

## Wise Women: Myths and Stories for Midlife and Beyond

**Sharon Blackie**

**Angharad Wynne, Contributor**

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A triumphant antidote to the falsities spread about women's aging, *Wise Women* is a solace- and life-giving collection of fairy and folk tales.

Knowing that older women in beloved tales are too often crones and villains, inculcating in their listeners a negative sense of aging in general, Sharon Blackie collected stories and poems that reflect the opposite. These tales feature "ungainly giantesses, glamorous fairy godmothers, misunderstood witches, fierce grandmothers and perspicacious wise women"; together, they function "to reenchant a time of life that can seem dreary."

A princess on the cusp of her happily ever after falls into a glass mountain and is imprisoned by a cruel man; using her wit to escape years later, she finds her beloved still waiting for her. A giant gathers stones in her apron to form a bridge between lands and is despondent when they fall. A mother endures her daughter-in-law's cruelties out of loyalty to her son, enabling his happier second match.

In addition to their appealing flourishes and glittering images, each story is appended by commentary on what middle age could be were it embraced rather than feared, making *Wise Women* perfect for all of those who are ready to welcome their later stages.

MICHELLE ANNE SCHINGLER (November / December 2024)

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