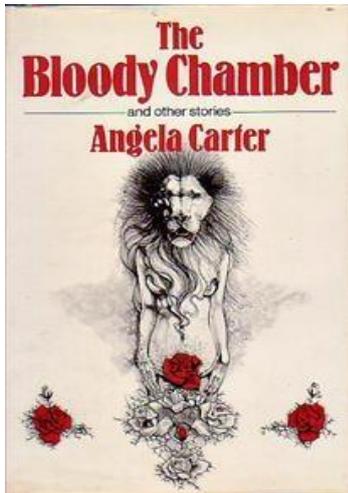


BOOK GROUP 2
November 2021



THE BLOODY CHAMBER AND OTHER STORIES – ANGELA CARTER

This book sparked an interesting discussion to say the least! As one member of the group put it “A jolt out of my usual comfort zone of reading that I am perhaps drawn to at my stage of life .”

The stories could be described as adult versions of some fairy tales and are mainly concerned with female characters dominated or owned by men. Although some have a “happy” ending all are very disturbing and one member of the group had nightmares as a result of reading it and managed only a couple of stories. The cruelty and horror is vividly described, with powerful imagery and crafted prose that required an energy and stamina that some of us found exhausting.

Another member of the group was terrified by fairy stories as a child and has consequently never been attracted to the fantasy genre – but she did acknowledge admiration for the author’s language. Examples were:

“my tear beslobbered father...”

“my spite was sharp as broken glass”

(describing tigers in captivity) “the golden fruit of their eyes dimming, withering in the far North of captivity”

Other comments against “I managed to read 3 of the short stories in Angela Carter’s book before indigestion set in from an overdose of her florid , repetitive, too self-conscious storytelling. Her deliberate twisting of familiar fairy tales was not for me.”

And from the only member of the group who enjoyed the book “the writing in this book is really beautiful. It makes compelling reading and her descriptions of countryside and woods are vividly real”

So, a book that provoked and repelled. The final verdict was that most of us would be avoiding this author in future!

We concluded with an interesting discussion on the craft of short story telling.

Christine Wright