for me on this excellent book!

Robert Vanneste says

3.0 - 3.5 . My favorite was Thirsty Creatures followed by All Souls Of Eve and Red Room . A entertaining read .

Sadie Hartmann Mother Horror says

I need to remember to choose the right edition (format) when I start doing my updates for a book--I didn't read the Kindle edition but I can't change that now or I'll lose all my updates and progress. I read a physical copy sent to me by Unnerving Publishing in exchange for an honest review.

4.5 stars!

As much as I read horror, you'd think I go to bed terrified every night, but I don't. It's not that the books I read aren't scary, they are--I just think that my house feels safe, I have my husband beside me and books don't penetrate the visuals in my mind the way that movies do.

That being said, a couple of the stories in this collection got through. One in particular I'm sure gave me a nightmare. But the nightmare (after analyzing it the next day) was a combination of the book cover and the story inside titled RED ROOM.

Christa Carmen went places with that particular piece that seriously got under my skin and stayed there. It unsettled me. I went to bed with frightening images in mind that later generated a nightmare! Success

Christa! (ha)

Another story that stood out was SOULS DARK AND DEEP--not a traditional babysitter at all, Christa toyed with a growing sense of "something's not right here" until you arrive at a startling scene involving one of *my* personal favorites...creepy dolls! Whoooo! That one was pretty dark.

And then, almost as if she wanted to show off her versatility for us, Christa switched gears with ALL SOULS OF EVE and I really enjoyed the tone of that story--a modern, Halloween twist on the classic Dickens tale, A CHRISTMAS CAROL. I thought it was really clever and engaging. I was wowed by the author's ability to write in a variety of styles by this point in the collection.

LIQUID HANDCUFFS was another standout because it gave me a new fear--I don't want to spoil it at all but as someone who has never fooled around or experimented with any illicit drugs, the idea Carmen brings to the table is a very terrifying one and it really freaked me out.

Lastly, LADY OF THE FLIES was so cool because I 100% understood the meaning of the title and the way it connected to the story (LORD OF THE FLIES is one of my favorite, classic books). I also imagined the actress that played, Brienne of Tarth on the GOT shows, Gwendolyn Christie as the main character Pris-killa. Anyhoo, I realized I've shared almost every single story in the collection and that wasn't my intention so I'll just say, I enjoyed this very, very much. There were only a few that didn't resonate with me, the rest were all my favorite flavors.

I would definitely add it to any October TBR or for solid horror fans, your everyday library...hahaha...you need it. This author is one to watch.

Ashley (bookishmommy) says

Thank you to Christa Carmen and Unnerving for the free copy in exchange for an honest review!

Ok, this cover is awesome. I love it. And why am I so hard on short stories? I need to stop because this collection was AWESOME. I loved the variety of horror. I think my favorite story was Liquid Handcuffs. It was so raw and gritty. Red Room was awesome too. So gruesome!! And to round out my top 3 I'm going with All Souls of Eve. It packed a lot of emotion.

Sara Tantlinger says

I really, really enjoyed this collection. Each story features its own disturbing, twisted tale, yet there are threads between them that help the stories feel like they belong in this particular collection together. Christa Carmen's prose has some truly fantastic lines and I have a feeling this writer is only going to get stronger and stronger the more she writes. I can't wait to see what she does next! My favorite pieces from SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLOOD-SOAKED were "Red Room," "Lady of the Flies," (that ending!), and "Liquid Handcuffs." The protagonists of these stories go through some dark, torturous journeys, and I really appreciated the rawness in which Carmen handles these tales. A solid collection through and through!

Mindi says

This book was sent to me by the publisher in exchange for an honest review.

From the moment I saw the cover I just had this feeling I would love this collection, and I was so right. This is a fantastic book of deeply disturbing and thought provoking horror stories. Christa Carmen is definitely

not afraid to take a story all the way.

The stories in this collection about addiction are truly haunting. *Liquid Handcuffs* in particular is fantastic. I went through an entire spectrum of feelings during that story. *Wolves at the Door and Bears in the Forest* is unflinching and hard to read. Stories about addiction are always hard to read, but when you add a child it's heartbreaking.

I absolutely adored *Red Room*. That one is so unsettling and realistic, it's easy to imagine it actually happening. I love stories that make technology creepy. We have become such slaves to our phones. Making them an insidious part of lives is something that touches you at your core. *Lady of the Flies* is another favorite that is so utterly disturbing. The image of Priscila in her mask, just wanting so much to be accepted and part of something is deeply unsettling. She's both terrifying and sympathetic all at once. Carmen's homage to A Christmas Carol *All Souls of Eve* is a fun twist on the classic. It also has a very satisfying ending.

