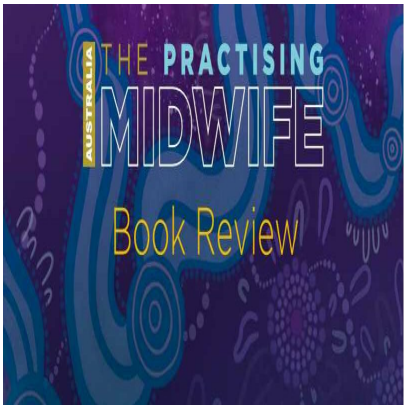
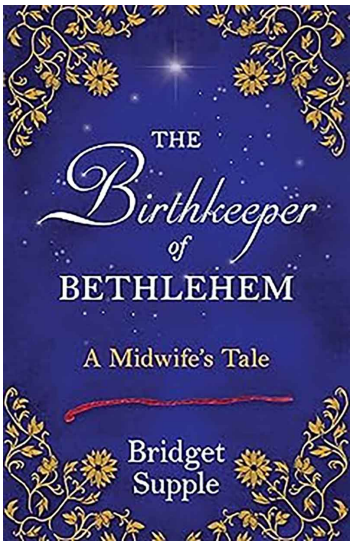


Description

Book Review: The Birthkeeper of Bethlehem a Midwife's Tale by Bridget Supple



Review: Dr Bridget Ferguson – Editor-in-Chief, The Practising Midwife, Australia Edition

Published By: Womancraft Publishing

Publication Date: 2022

Format: pbk, 153pp

RRP: $34.03

ISBN: 978-1910559826

If you're a midwife who enjoys historical fiction, The Birthkeeper of Bethlehem offers a unique take on the Nativity story through the perspective of Salome, a midwife. While not a contemporary clinical text, it poetically reimagines birth in ancient times and honours women's roles in midwifery.

We all know the Christmas story, but who attended Mary in labour? Supple's novel introduces Salome, who witnesses this extraordinary birth. Through her eyes, we see that birth is not just a physical event but a spiritual experience

enriched with midwifery wisdom and the strength of women supporting each other.

This novel highlights how wise women have cared for one another during childbirth, beautifully illustrating the relationships between them and the community supporting mothers and children. This sorority and shared knowledge are at the heart of midwifery.

The book explores ancient midwifery, grounded in tradition and the rituals of biblical times. Salome and her fellow birthkeepers embody the intuition and strength still valued Bridget Supple today. Rather than a detailed physiological account, it emphasises the sacredness of birth. The narrative portrays midwifery as an act of devotion and care.

One compelling aspect of the novel is its respect for midwives and the bonds between women. Even though the story is set in the past, the essence of midwifery remains, providing reassurance and wisdom. The novel showcases the collective strength of midwives who create safe, sacred spaces. We may use different techniques as modern practitioners, but our core mission to protect and empower women during profound life experiences remains unchanged. This novel serves as a reminder of midwives' timeless essential role. **TPM**

Category

1. Australia - TPMA
2. Book reviews
3. TPM Journal

Tags

1. 2025

Date Created
15th October 2025