



A Pocketful of Crows

Joanne M. Harris , Joanne Harris , Bonnie Helen Hawkins (Illustrator)

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I am as brown as brown can be,

And my eyes as black as sloe;

I am as brisk as brisk can be,

And wild as forest doe.

(The Child Ballads, 295)

So begins a beautiful tale of love, loss and revenge. Following the seasons, *A Pocketful of Crows* balances youth and age, wisdom and passion and draws on nature and folklore to weave a stunning modern mythology around a nameless wild girl.

Only love could draw her into the world of named, tamed things. And it seems only revenge will be powerful enough to let her escape.

Beautifully illustrated by Bonnie Helen Hawkins, this is a stunning and original modern fairytale.

A Pocketful of Crows Details

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Author : Joanne M. Harris , Joanne Harris , Bonnie Helen Hawkins (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review A Pocketful of Crows for online ebook

Cendaquenta says

Oh, what absolutely glorious witchy goodness! ? Good for the turn of the year or next Halloweentime...

I need to get myself a physical copy ASAP for the sake of the illustrations (and yes, also sitting pretty on my shelf).

Lyubov says

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Maria says

This was such a joy to read. The writing style and the narrator were amazing. The art was beautiful. This book took me to another world and made me travel into the mind and the feelings the character was feeling. ?

Kirsty says

You know sometimes you read a book and you love it so much that you want to eat it, so you can carry it around inside you? That's how I felt about this book.

I just chaired Joanne Harris's event at the book festival in Edinburgh, and she mentioned that she's working on another book in this series – and it's about selkies! Honestly, it's like she's writing specifically for me. I can't wait.

Thea 'Wookiee'sMama' Wilson says

This book is absolutely stunning! A beautifully crafted fairy tale for a new age full of whimsy, charm and the most fantastical illustrations..... it all makes for one of the loveliest books I have ever read.

Amazing.... just amazing!

samantha (books-are-my-life20) says

what a beautiful short story it remembered me so much of an old fairy tales like Hans Christian Andersen's

dark and hunting, and will stay with you for a long time. I would love to re-read this in the autumn it has that feel too perfect for an October night's read.

Clemlucian (the brooding witch) says

DNF at 65%

I guess the fact that the narrator doesn't learn from her mistakes as fast I wish she would kinda turned me off.

Misericordia? ~ The Serendipity Aegis ~ ?????? ✨*♥♥ says

Generally, I prefer my books to be less whimsical and involve at least some brain action so I believed this would not merit an outstanding grade. The poetic treatment of this stupid, stupid love story wrapped with myth and fairy tale won me over: 5 entangling shining stars.

Let us all be true to ourselves!

Q:

The moon is ringed with silver – a sign. The air is sweet as summertime. (c)

Q:

The year it turns, and turns, and turns. Winter to summer, darkness to light, turning the world like wood on a lathe, shaping the months and the seasons. (c)

Q:

I am brown, and brisk, and wild. I hunt with the owl, and dance with the hare, and swim with the trout and the otter. (c)

Q:

Naked, I turn in the firelight; moon-silver, fire-golden. (c)

Q:

And now I can hear the sounds of the night: the lapping at the water's edge; the squeak of a mouse in the long grass; the calling of owls in the branches. I can hear the tick-tick-ticking of a death-watch beetle in a beam over half a mile away; I can catch the sleepy scent of lilacs on the common. (c)

Q:

The vixen's fur is warm and thick; I am no longer shivering. For a time I run alongside her, feeling her strength and the fierce joy of hunting under a blue milk moon, with the promise of blood in the air and summer no more than a heartbeat away. Then, in a moment, we are one. (c)

Q:

Wild creatures feel hunger differently. My own is deep as wintertime; frugal as old age. The vixen's is joyous; exuberant; sniffing for frogs under the turf; snapping at moths in the shining air. (c)

Q:

I am brown, and brisk, and wild. I hunt with the owl, and dance with the hare, and swim with the trout and the otter. (?)

Q:

My people are the wolves, the hare, the wild bees in the forest. My people are the birch trees, the roe deer,

and the otter. My people are the travelling folk that travel on the campfire smoke, and go into the fox, the wolf, the badger and the weasel. And I am not afraid. (c)

Q:

'Do you have a name?' he says.

