



The Bed Moved: Stories (Vintage Contemporaries)

By Rebecca Schiff



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The audacious, savagely funny debut of a writer of razor-sharp wit and surprising tenderness: a collection of stories that gives us a fresh take on adolescence, death, sex; on being Jewish-ish; and on finding one's way as a young woman in the world.

A New Yorker, trying not to be jaded, accompanies a cash-strapped pot grower to a "clothing optional resort" in California. A nerdy high-schooler has her first sexual experience at Geology Camp. A college student, on the night of her father's funeral, watches a video of her bat mitzvah, hypnotized by the image of the girl she used to be . . .

Frank and irreverent, Rebecca Schiff's stories offer a singular view of growing up (or not) and finding love (or not) in today's ever-uncertain landscape. In its bone-dry humor, its pithy observations, and its thrilling ability to unmask the most revealing moments of human interaction—no matter how fleeting—*The Bed Moved* announces a new talent to be reckoned with.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Review

Praise for Rebecca Schiff's *The Bed Moved*

Kirkus Reviews, Best Fiction of 2016

The Huffington Post, 18 Best Fiction Books of 2016

Electric Literature, 25 Best Short Story Collections of 2016

"[A] stellar collection. . . . Schiff writes slim, ice-pick stories about sex and death and nighttime cab rides, sharpened by humor and extreme candor." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"I'd like to watch the faces of people reading [*The Bed Moved*] as they shift between awe and admiration and shock. This writer is freaking good." —Ben Marcus, *The New Yorker*

"Acerbic. . . . Darkly comic. . . . [Schiff] is funny and wise beyond her years." —*Los Angeles Review of Books*

"Wry and ambitious. . . . [Schiff's] sparse, poetic paragraphs are packed with forceful wit." —*The Atlantic*

"Riveting. . . . Magic. . . . In [Schiff's] work, you see the grace in human frailty." —*The Nation*

"[Schiff's] dark wit gives her stories genuine tensile strength. . . . She dips into her own braininess as if it were a bottomless trust fund." —Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*

"Riveting. . . . Magic. . . . In [Schiff's] work, you see the grace in human frailty." —*The Nation*

"Schiff's stories are simultaneously universal and totally original. . . . You'll laugh, you'll cry, you'll cringe from red-faced embarrassment. Schiff gets at the relentlessness of being a young woman dealing with (or, hell, even being ambivalent about) love, dating, and grief, all while finding deep, sometimes dark, laughter in it." —*Marie Claire*

"A wildly assured debut short-story collection featuring tales of bat mitzvahs, high school ennui, nudist hot springs, and women much smarter than the men they're sleeping with." —*O Magazine*

"Reads like watching a mashup of Mark Morris and Twyla Tharp choreography. . . . Painfully funny. . . . A mournful vapour trails Schiff's acrobatic wit." —*San Francisco Chronicle*

About the Author

REBECCA SCHIFF graduated from Columbia University's MFA program, where she received a Henfield Prize. Her stories have appeared in *n+1*, *Electric Literature*, *The American Reader*, *Guernica*, *The Guardian*, and *Lenny Letter*. She lives in Brooklyn.

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The Bed Moved

There were film majors in my bed—they talked about film. There were poets, coxswains, guys trying to grow beards.

“Kids get really scared when their dad grows a beard,” I said.

Finally, I had an audience. I helped a pitcher understand the implications of his team’s hazing ritual. I encouraged indecisive dancer-anthropologists to double major. When a guy apologized for being sweaty, I got him a small towel. I made people feel good.

Then I took a break. Then I forgot that I was taking a break. Spring was here. Jake was here. Also Josh. One dancer-anthropologist dropped anthropology, just did dance. He danced with honors.

“Mazel tov,” I said.

The bed moved. Movers moved it. Movers asked what my dad did, why he wasn’t moving the bed.

New guys came to the bed. New guys had been in the Gulf War, had been bisexual, had taken out teeth, had taken out ads. Musical types left CDs with their names marked on—I kept a pile. I was careful not to smudge them, scratch them. (Scratch that, I wasn’t careful.)

“So many musicians in this city,” I observed, topless.

Boxer shorts were like laundry even on their bodies. Guys burrowed down for not long enough, popped up, smiled.

Did I have something? Did I have anything?

I did.

Something, anything, went in the trash, except one, which didn’t. One hadn’t gone on in the first place.

After, cell phones jingled: Be Bop, Mariachi Medley, Chicken Dance, Die Alone.

Nervous, I felt nervous. There was mariachi in the trains, or else it was just one guy playing “La Bamba.” I slow-danced into clinic waiting rooms. Receptionists told me to relax and try to enjoy the weekend, since we wouldn’t know anything till Monday. Sunday I lost it, banged my face against the bed. Be easy, girl, I thought. Be bop. Something was definitely wrong with me—I never called myself “girl.” I played CDs, but CDs by artists who had already succeeded. They had succeeded for a reason. They weren’t wasting time in my bed. One did pass through the bed, to brag. He had been divorced, had met Madonna.

He asked, “Is this what women are like now?”

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