



Black as Blood

Seanan McGuire

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Things are getting serious between Ryan Yukimura and Istas of the Waheela—enough so that it's time for Istas to experience one of the great milestones of a tanuki relationship. It's time for her to meet the parents. Of course, that means flying to the other side of the country, in a plane packed full of humans, to spend time in someone else's territory. What could possibly go wrong?

Unfortunately for Istas, the humans aren't the problem. When confronted with the stark reality that she and Ryan will never be members of the same species, will she be able to continue with the relationship? Or will she be forced to admit that blood will always tell, and that in the cryptid world, she will always be a monster?

Black as Blood Details

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From Reader Review Black as Blood for online ebook

Jessica ❁ ⇒ Silverbow ⇒ ❁ Rabid Reads-no-more says

Reviewed by: Rabid Reads

2.6 - Black as Blood

4 stars

Would it be redundant if I chanted "Istas" again? *chants* *Istas, Istas, Istas . . .*

Oh well. Can't be helped.

1. Ryan's family, with the possible exception of his sister Christine, SUCK.
2. Istas is brave and determined and loyal and ALL the good things.

I love her. She deserves happiness. She deserves to be more than the cryptid community's opinion of Waheela. *grows*

Fiona says

I did not like this place, which smelled too strongly of judgment, and not at all of home.

These Ryan and Istas stories are just the best - Seanan McGuire manages to capture all the complication of family and prejudice, and packs so much feeling into such a short story. Absolutely excellent.

K.F. says

I love istas and my heart is breaking....

Meredith says

Go Istas!!!

Robin (Bridge Four) says

Poor Istas, Ryan's family was pretty horrible all things considered.

I like them together and it was interesting to get some more background into waheela and why Ryan is maybe everything Istas would want in a mate.

But like the first time may people meet there future mother in laws when you are different cultures and species it is not going to be smooth sailing when they thought their son would pick a different path.

Mayhem now please.

Louisa says

Loved seeing Izzy with Ryan's family, and yeah, that she'll fight for them! Loved it!

Jessica says

This post was originally posted on Notes of a Book Lover

Thank you to the ever-generous Seanan McGuire for providing us with another short story set in the InCryptid world!

This is the first story I read that has Istas and Ryan as the main characters. (There is one before this but I haven't read it yet). I like this new point of view because it shows me what Istas is thinking and the difficulties she encounters in being a better and more considerate Waheela. This short story definitely adds to the depth of the InCryptid series.

I find Ryan, Christine, Michael and Paul very interesting because there isn't much development of them in the short story but I really like what I saw from the glimpses I caught. I would love to know more about them.

However, I think that this short story could have been further developed. The last scene, when Istas expresses her intentions to Ryan's mum, is a tad too abrupt for me. Ryan's mum accepts Istas too easily and fast after her strong opposition at the start of the short story.

Just saying, I dislike Michael because he seems mean. At first, I was rather sympathetic to him because his parents were going to force him to breed with another woman even though he had a lover. But he was so mean to Istas! Now I'm not going to sympathise him!

Overall, I still like this short story for the alternative POV it provides. I would definitely recommend this short story to any InCryptid fan.

Sabrina says

I adore Istas.

Marjolein says

Read all my reviews on <http://urlphantomhive.booklikes.com>

Not focusing on the Price family, this short story rather follows Iestas and Ryan as they go through a daunting phase in any relationship, let alone when being two different kinds of Cryptids.

Another nice story, but I didn't like it too much as some of the characters were extremely prejudiced.

Jenevieve says

Review first published on My Blog. Check out all my reviews there!

Ryan, a tanuki, has asked his girlfriend Iestas, a waheela, to travel cross-country to meet his family. To a tanuki this is a huge deal as their species is almost extinct and mating is an imperative among all fertile members of the species. Since the tanuki is odd in that they can breed true with any other species this doesn't seem like a big deal until you realize that waheela are vicious predators that tend to eat their young. Needless to say, Ryan's tanuki mother is not a fan of Iestas. Iestas manages her temper beautifully (waheela are also famous for their hair-trigger temper) and things really go about as well as can be expected.

Iestas and Ryan are not hugely prominent figures in the series but it's sweet to watch their relationship grow in these short stories.

Sarah says

You know that saying "be careful what you wish for" well I should have heeded that before getting excited about the fact we were getting to meet Ryan's family because unfortunately they're a rather prejudiced and mean lot. Not as violent and aggressive as Iestas' family for sure but certainly much ruder.