While some of these stories resonated with me more than others, truly all of them are fantastic. This collection is one of my favorites of 2018, and I cannot wait to read more from Carmen.

Emily says

"The final girl may live, but she's stripped of so much by the time the credits roll."

Something Borrowed Something Blood-Soaked is Christa Carmen's debut collection of 13 stories, and I enjoyed reading it!

First off, I want to say that this book has one of my favorite covers from this year. It's spooky and haunting, and this book will stick in your head. I feel like it's perfect for letting readers know that they're about to get into some crazy stuff inside.

My top 5 stories in this book are Red Room, All Souls of Eve, Liquid Handcuffs, Lady of the Flies, and The Girl Who Loved Bruce Campbell. I think that Red Room is probably the creepiest story in the collection, and I probably could have read an entire novel based on that story. I liked reading about all the different women in each story.

A few of the stories are linked, and it's fun to see the connections. I enjoyed seeing characters from early stories mentioned in later ones. Common themes in Something Borrowed Something Blood-Soaked are addiction and recovery. Christa Carmen does a great job of tapping into the horror of this situation. She shares some of her own story in the afterword of the collection, and I truly admire the boldness and honesty of her writing.

This collection is not perfect, but it is enjoyable. I rated all of the stories between 3 and 5?, which means that I liked everything overall. The stories were creative, and I had fun reading everything. Whatever Christa Carmen does next will be great, and I can't wait to read more from her! Something Borrowed Something Blood-Soaked was an entertaining collection.

Thank you so much to Erin Sweet Al-Mehairi and Unnerving for sending this to the Nightworms in exchange for reviews.

destiny ??? [howling libraries] says

I always love a good horror collection, and when I was offered this one, it felt implied that the stories were not only spooky, but also feminist in nature, which immediately hooked my interest. I will say that there are a lot of feminist notes to the tales, as well as subversion of some tropes here and there, though it wasn't enough to make this anthology a complete winner for me.

There are definitely a few gems in the collection, such as:

- *Red Room*, in which a woman tries to warn her boyfriend about the terrifying, bloody photos that keep mysteriously appearing on her phone—but nobody ever listens to the women, do they?
- *All Souls of Eve*, a Halloween retelling of Ebenezer Scrooge's tale—except this time, the ghosts are dead ex-boyfriends, and they're just as toxic in the afterlife as they were when Eve dated them.
- *Lady of the Flies*, a story full of secondhand awkwardness and cringe-inducing grossness, albeit dimmed slightly by a lackluster back story.

Unfortunately, the other ten stories in the collection were mostly 3-star reads for me.

The most bothersome aspect for me is how heavily it relied on repetition of drug-related narratives. I know that the synopsis mentions substance abuse as one of the themes, but I think nearly half of the stories featured drug usage and/or characters with addictions. While I have no problem reading about addiction, it reached the point of repetition.

On one hand, many of the tales had serious potential; I think **Christa Carmen shows definite potential as a writer**, and I'd love to see where she goes with it, but the vagueness of most of the characters' motives frustrated me, and on a more personal "pet peeve" note, the over-usage of similes in descriptive text kept jarring me out of the story, especially when there were multiple in a paragraph. All in all, though, I still enjoyed myself quite a bit while reading!

All in all, if you're looking for a unique and feminist collection of indie horror, go ahead and give this one a try. I'm definitely willing to check out more of this author's work in the future, because I think she has potential to go far, but this collection just didn't *quite* "wow" me.

Thank you so much to the publicist for providing me with this ARC in exchange for an honest review!

Content warnings for violence, death, abduction, slut-shaming, abuse, suicide, alcoholism, addiction, drug usage, animal death, torture, mutilation, sexual assault, and self-harm.

You can find this review and more on my blog, or you can follow me on twitter, bookstagram, or facebook!

Robyn says

Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked is Christa Carmen's debut collection of thirteen short stories. What I liked most about this collection is they are all centered around women with real life issues and fears sprinkled along side the paranormal and spooky. While reading this short collection, it brought me back to a time when I was younger and used to watch Tales From the Crypt. I have always missed those chilling tales and feel that the horror genre has emerged into something totally mainstream the last decade or so. So, when I had the opportunity to read and review Carmen's collection, I jumped at the chance and I am so glad that I did! Carmen brought me back to the horror that I grew up on where things go bump in the

night. While I loved all of the stories, there are a few that do stand out for me as the real winners.

