



The Glassblower's Children

By Maria Gripe

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The Glassblower's Children By Maria Gripe

By the Winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Medal for Lifetime Achievement in Children's Literature

Albert the Glassblower and Sofia are the loving parents of little Klas and Klara. Albert makes the most beautiful glass bowls and vases (unfortunately they are so impractical that no one will buy them), while Sofia supports the family by working in the fields. Every year Albert goes to the fair to try to sell his wares, and sometimes Sofia and the children go too. At the fair the family meets Flutter Mildweather, a weaver of magical rugs that foretell the future, and Klas and Klara come the attention of the splendid Lord and Lady of All Wishes Town, who have everything they want except for one thing: children.

Full of curious and vivid characters—like the one-eyed raven Wise Wit, who can only see the bright side of life, and the monstrous governess Nana, whose piercing song can shatter glass—*The Glassblower's Children* also ponders such serious matters as what it means to find meaningful work and the difference between what you want and what you need. In *The Glassblower's Children* Maria Gripe has drawn on fairy tales and Norse myths to tell a thrilling story with a very modern sensibility.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Gripe polishes each separate scene to fine perfection.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“This is a book to be read and returned to: it touches one deeply before the full pattern of meaning becomes clear, but, when it does, every detail is seen to have its place.” —Lesley Croome, *The Times Literary Supplement*

“Beautiful and terrifying by turns...*The Glassblower's Children* is a brave book.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

"Fifty years ago, Swedish storyteller Maria Gripe set down a curious and somewhat disconcerting fairy tale about a benevolent carpet-weaving witch named Flutter Mildweather; her one-eyed raven companion, who can see only the good in the world; and two small kidnapped children. Reprinted in an elegant edition with original white-on-black etched illustrations....*The Glassblower's Children* retains its mystical, allegorical power....Stirring and distinct, this fable by the 1974 winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award lends itself not just to bedtime reading but also to quiet reflection." —Meghan Cox Gurdon, *The Wall Street Journal*

"[Gripe's] stories were often deceptively plaintive. They hid a wealth of darker truths which brewed just beneath the crust of her mannered language....Gripe employs a striking dynamism that straddles a balance between grim realism and mystical fantasy. Very Swedish in its approach to analyzing human behaviour (think Ingmar Bergman writing children's stories), *The Glassblower's Children* delves deep to examine a kind of existential melancholy in young children." —Imran Khan, *Popmatters*

About the Author

Maria Gripe (1923–2007) was born Maja Stina Walter in Sweden's Stockholm archipelago, the daughter of an army captain. She attended Stockholm University, where she studied philosophy and the history of religion, and in 1946 married the artist Harald Gripe. Though she wrote stories from the time she was a child, Gripe did not publish her first book until she was thirty-one. Her first notable success came in the 1960s with a trilogy of books about Hugo and Josephine, and in 1964 she published *Glasblåsarns barn*, translated into English as *The Glassblower's Children* in 1973. In 1974 she received Hans Christian Andersen Award, the most prestigious prize given to a writer of children's literature. She adapted many of her books for radio, television, and film; in 1998 a movie adaptation of *The Glassblower's Children*, starring Stellan Skarsgård, was released. Among Gripe's books translated into English are *The Night Daddy*, *Elvis and His Secret*, and *Agnes Cecilia*.

Harald Gripe (1921–1992) was born and raised in Stockholm. Early in his career he worked as a set designer but later focused on painting and the illustrations he drew for his wife's many books, working frequently in the style of white line etched into a dark background. His large collection of toy theaters is displayed at Gripe Model Theater Museum in Nyköping, Sweden, where he and Maria lived for most of their married life.

Users Review

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