Of course not. Names are for tame folk. Names are for those who are afraid of our kind of freedom. ... I have been every bird, every beast, every insect you can name. And so I have no name of my own, and cannot be tamed or commanded. (c)

Q:

No one sees me, as a rule. Even when I show myself, no one really sees me. (c)

Q:

What sickness is this? Why do I not take pleasure in my freedom? The air is bright; the sky is blue; the wind is filled with promise. Why then do I feel so unlike myself, so restless and strange, so incomplete? Why then do I ache, and fret, and pine, and rage, and question? (c)

Q:

I heard it from a white-headed crow, who heard it from a black sheep, who heard it from a tabby cat that lives in a dry-moated castle. (c)

Q:

The travelling folk have no castles, no wealth. We do not hold lands or territories. Instead we have the mountains, the sea, the lakes and the moors and the rivers. This is our inheritance. (c)

Q:

And he will never once be mine, or look at me with love in his eyes, for who could love a brown girl who never stays in her own skin? (c)

Q:

Such a stone is a powerful charm, and looking through the hole in its heart by the light of a tallow candle, you can see as far as the ocean – even, perhaps, through castle walls. (c)

Q:

What a strange thing it must be, to be named. What a strange and terrible thing. No man will ever name me, not as a cat, and not as myself. ...

A named thing is a tamed thing. ... A named thing has a master. (c)

Q:

I shall sleep on your pillow, and purr, until you are mine for ever. (c)

Q:

Just for today, it feels good to be tame, and besides, who else but I need know? (c)

Q:

I sleep, and by your side I dream of things I never knew I wanted... (c)

Q:

And now I know that this feeling is not a curse, or a spell, or a dream. It is as real as the starry sky, and the hot blood of the rat I caught last night in the castle kitchens. This feeling, at once so strong and so sweet; so real, and yet insubstantial. I have been warned against it, and yet it does not seem so dangerous. (c)

Q:

I shall go into a cat, and sleep on his pillow all night long. Not because he is my love, but because I do as I please, and no one tells me what to do. (c)

Q:

Today I am a skylark, tumbling high among the clouds, flinging my song against the peaks, dancing with the rainbows. (c)

Q:

I have no need of silks and furs. I have no need of servants. I have the silk of the dragonfly's wing, the snowy coat of the winter hare. I have the gold of the morning sun, the colours of the Northlights. And I can go into a horse, and run across the marshlands, or travel with the wild geese as they fly towards the sun— (c)

Q:

We do not try to change ourselves into what we should not be. (c)

Q:

And William loves the fine black silk that lines my legs and armpits, and the roundness of my breasts, and the soft broad curve of my hip, and would not see me change a thing. (c)

Q:

We could have the moors, and the lakes, and the open skies, and the mountains. We could live in the forest, alone, and be everything to each other. (c)

Q:

And as the rose month reaches its peak, and midsummer is upon us, I know that our joy will grow and grow, and fill the earth with roses. (c)

Q:

Sing a song of starlight,

A pocketful of crows.

See the bonny brown girl

In her borrowed clothes.

See her in a vixen,

See her in a hare,

See her in her true love's arms,

at sweet Midsummer's fair. (c)

Q:

I know his heart, as he knows mine.

I need no charm to capture him; no adder-stone to watch him by. (c)

Q:

Our love is like the mountains. Our love is like the stormy sea. Our love is like the midnight sky. ...But I miss the peaks and the cold black lake, and the forest, and the islands. I miss the open sky, and the sun, and the song of the morning in my throat. (c)

Q:

My people were here when these mountains were ice, and these valleys were nothing but streamlets running down from the glacier. (c)

Q:

And now, for the first time, I have a name. Malmuira. Dark Lady. I wear it like a golden crown. I wear it like a collar. ...

I have a name. It binds me. I am no longer a child of the world, no longer one of the travelling folk, but a named thing. (c)

Q:

I wish I could tell him how I feel. But that would mean giving away secrets that are not mine to give. I cannot betray my heart, my blood. The travelling folk may have disowned me, but they are still my people.

(c)

Q:

The prince should have recognised his love whatever she was wearing. ...

And why did the princess not speak out when the prince went looking for her? Why did she lurk in the kitchens, waiting to be saved? Why could she not save herself? ...

And why would one of the Faërie have given her three wishes? And why would she waste them on a dress, some dancing shoes and a coach and four? (c)

Q:

Sleep well, love, and dream of me. And know that, if I were to live for a thousand years, there would still not be enough nights in which to dream of you. (c)

Q:

Our love is as strong as the mountains, as endless as the oceans. (c)

Q:

One thing at a time. Wisdom must always be paid for. (c)

Q:

And then I lay down in the ferns and grass that grow around my hut, and watched the fragments of sky through the trees, and wondered how the sun still shone when my light had gone out for ever. ... Now I am as old as Old Age, and colder than ice, and harder than stone. (c)

Q:

And I shall dance barefoot on your grave, and sing like a lark with the joy of it, and soar into the stormy sky, and fill my throat with lightning. (c)