Red Room

Scrolling through pictures on her cell phone, Marci gets the shock of her life. There is a gruesome picture of a red room filled with unimaginable horror and gore and no one believes, not even her boyfriend, how the photos mysteriously appear on her phone. Thinking her phone got hacked, her boyfriend refuses to listen until it is too late.

Something Borrowed, Something Blood Soaked

When her Aunt Louise warns Bella from marrying Luke, Luke has other plans for the dear sweet aunt. Should Bella have listened to her aunt's warning right from the beginning?

Souls, Dark and Deep

When Belinda, the new babysitter, suggests a new game to play, Sisters Annie and Abigail never realizes just how real the game would become. Just what have their parents been hiding from them?

Lady of the flies

Priscilla Teasdale has been working for Gourd Farms for the past ten years. She is weird, awkward, and has no friends or social skills. So, it comes as a surprise when the owner's son asks for her help with the corn maze on Halloween. Finally, feeling as if she is accepted, she gladly helps out. Little does she know that all the old insecurities come back, but this time she will no longer hide from what she truly has become.

The One Who Answers The Door

Zombie Elsa, Harley Quinn and their friends decide to go trick or treating in River's End where old man Teasdale lives. They took a dare from the boys to get the old man to open his door. What they hadn't realized is the home is more like a fortress keeping those locked in with no chance of ever being let out.

Carmen's writing is intense and has an almost poetic quality to it. I could not help but to be sucked in to her well crafted stories. What really blew me away was how short some of the stories were, but yet Carmen was able to bring forth the horror and believability within a very short amount of time. I never felt like I was missing anything and she says so much in so few words at times. I was amazed because I felt like I could connect with the stories even if they were only a couple of pages long.

Christa Carmen is a new to me author and one I feel is going to take the horror genre to a completely new level of spook.. Plus, being a woman author in the genre is like a breath of fresh air. I can not wait to read more from this author.

Dustin says

Many thanks of gratitude to the Horror Writers Association's Facebook group, and especially the author, for making this opportunity possible. She provided a PDF file in exchange for an honest review. My opinions are my own.

Forward

"But Christa Carmen isn't interested in silence, and her collection...isn't looking to lead you calmly down the aisle. Your path is littered with temptations that test the strength of your mind, heart, and stomach, and over thirteen tales of death and dependency...Carmen has you

questioning whether love is real or just another addiction.”

-Jessica McHugh

Thirsty Creatures

In just five pages, the tragic realities of an apocalyptic landscape of the most dire imaginable were revealed, in a very well-written and hypnotic manner. Coupled with unexpected and curious word choices, Christa Carmen's poetic prose was dense yet fluid, disturbingly soothing and inexplicably humane. With breakneck pace and wild imagery, all that I found lacking was a little more exposition and character development.

4 stars

Red Room

Most likely inspired by the slasher films of the 1970's and 80's, with splashes of *The Sixth Sense* and 2002's *Panic Room*, and with insight into the evils of technology, the author took a deceptively simple premise and, spinning it on its top, complicated things further with an unreliable narrator and...flashes of red.

Her heart beat like a herd of spooked horses, but amongst the mound of books, the Kindle with its textured purple cover, the dish of rings and earrings, the bookmarks and pens and empty seltzer cans, there was no phone to be found.

5 stars

Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked

Sinister and twisted, yet in light of its brevity, the ending was very abrupt, almost like Carmen got bored with crafting her tale of newlyweds Luke and Belladonna, and their peculiar relations with her Aunt Louise. Admittedly though, there was a lot taking place beneath the surface, which drove home the point that the author didn't merely abandon it. She crafted it precisely how she envisioned it should be, and what a lovely tale indeed.

3 stars

Souls, Dark and Deep

If the last story was twisted, this one was compulsively demonic, strange, and disturbing, leaving the reader unsure about what the future held for these characters. Were Belinda's motivations as clear cut as they seemed? Should she be trusted? Was she even telling the truth? You decide.

4 stars

All Souls of Eve

Clearly inspired by Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, Carmen's spin on the iconic concept of three separate ghosts (thankfully, hers were a little different,) visiting one unlikely individual was unlike anything the collection had to offer. And aside from the former, I'd never read anything quite like it. In the end, *All Souls of Eve* was more AND less than what I expected. I liked it, but I wouldn't categorize it as horror. I was anticipating a dark twist at the end. Instead, Carmen gave something else entirely.

