

Book 1 of *The Black Jewels Trilogy*

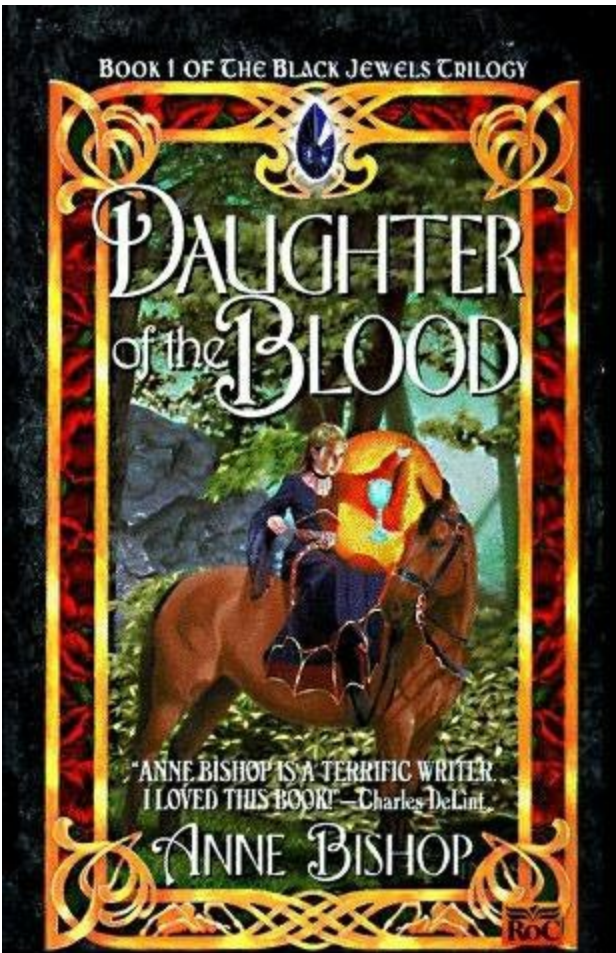
NATIONAL BESTSELLING AUTHOR

**ANNE BISHOP**

**DAUGHTER  
OF THE  
BLOOD**

"Anne Bishop is a terrific  
writer. I loved this book!"  
—Charles de Lint





[Version 2.0]

[Proofread and formatted by braven]

**Anne Bishop**

Daughter of the Blood

*For Blair Boone*

*and Charles de Lint.*

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## **JEWELS**

*White*

*Yellow*

*Tiger Eye*

*Rose*

*Summer-sky*

*Purple Dusk*

*Opal*

*Green*

*Sapphire*

*Red*

*Gray*

*Ebon-gray*

*Black*

Opal is the dividing line between lighter and darker Jewels because it can be either.

When making the Offering to the Darkness, a person can descend a maximum of three ranks from his/her Birthright Jewel.

Example: Birthright White could descend to Rose.

## **BLOOD HIERARCHY/CASTES**

### **Males**

landen—non-Blood of any race

Blood male—a general term for all males of the Blood; also refers to any Blood male who doesn't wear Jewels

Warlord—a Jeweled male equal in status to a witch

Prince—a Jeweled male equal in status to a Priestess or a Healer

Warlord Prince—a dangerous, extremely aggressive Jeweled male; in status, slightly lower than a Queen

### **Females**

landen—non-Blood of any race

Blood female—a general term for all females of the Blood; mostly refers to any Blood female who doesn't wear Jewels

witch—a Blood female who wears Jewels but isn't one of the other hierarchical levels; also refers to any Jeweled female

Healer—a witch who heals physical wounds and illnesses; equal in status to a Priestess and a Prince

Priestess—a witch who cares for altars, Sanctuaries and Dark Altars; witnesses handfasts and marriages; performs offerings; equal in status to a

Healer and a Prince

Black Widow—a witch who heals the mind; weaves the tangled webs of dreams and visions; is trained in illusions and poisons

Queen—a witch who rules the Blood; is considered to be the land's heart and the Blood's moral center; as such, she is the focal point of their

society

# PROLOGUE

## Terreille

I am Tera the Weaver, Tera the Liar, Tera the Fool. When the Blood-Jeweled Lords and Ladies hold a banquet, I'm the entertainment that

comes after the musicians have played and the lighthearted girls and boys have danced and the Lords have drunk too much wine and demand to have their

fortunes told. "Tell us a story, Weaver," they yell as their hands pass over the serving girls' rumps and their Ladies eye the young men and decide who will have the painful pleasure of serving in the bed that night.

I was one of them once, Blood as they are Blood.

No, that's not true. I *wasn't* Blood as they are Blood. That's why I was broken on a Warlord's spear and became shattered glass that only reflects what might have been.

It's hard to break a Blood-Jeweled male, but a witch's life hangs by the hymenal thread, and what happens on her Virgin Night determines whether

she is whole to practice the Craft or becomes a broken vessel, forever aching for the part of her that's lost. Oh, some magic always remains, enough for

day-to-day living and parlor tricks, but not the Craft, not the lifeblood of our kind.

But the Craft can be reclaimed—if one is willing to pay the price.

