



Effigy: Mormons. Polygamy. Taxidermy. Love.

Alissa York

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“A small masterpiece . . . Exhilarating and genuinely fresh.” ---*National Post* (Canada)

Set on a Mormon ranch in nineteenth-century Utah, and inspired by the real events of the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857, Alissa York's *Effigy* is a haunting story of a polygamous family united by faith but separated by secrets.

At the heart of the novel is Dorrie, the fourth wife of rancher, hunter, and horse breeder Erastus Hammer. A pale child bride with a mass of untamable black hair, she cannot recall anything of her life before she recovered from an illness at the age of seven. Her keenest pleasure lies in the act of bringing dead creatures to life through the art of taxidermy, and Hammer has married her not for love, or even lust, but so that she might make fitting trophies of his kills. The matter is urgent for Hammer, as he is slowly going blind.

Happy to be given this work, Dorrie secludes herself in her workshop world, away from Mother Hammer's watchful eye and the rivalry of the elder wives. But when Hammer brings Dorrie a whole family of wolves to fashion into a tableau, she struggles with her craft for the first time in her short life, dreaming each night of crows and strange scenes of violence. The new hand, Bendy Drown, is the only one to see her dilemma and offer her help, a dangerous game in a Mormon household.

Outside, a lone wolf prowls the grounds looking for his lost pack, and his nocturnal searching will unearth the secret tensions of this complex and conflicted family.

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