3 stars

Liquid Handcuffs

Enter: Nicole Price. Eddie Vance. Olive Holton. Spanning fifty-two pages, this quasi slowly burning novella was the longest tale. It was also the strongest, possessing the most visual stimuli, unpredictability, suspense, tension, and conflicting moods and tone. With morbid fascination, I sat back and watched everything unfold, with a mindfulness of the councilor's plight (cheering, cringing all the while,) and Nicole's absence. Would her reappearance, or having a stronger presence, have created a stronger story? That's the lingering question, for which I have no answers.

Reminiscent of Stephen King's "Big Driver" and "The Gingerbread Girl," it became clear that *Liquid Handcuffs* was none of those things. At least, not entirely. It was a tale all its own, standing tall on its distinctive merits. It's also my favorite work so far.

4 stars

Lady of The Flies

I liked Priscila Teasdale almost right away. That intrigue soon transcended love, and clashing down near the masterful, completely earned denouement, she gained my respect and sympathy. I empathized with her plight in ways I haven't experienced from a fictional character in a very long time.

They left me. They left me without a second thought, and all I'd wanted was a thing to call my own. My own dog. A livelihood. A fulfilling relationship with a co-worker. A friend.

<i>

Between this one and *Liquid Handcuffs*, I can't decide which I love more. I suppose my affinity for them is equal, but of course, for different reasons.

5 stars

The Girl Who Loved Bruce Campbell

Robert Kirkman's cult classic met Bruce Campbell's seminal work, steeped in the ongoing opioid pandemic and plausible scientific research, this offering was intense, particularly from the halfway point to its abrupt end. It was also mysterious, and a lot of fun. Despite going in with zero preconceived notions, something felt a little lacking--be it the cliched subgenre or the personal need for a more substantial scientific theory, I'm not sure, but I was entertained.

3.5 stars

A Fairy Plant In Grief

As one with an appreciation for unusual names and/or unique spellings, Mikhail instantly resonated. More revealing, though, was Carmen's exquisite attention to the myriad of small details (quickly honing in on all five, possibly six, senses,) which really helped develop Mikhail's place in the world, and her questionable mentality. In the end, I was left wanting more. So much more..

I really wanted to give this a higher rating, but **3.75** was the most I could do. Ordinarily, a short story with more questions than answers would be given less, but it's important to remember just how MUCH Carmen conveyed in a mere two pages.

Wolves At The Door And Bears In The Forest

This was another favorite; a stand-out offering, undoubtedly. The protagonist, Molly Monteith, was likeable and loathsome in equal measure. And perhaps that adjective was too harsh, because I didn't hate her, but some of the choices she made were truly repulsive, particularly in light of the fact that they didn't only affect her, but also her three year old daughter. It was a poignant reminder of the debilitating, all-encompassing, and non-discriminatory nature of addiction.

Set in the same locale as *Liquid Handcuffs*, the references to Nicole, Olive, and Eddie were a nice touch.

5 stars

This Our Angry Train

Wow. Wildly imaginative and atmospheric. Unpredictable and frigid. Phantasmagorical to the point of sheer madness (in the literal sense,) and an ill comprehension of reality. This was, however, more than a series of abstract images, senses, and conversations. At its core, it was the story of a young woman, Lauren, attempting a reconciliation. Was it coming-of-age, though? THAT is the question. And does it make a difference?

5 stars

The One Who Answers The Door

Creepy and also atmospheric, this was the tale of Harley Quinn, her sister, Zombie-Elsa, and their comrades on All Hallows' Eve, and the plausible consequences of peer pressure, which can be horrific in of itself.

3 stars

Flowers From Amaryllis

You're in the doctor's office. Dr. Mendelevitch sits before you, questioning your mental state with what you, Willow, perceive as vague accusations. Imogene won't visit you. The shadow wolf leers in the far corner (or is it closer?) of your peripheral vision. Is that a growl you just heard? A sneer directed in your general direction?

Perhaps closet yet: Amaryllis. Is she here to help, or hinder? Perhaps Dr. Mendelevitch holds the keys to unlocking your secrets. Or maybe you've known all along, and were too afraid to face reality. Or maybe no one knows. Do we ever truly know ourselves? Each other?

It is easier this way, easier to subject your body to the repertoire of tortures it requires. Food is scarce and instruments of pain abound in the absence of everything else.

5 stars

So although this was a short story collection, many of the entries shared interconnections, such as time, place, even characters, allowing them to function like a very loosely related novel. At its center were recurring themes of mental illness, and perhaps most surprising of all, love; themes of angst and addiction, amongst others.