You see Ryan is a tanuki, a Japanese shapeshifter with several forms but all apart from the human version have similarities with the Japanese raccoon dog. His kind has been nearly wiped out by the Covenant of St George (we already know what a lovely bunch they aren't from the main books!) so his family have been encouraging Ryan to find a mate and settle down. Unfortunately they're not happy that he's chosen Iestas. She's a waheela and her breed is considered monsters by most of the other cryptids. Iestas was born on the frozen wastes of the north and she has to fight against the constant hunger that is inside all waheela but Iestas has worked hard to get to where she is now and Ryan adores her.

I was incredibly annoyed with Ryan's family (especially his AWFUL mother!) because they didn't even give Iestas a chance before shunning her. I was prepared for them to be wary but they should trust Ryan enough to know he wouldn't bring home some kind of a monster who was going to attack them all as soon as she walked through the door and I felt they could have at least tried to get to know Iestas before being so mean to her. I absolutely loved Iestas' set down to his mother but it ended a bit abruptly after that and I needed his family to have made more of an effort to apologise. Just extending it by a single scene where they attempted to build bridges would have made it a much more satisfying read. It seems a bit petty to complain about a free short story though and I'm glad I still have one more left to read about this couple so I'm hoping things will be resolved in **White as a Raven's Wing**.

Holly Hand Grenade says

"I require a hairdresser, a manicurist, and a steak the size of my torso."
Ryan smiled. *"You got it, honey."*

We met Ryan and Ista in Discount Armageddon and learned more about them in Midnight Blue-Light Special. Ista is probably my favorite character so far. I love how completely alien she seems while being completely comfortable with herself. Ryan takes her home to "meet the parents." Yeah-that went well.

Angela says

So, since we met Ista's family in the last short, I was hopeful that we'd meet Ryan's family under somewhat better circumstances soon.

I ... kind of got my wish. We do meet Ryan's family here, but it's not all I was hoping for.

Thankfully, Ryan and Ista make up for that. Ista is amazing and confident and everything I want. Ryan loves her, is supportive and awesome and doesn't care what his family thinks.

Also, the biology stuff in here about mating and children is fascinating to me.

Kathy Davie says

It's one of Seanan McGuire's free short stories (PDF, MOBI, and ePUB) — 2.5 in the InCryptid urban fantasy series with the focus on Antimony Price.

My Take

The story is useful information, but definitely NOT one of my favorites. I suspect it's that bitch of a mother. Hmm, I also think I'm missing the Aeslin mice. Not that I'm that impressed with the rest of the Yukimura family. The ending was also too abrupt. *Lord, whine, whine, whine. It's freakin' free story, and I'm whining!*

It is an interesting introduction to waheela culture as well as to Izzy. You'd never expect something as big as she is to be so concerned with her very feminine clothing. Her stilted speech and excessively literal interpretation of what's said to her is another fascinating aspect.

The prejudice, the bigotry are set against the very civilized waheela. I do love how Izzy confronts Ryan's mom at the end!

The Story

It's the first time Ryan has brought a girl home to meet his family, and he's tense. He's tanuki, she's waheela, and a tanuki *must* mate and have children to build their species back up after the Covenant massacres.

The Characters

Ryan Yukimura is the bartender at the Freakshow; he's also a **tanuki**.

Istas "Izzy" is a waheela who loves wearing Lolita-style clothing — it's obsessively important to her to dress appropriately for any occasion. She's also worked very hard to overcome her waheela nature. To pull in her constant need to destroy.

Ryan's family is...

...in Seattle and already hate Izzy. **Yukimura "Ako" Chiyako** is his mother. His father, **Paul**, is human and a witch (small charms and runic magic). **Christine** and **Michael** are two of his siblings.

Kitty owns the **Freakshow**.

Tanuki are a Japanese therianthrope capable of transforming into a variety of forms which echo the Japanese racoon-dog. **Waheela** live in the cold and suffer from constant hunger and is one of the reasons they eat their young. They are considered mindless killers who happen to look like the First People of Canada in their human form while they look like wolf-bears in their animal form. The **Covenant of St. George** killed most of the tanuki and mating is excessively important to them.

The Cover and Title

The cover is Izzy with her feathered fascinator and a fitted deep red velvet coat with wide lapels. It's a contrast with the dressed-up Izzy against the huge trees of a Seattle forest.

The title is a bit of a conundrum. I want to say it's Ryan's family with their actions as "Black as Blood", but it could also be how the waheela are perceived in the crytozoid community.

Steven says

Ryan's family is full of asshats. >:(