When I was younger, I fought against that final slide into the Twisted Kingdom. Better to be broken and sane than broken and mad. Better to see

the world and know a tree for a tree, a flower for a flower rather than to look through gauze at gray and ghostly shapes and see clearly only the shards of one's self.

So I thought then.

As I shuffle to the low stool, I struggle to stay at the edge of the Twisted Kingdom and see the physical world clearly one last time. I carefully place

the wooden frame that holds my tangled web, the web of dreams and visions, on the small table near the stool.

The Lords and Ladies expect me to tell their fortunes, and I always have, not by magic but by keeping my eyes and ears open and then telling them

what they want to hear.

Simple. No magic to it.

But not tonight.

For days now I have heard a strange kind of thunder, a distant calling. Last night I surrendered to madness in order to reclaim my Craft as a Black

Widow, a witch of the Hourglass covens. Last night I wove a tangled web to see the dreams and visions.

Tonight there will be no fortunes. I have the strength to say this only once. I must be sure that those who must hear it are in the room before I speak.

I wait. They don't notice. Glasses are filled and refilled as I fight to stay on the edge of the Twisted Kingdom.

Ah, there he is. Daemon Sadi, from the Territory called Hayl. He's beautiful, bitter, cruel. He has a seducer's smile and a body women want to

touch and be caressed by, but he's filled with a cold, unquenchable rage. When the Ladies talk about his bedroom skills, the words they whisper are

"excruciating pleasure." I don't doubt he's enough of a sadist to mix pain and pleasure in equal portions, but he's always been kind to me, and it's a small bone of hope that I throw out to him tonight. Still, it's more than anyone else has given him.

The Lords and Ladies grow restless. I usually don't take this long to begin my pronouncements. Agitation and annoyance build, but I wait. After tonight, it will make no difference.

There's the other one, in the opposite corner of the room. Lucivar Yaslana, the Eyrien half-breed from the Territory called Askavi.

Hayl has no love for Askavi, nor Askavi for Hayl, but Daemon and Lucivar are drawn to one another without understanding why, so wound into

each other's lives they cannot separate. Uneasy friends, they have fought legendary battles, have destroyed so many courts the Blood are afraid to have

them together for any length of time.

I raise my hands, let them fall into my lap. Daemon watches me. Nothing about him has changed, but I know he's waiting, listening. And because

he's listening, Lucivar listens too.

"She is coming."

At first they don't realize I've spoken. Then the angry murmurs begin when the words are understood.

"Stupid bitch," someone yells. "Tell me who I'll love tonight."

"What does it matter?" I answer. "She is coming. The Realm of Terreille will be torn apart by its own foolish greed. Those who survive will serve, but few will survive."

I'm slipping further from the edge. Tears of frustration spill down my cheeks. Not yet. Sweet Darkness, not yet. I must say this.

Daemon kneels beside me, his hands covering mine. I speak to him, only to him, and through him, to Lucivar.

"The Blood in Terreil e whore the old ways and make a mockery of everything we are." I wave my hand to indicate the ones who now rule. "They twist things to suit themselves. They dress up and pretend. They wear Blood Jewels but don't understand what it means to be Blood. They talk of honoring

the Darkness, but it's a lie. They honor nothing but their own ambitions. The Blood were created to be the caretakers of the Realms. That's why we were

given our power. That's why we come from, yet are apart from, the people in every Territory. The perversion of what we are can't go on. The day is coming

when the debt will be called in, and the Blood will have to answer for what they've become."

"They're the Blood who rule, Tersa," Daemon says sadly. "Who is left to call in this debt? Bastard slaves like me?"

I'm slipping fast. My nails dig into his hands, drawing blood, but he doesn't pull away. I lower my voice. He strains to hear me. "The Darkness has

had a Prince for a long, long time. Now the Queen is coming. It may take decades, even centuries, but she is coming." I point with my chin at the Lords and Ladies sitting at the tables. "They will be dust by then, but you and the Eyrien will be here to serve."

Frustration fills his golden eyes. "What Queen? Who is coming?"

"The living myth," I whisper. "Dreams made flesh."

His shock is replaced instantly by a fierce hunger. "You're sure?"

The room is a swirling mist. He's the only thing still in sharp focus. He's the only thing I need. "I saw her in the tangled web, Daemon. I saw her."

I'm too tired to hang on to the real world, but I stubbornly cling to his hands to tell him one last thing. "The Eyrien, Daemon."

He glances at Lucivar. "What about him?"

"He's your brother. You are your father's sons."

I can't hold on anymore and plunge into the madness that's called the Twisted Kingdom. I fall and fall among the shards of myself. The world spins

and shatters. In its fragments, I see my once-Sisters pouring around the tables, frightened and intent, and Daemon's hand casually reaching out, as if by

accident, destroying the fragile spidersilk of my tangled web.

It's impossible to reconstruct a tangled web. Terrence's Black Widows may spend year upon frightened year trying, but in the end it will be in vain. It

will not be the same web, and they will not see what I saw.

In the gray world above, I hear myself howling with laughter. Far below me, in the psychic abyss that is part of the Darkness, I hear another howling,

one full of joy and pain, rage and celebration.

Not just another witch coming, my foolish Sisters, but Witch.