Christa Carmen's strongest asset was the writing itself. In the hand of another, these would most likely come across as cliched concepts, a mediocre attempt at greatness. And to an extent, some of the concepts were cliché, but they were far from mediocre. Her often lyrical prose was beautiful, and consistently awe-inspiring.

I can easily see myself reading these stories again and again. I'm more curious than ever about her impressive catalogue.

”Christa Carmen is undoubtedly one of horror's most exciting and distinctive new voices, and her debut collection absolutely proves why. From hardcore to heart-wrenching, these tales run the gamut, with each one of them taking hold of you and not letting go. *Something Borrowed, Something Blood-Soaked* is one incredibly wild ride. Hold on tight.”

--Gwendolyn Kiste

Alyssa says

Thanks to being a giveaway winner for this book, I had the pleasure of reading this book and finally discovering this author which I didn't know of before. I really enjoyed this book with the short stories so really I got 13 different stories all in one book. It was very clever and most of the stories made me nervous to want to keep reading on. I was very impressed since I took a chance on an author/book I had never even heard of till the giveaway. Christa Carmen is a very talented author and these stories were scary. Something Borrowed, Something Blood Soaked gets 5 stars from me and I would most definitely recommend this book to anyone especially anyone interested in scary stories.

V. Castro says

This woman is incredible. Great writer and storyteller! Every story is a bloody, emotional, weird and wonderful journey that will make you think and feel. I love how she tackles issues women experience throughout their lives. You are immediately involved in the characters lives and situations despite their tales being a short story. Not all horror makes you jump, it's so much more than that.

It's not all serious though! Christa sneaks in humour in the best of ways to break the tension when you need it most. My favourites were Red Room and The Girl Who Loved Bruce Campbell. Buy this book and tell your friends to read it!

Theresa Braun says

Searching for some thought-provoking, yet entertaining dark stories? Look no further. Grab some Dunkin Donuts coffee (you'll find the author has a penchant for it) and launch into a reading binge. Carmen showcases her story writing chops in this collection. Her pieces have appeared in numerous publications, so it's handy to have thirteen of them right here. Carmen doesn't shy away from grim subjects like substance abuse or self-loathing. Her characters are real and relatable, yet gorgeously flawed. Even if you don't particularly like them, you will be fascinated with how epically they muck up their lives. In a world where it's difficult to find redemption, Carmen pushes us to root for her protagonists. And, often they manage to steady the reins on their circumstances, achieving empowerment on their own terms. They may not always be terms we are comfortable with, but that is half the fun.

Despite the fact that there are no bad tales here, I've highlighted the ones that stood out for me.

The Red Room: This is a creepy story about some photos that mysteriously appear on a wife's phone. Her husband brushes it off, making all kinds of excuses. Although I toy with saying the moral here is to listen to your wife, I'm not so sure that would have mattered. Supernatural situations suck. Life is sometimes out of our control. The end.

Something Borrowed, Something Blood-soaked: Marriage, Murder, Ghosts, and the Stanley Hotel—what's

not to love? There's also a splash of wrestling with issues of female power. How far does a girl have to go? This is a cautionary tale about what happens when you seek to dominate a woman. She might just go rogue on your ass.

Souls, Dark and Deep: I really liked the way this story plays with point of view and perceptions. A couple goes out for the night, leaving their children with a last-minute baby sitter. The ominous details foreshadow that this baby sitter has some hidden agenda, however, it isn't one that I saw coming. The conclusion has a beautifully shocking twist.

All Souls of Eve: This has to be my favorite story in the collection. Instead of Scrooge being visited by the ghosts of Christmas past, a young woman is visited by three dead boyfriends. Not only that, but this visitation occurs on the eve of her wedding. I love how we get the protagonist's characterization through her interactions with these men, both then and now. It's an extremely relatable exploration of relationships, regret, and wanting to become a better person. Will this self-reflection lead to a happy future, one where she is empowered? You'll have to read to find out.

Liquid Handcuffs: A tale about a therapist who works with patients in substance abuse recovery. It's an unsettling examination of the demons of addiction. When the therapist is kidnapped by an addict from the center, we keep wondering if there is more to fear than the heroin he injects her with. The portrayal of drug use and the specific thoughts and actions of the therapist is so true to life that I wasn't surprised to read in the acknowledgements that the author drew from personal experience. This was another story with an unexpected ending, although you might be able to pick up on it based on the foreshadowed breadcrumbs left along the way.