Q:

We are the travelling folk. We live. And we will live for ever. (c)

Q:

We may look like beggars by day, but on this night, we are kings and queens, and the world is our kingdom, our playground the night, and the starry night our canopy. (c)

Q:

Most people die an hour before dawn. It is the point of least resistance to the pull of the darkness. An hour before dawn, you can see the pale seam of the night sky starting to unravel: you can hear the birds as they awaken; there is hope. And that is the moment at which they fade, the old ones and the babes-in-arms, the ones that slip gently into the dark and those who struggle till the end. (c)

Q:

The two wolves come to me every night. Together, we sleep in safety. ... The wolves bring me food from their hunt, and sleep beside me, and give me strength, but I still miss my freedom. (c)

Q:

And though I still cannot travel, I can sometimes forget who I am, and dream that I am one of them, and in dreaming grow stronger. (c)

Q:

But when one has had so little love, even table scraps may serve. (c)

Q:

The time between Christmas and the New Year is a dark, uncertain time: a time when dogs howl, witches fly, and the dead watch the living. (c)

Q:

What's a life or two, between friends? (c)

Q:

'Is it so very obvious?'

Everything is very obvious when you're as old as I am (c)

Q:

I know it is a lie, and yet my heart will not believe it so. Instead it dances like a star, and leaps like a salmon, and aches like a stone, and there is nothing I can do to still its wild and hopeful song. (c)

Q:

We take what we must, and never look back, and scatter our seeds to the four winds, and into the mountains, and over the sea, and all across the starry sky. (c)

Q:

I want to tell her the child still lives, safe in the arms of the travelling folk. Nameless, it will always be wild, and fly with the crow and the magpie. Soulless, it will never die, but go into the world again, until the world is ended. (c)

Q:

And the laughter was like a giant wave that swept me into the primrose sky, so that I was thistledown, and fireworks, and starlight. (c)

Q:

You called me ugly, and a slut. You lied and you betrayed me. Worse than that, you named me. (c)

Q:

He would have known and loved me wherever I chose to travel, and he would have wanted to be with me, whatever the cost to his heart or soul. (c)

Q:

Now I am in everything. Now I am the wind, the rain, the love-knots on the hawthorn tree. (c)

Q:

I have been tame, and I have been wild. And I swear I will never again be tame, or try to be like one of the Folk, or turn away from the ancient ways of the travelling people. (c)

Q:

'Well met, sister. Blessed be.' (c)

Sonja Arlow says

I am glad I listened to this one as the author reads it herself and if she ever wants to stop writing books she will definitely get work as an audio narrator. On the other hand, I think I missed out on the illustrations that accompany the printed version.

The chapters follow the months of the year with a short rhyme from the 'Child Ballads' or some old folk saying as an introduction.

The brown girl with no name is one of the traveling folk. She can take the form of a fox, a crow, a hare, any animal she wants and travel, see, experience anything she wants. But then she meets William, a strapping young lad from the village. Falling in love makes her give up more than what she gains but that's a hard lesson she must learn on her own.

It felt like I was listening to a beautiful poem. The essence of the story is one that has been done in various guises many many many many times and although the writing was lyrical and evocative I didn't feel as if I experienced anything new.

If you are going to read this only for the evocative writing, then I think you will like it.

Nigel says

In brief - A wonderful read and I loved it. Real 5 star stuff for me.

I confess I wasn't really sure what sort of a book this was nor whether it was my sort of book. I very quickly discovered it was my sort of book even if I don't recall reading anything quite like it before. It's inspired by, and takes its story from, "The Brown Girl" which is one of the Child Ballads. While these were collected together in the 19th century they are far older than that. This and the other ballads are essentially old folk tales a number of which have become folk songs. It is about a wild girl, unnamed, who lives in the woods and falls in love. She calls herself a traveller.

Depending which version of the ballad you look at there is a maximum of 16 four line verses. To transfer that into this book seems remarkably creative. It weaves myth, legend and folk stories into a tale about love over the course of one year. For me it also asks if the wild can be tamed and what happens then; is madness a possibility.

The writing is really beautiful as I read it - poetic and magical. It also gives a real sense of time and place while being timeless and unbound. I don't recall reading anything quite like this before. It manages to be light and dark and compelling and engaging and much more all at the same time. I guess I'm not absolutely sure who the target audience is however if it appeals to you, I think you are the target and you should enjoy this wonderfully rich tale. I rarely re-read books these days - this one may well be an exception. I was simply blown away by this and would love to read another from this author if it was anything like this.

