

development), and the newer options of compostable or flushable diapers are not described.

The Mother of All Baby Books: An All-Canadian Guide to Your Baby's First Year is an important addition to the bookshelf of parenting books that has grown exponentially since the 1946 publication of pediatrician Benjamin Spock's bestselling *Baby and Child Care*. It is refreshing to read a parenting book authored by a mother that includes mothers' voices, and readers will enjoy learning the results of recent research, such as the finding that new fathers' hormone levels change in the weeks immediately preceding and following the birth of a baby. Douglas's journalistic background shows in this engagingly written work, but the lack of illustrations makes it difficult to visualize advice on topics such as postpartum exercises and the proper latch for breastfeeding. In the end, readers may find this book contains valuable information to supplement their broader reading about the first year of a baby's life.

Mothers, Daughters and Untamed Dragons

Aysan Sev'er.

Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press, 2012.

REVIEWED BY NONIE HARRIS

"Turkish plays have a lot of deaths in them, especially deaths of women who sacrifice themselves for their country, or for their husbands or children. In Turkish plays, the drama imitates life."

Mothers, Daughters and Untamed Dragons begins with a death—the "un-eventful" death of Anna, the novel's narrator, who leads readers through her life as a child in post-World War II Turkey to new possibilities in Canada. Anna's is a tale of four generations and six women: of mother-daughter relationships that are fraught with deeply rooted tensions and men who either are "scared off" or doomed to early death. Through Anna's eyes, author Aysan Sev'er skillfully and meticulously unfurls the difficult terrain of mother-daughter relationships. Anna bears witness to human frailty, jealousy, generosity, and love, as well as the painful grief tied deeply to the loss of her own daughter.

On one level, the novel explores the lasting effects of war and brutality on one family: "war blunts morals, and turns them upside down." The consequent emotional damage threads its way through the four generations, always present but not necessarily articulated. On another level, the novel offers an

unsentimental view of mother-daughter relationships that lays bare the many ways that the narrowly confined and prescribed lives of women can come to poison, stunt, and undermine the very relationship that might be a source of power, strength, and resistance. Limned here is the complex interplay between individual aspirations and patriarchally defined possibilities for women. But there is also the strength and love of women, “the love that binds all these pages together.”

Mothers, Daughters and Untamed Dragons is both provoking and riveting. I empathized with Anna as she negotiated a tradition bound childhood in Turkey, a loveless marriage, a new life Canada, and the 1970s feminist revolution with a tertiary education that promised liberation and the despair of losing the connection with her own daughter, Negrisse. Negrisse represents the liberated life that finally eludes her mother. Is the novel suggesting that liberation for daughters is only attainable by severing ties with their mothers?

Anna’s story encourages readers to ponder their own complex histories, to consider the interaction between history, culture, and family. Sev’er also reminds readers that the constraints of patriarchal motherhood can threaten women in small but catastrophic ways. Nonetheless, her story of four generations of women is powerfully and lovingly rendered as “a beautiful, challenging and sometimes foreboding tapestry.”

My Mother Did Not Tell Stories

Laurie Kruk.

Bradford, Ontario: Demeter Press, 2012.

REVIEWED BY DORSÍA SMITH SILVA

Laurie Kruk’s volume of poems, *My Mother Did Not Tell Stories*, explores the realities of mothering. In the intimate opening poem, “First Birds,” Kruk recalls her daughter’s sounds when she is eight months old. Like the sound of a baby bird, the child’s guttural noise transforms from a bird in flight to a “nest” between mother and daughter. Kruk also explores the connections between mother, child, and nature in “Scratching Tree.” At the start of this poem, the expectant mother is the “Mama Bear” who fiercely protects her unborn child. Following birth, however, the daughter matures quickly and becomes a “she-bear” with own “den.” Here, Kruk skillfully balances the mother’s longing for the return of her child with hope for the birth of grandchildren. She reminds readers that a part of mothering is the independence of children and connection to extended family.