Lady of the Flies: One thing I enjoyed about this one (in addition to the cool title) is how it deals with a bit more cringy gore than the others. The female protagonist is also very different from the others in this collection in that her brokenness stems from being a total social outcast, which makes it harder for her to rise above it all. You'll be wincing one moment, and feeling sorry for her the next. Don't expect a happy ending here, folks.

Wolves at the Door and Bears in the Forest: This story was trippy, mixing elements grounded in reality with the fantastical. Molly is a mother who is also a recovering addict. We empathize with her, but also flinch at her shortcomings, all at the same time. When one of the characters speaks of this mystical staircase in the middle of the woods, I eagerly waited for that angle to play out. It was fun to be kept on my toes during this read, and the ending is a satisfying one.

This Our Angry Train: Two words: haunted train. That's all I'll give you here. Past and present suspensefully collide in this story. Read up.

Again, this collection has a lot to offer. The plots and characters are engaging, and we are nudged toward some interesting themes. Can we escape our fate, or our choices? Can we maintain sanity? Most of the time Carmen paints a grim picture of the human plight, so if you prefer your horror with a side of death, doom, and destruction, you've come to the right place. You won't regret it.

Kimberly says

4.5 Stars!

SOMETHING BORROWED, SOMETHING BLOOD-SOAKED is a collection of thirteen stories by author Christa Carmen. This is the first I have read from this author, and I was very impressed with both her writing style and unique ideas.

" . . . All things sounded the same when they fell into death."

As with most collections, certain stories will appeal more strongly to each individual reader. I found that within the various themes presented, there were quite a few that I felt were full five-star tales.

Personal favorites of mine included:

--"**Souls Dark and Deep**": Parents on a mysterious evening out, hire an equally mysterious babysitter for their daughters. This was one I couldn't predict ANY part of--unique and exciting story. *" . . . They prayed their secrets I would keep . . . "*

--"**All Souls of Eve**": A novel take on Dicken's "A Christmas Carol" set for Halloween.

--"**Lady of the Flies**": Fantastic tale of both psychological and visceral horror! A misfit/misunderstood woman dreams of finally fitting in with people. *" . . . Pris-killa is coming to slay us all."*

--"**The Girl Who Loved Bruce Campbell**": In the wake of all "The Girl" books that have been published lately, this story is a great dark comedy that pays homage to screen "zombie killer", Bruce Campbell. *"Weebles wobble, but they don't fall down . . . "*

--"**A Fairy Plant in Grief**": This story was much more intense than the previous, but extremely gripping in terms of content. Excellent conclusion!

--"**The One Who Answers the Door**": This was possibly my favorite of the collection. A shorter tale, but one that I didn't anticipate in any way. *"The dwelling was designed to keep in what shouldn't be allowed out . . . "*

Overall, a remarkable collection from a new-to-me author. There's something for all kinds of horror enthusiasts in here. I'm looking forward to seeing what Christa Carmen comes out with in the future.

Recommended.

S.J. Budd says

I first came across Christa Carmen in issue 5 of Unnerving magazine with her short tale, The Red Room. It really stood out to me amongst the others and I thought here's a new voice in horror. So obviously I jumped at the chance to get a sneak peak at her upcoming debut collection Something Borrowed, Something Blood-soaked.

With this collection of tales she does not disappoint. I had a lot of fun reading through this. There are thirteen tales inside and not one of them was a dud. Stand out tales for me include; Lady of the Flies, The Girl Who Loved Bruce Campbell, This Our Angry Train and Souls Dark and Deep. Although they are all very good!

There's a lot to like about this collection, not only can Christa Carmen entertain you for a few hours with dark tales they are also really thought provoking and stay with you long afterwards. Her stories delve deep into all forms of darkness, the grit of human depravities and the things which no mortal can explain. You get the sense that Christa has lived many lives.

A lot of people say that monsters aren't creatures which creep at night but they're amongst us and very much human as illustrated in *Wolves at the Door* and *Bears in the Forest*. This tale really stood out for me. The tale of a young mother trying to create a better life for her daughter but everything is stacked against her, even the people who's job it is to help.

Each of these stories are really different but equally compelling. I can't say there was one I didn't enjoy. Some of them made for uncomfortable reading with their darkness but it's a collection I really love. I can't wait for more from Christa Carmen. This is a really exciting time for Women in Horror!

Thanks to Hook of a Book for allowing me a sneaky preview before the official release date in August 2018