Note - I received an advance digital copy of this book from the publisher in exchange for a fair review

<http://viewson.org.uk/fantasy/pocketf...>

Paromjit says

Joanne Harris has written a powerfully magical and fantastical tale brimful of folklore that draws on the The Child Ballads. It is beautifully written, poetic and lyrical, and a short read. It reads like a dark fairytale. An unnamed wild brown girl roams the forests, free to transport herself into birds and other wildlife. She savours her freedom and is loyal to her people, who are treated with contempt and sneered by others in society. We follow the seasons, echoing the aging process. The wild girl takes an adderstone love token left by a woman with the name William on it. This is the story of innocence, love, betrayal, loss and revenge.

Our wild girl encounters William MacCormac, a man of privilege and power, the son of a influential lord and saves him. Neither can forget each other, and William persuades her to come live with him and names her Malmuira, the dark lady of the mountains. There are ominous signs and portents but the girl ignores them. Naming means taming, and despite the warnings of her community, she gives up her freedoms to stay, all for love. She is treated with contempt and sneered at by others in William's household, whilst rumours abound of her being a wicked witch who has bewitched the young lord. William's love proves to be less than enduring. This is a wondrous and mythic story that weaves a spell over the reader. Highly recommended. Many thanks to Orion for an ARC.

Emma says

“My people are the wolves, the hare, the wild bees in the forest. My people are the birch trees, the roe deer, and the otter. My people are the travelling folk that travel on the campfire smoke, and go into the fox, the wolf, the badger and the weasel. And I am not afraid.”

A wonderful magical story told within the cycle of a year. A tale of love, betrayal, revenge and rebirth. Entrancing and timeless. Recommended.

Lia (a paper pigeon) says

I have no name.

The travelling folk have neither name nor master. When I die, no stone will be laid. No flowers will be scattered. When I die, I will become a thousand creatures: beetles, worms. And so I shall travel on, for ever, till the End of the Worlds. This is the fate of the travelling folk. We would not have it otherwise.

Wow, what a lovely little piece of literature!

This adult fairytale will break your heart, build it back together and then fill it with life, passion and love for nature.

Thanks to the pacing, I loved and hated (and suffered) along with the *bonny brown girl*, and the gorgeous illustrations that pepper the pages are so perfect and in tune with the tone of the story that you can't help but feel dragged in.

Though, I think it's fair to say that its whimsical, dark and gut-wrenching writing is without a doubt the main character.

Poetry without poetry is my favorite.

On Bonnie Helen Hawkins' blog you can find some of the illustrations she made for the book. Give it a look. Her art is extraordinary!

Kirsty 📚📖♥? says

What a lovely little book. I actually read it in a couple of hours one lazy Sunday morning. The synopsis says it all really. Based on the poem 'The Child Ballads' this is a lovely poetic piece of writing weaving folklore and nature into one beautiful piece of prose. The young girl (not named as naming means taming) is a wild child living in the forest who finds a love token for the local lords son. Taking it, she then stops the boy from being trampled by his horse, falling in love with him and he with her. Or so she thinks. Bitterly betrayed by him she sets about getting her life back and seeking revenge on all who have hurt her.

One of the things I enjoyed most were the times when the girl leaves her body to go travelling in the bodies of local animals. How she sees the world through their eyes, whether soaring above in the sky or scuttling around the castle listening for gossip. You are taken along with every step of the girls journey. It really is magnificent. One of my new favourites by this author.

Free arc from netgalley

Wordpress review scheduled for release day

?αα says

Things I liked:

- ? The writing was very whimsical, and that aspect felt very fairytale-esque.
- ? The illustrations throughout were a nice addition.
- ? The cover is beautiful, and the synopsis is vague but piqued my interest. This miiight've been a cover buy.
- ? Annnnd..... I liked nothing else.

Things I disliked:

- ? Okay SO at the beginning, two characters meet and within 2.318 seconds they're completely besotted with each other.
- ? They then proceed to "fall madly, truly, deeply in love". But they were both being very fickle. They were quick to assume and believe the worst of each other, and pettiness and jealousy tainted their relationship.
- ? From there, the tale morphs into one of revenge. This is supposedly a modern fairytale, but if the main character's revenge was supposed to be *empowering*, I think that's complete tosh.
- ? When you're wronged by someone, your response should not be (view spoiler) that person and everyone who gets in your way. That's an awful message to convey.
- ? SO much harm came to people who were undeserving and unlucky to be in the firing line, too.
- ? I greatly dislike the love interest, but safe to say that I detest the main character more than I detest vacuuming my house or finding dead mice ("*gifts*") from my cats outside my bedroom door.

Overall rating: ★????½ (the half a star is just for the writing, mind you)
