



Angel Maker: The Short Stories Of Sara Maitland

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Women's lives are at the center of this stunning collection of short stories by the writer *The New Yorker* says "provides unexpected delights....Questions and answers alike shine with intelligence and an almost nineteenth-century concern for ideals."

Though Sara Maitland's interests are as varied as the people who inhabit her stories, there is a common theme to this work that extols risk taking over safety. Acrobats, women warriors, a girl who wants to become a garden, a long-distance runner, housewives and mothers, and a reformed sixteenth-century conquistador are among the characters revealed in this dazzling collection.

By turns elegant and simple, erotic and elegiac, the stories draw on classical mythology, folktales, inexplicable accidents of history, and disquieting experiences of the supernatural. And, as Ann Beattie has written of Sara Maitland's wise and magical fiction, "it speaks to today's reader in a voice that is irresistible."

Familiar names from literature--Gretel, Eurydice of the green fields, the shepherd Prince Endymion, Lady Artemis--commingle with contemporary characters called David, Meg, and Liz, who desperately seek love and fulfillment and frequently have babies when they can't get what they want. Close by is the echo of Mary Magdalene, teaching us about endurance and perserverance in a voice rich with the experiences of the sex object and the "true-love dichotomy." The author suggests: "She must have thought the crucifixion a bit mad too."

Sara Maitland never holds back; instead, she invites us again and again to a place of risks, and we enter, "not because we must, but because we will." And when you are about to lose heart, you meet Caroline, who has learned what it is to be strong, how it feels to be free of fear, how it feels to be totally herself: "Then she looked at Richard and he was smiling, not pityingly, not even kindly, but with open admiration."

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