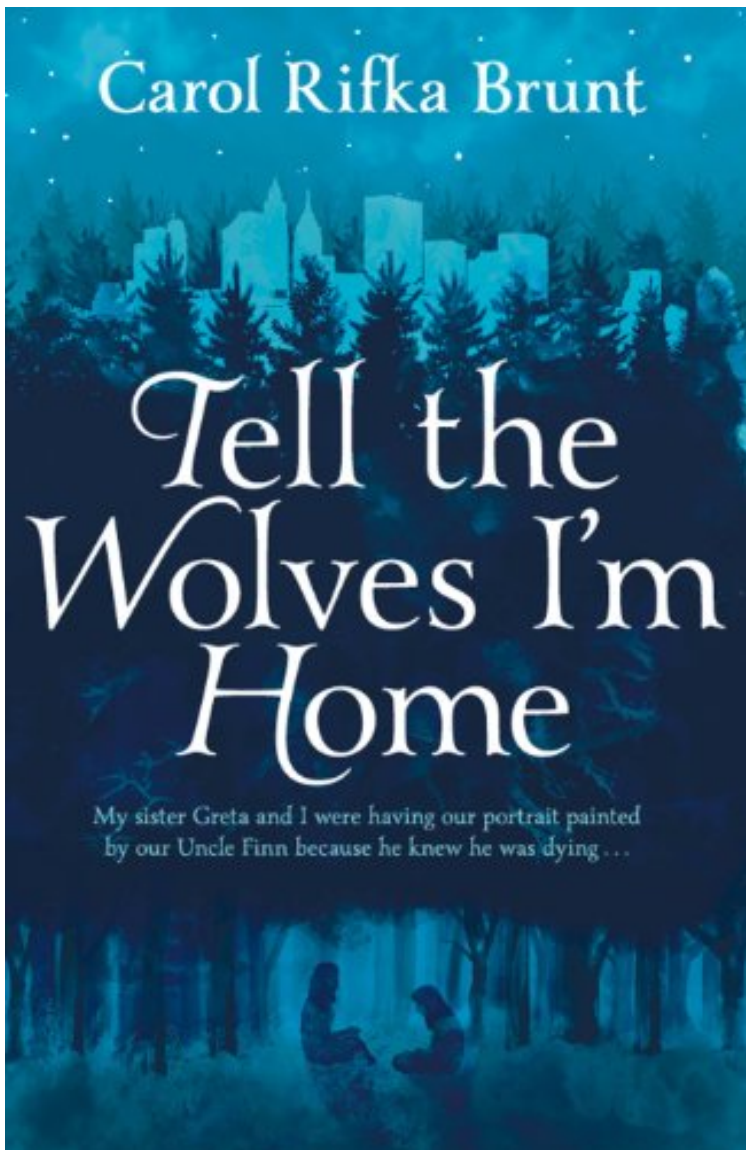


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Tell the Wolves I'm Home (English Edition)



Par Carol Rifka Brunt
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Description :

Prsentation de l'diteurThere's only one person who has ever truly understood fourteen-year-old June Elbus, and that's her uncle, the renowned painter, Finn Weiss. Shy at school and distant from her once inseparable older sister, June can only be herself in Finn's company; he is her godfather, confident, and best friend. So when he dies far too young of a mysterious illness that Junes mother can barely bring herself to discuss, June's world is turned upside down. At the funeral, she notices a strange man lingering just beyond the crowd, and a few days later, June receives a package in the mail. Inside is a beautiful teapot she recognizes from Finn's apartment, and a note from Toby, the stranger, asking for an opportunity to meet. A the two begin to spend time together, June realises she's not the only one who misses Finn, and if she can bring

herself to trust this unexpected friend, he might just be the one she needs the most. Tell the Wolves I'm Home is a tender story of love lost and found, an unforgettable portrait of the way compassion can make us whole again.

ExtraitOneMy sister, Greta, and I were having our portrait painted by our uncle Finn that afternoon because he knew he was dying. This was after I understood that I wasn't going to grow up and move into his apartment and live there with him for the rest of my life. After I stopped believing that the AIDS thing was all some kind of big mistake. When he first asked, my mother said no. She said there was something macabre about it. When she thought of the two of us sitting in Finn's apartment with its huge windows and the scent of lavender and orange, when she thought of him looking at us like it might be the last time he would see us, she couldn't bear it. And, she said, it was a long drive from northern Westchester all the way into Manhattan. She crossed her arms over her chest, looked right into Finn's bird-blue eyes, and told him it was just hard to find the time these days. Tell me about it, he said. That's what broke her. I'm fifteen now, but I was still fourteen that afternoon. Greta was sixteen. It was 1986, late December, and we'd been going to Finn's one Sunday afternoon a month for the last six months. It was always just my mother, Greta, and me. My father never came, and he was right not to. He wasn't part of it. I sat in the back row of seats in the minivan. Greta sat in the row in front of me. I tried to arrange it like that so I could stare at her without her knowing it. Watching people is a good hobby, but you have to be careful about it. You can't let people catch you staring at them. If people catch you, they treat you like a first-class criminal. And maybe they're right to do that. Maybe it should be a crime to try to see things about people they don't want you to see. With Greta, I liked to watch the way her dark, sleek hair reflected the sun and the way the ends of her glasses looked like two little lost tears hiding just behind her ears. My mother had on KICK FM, the country station, and even though I don't really like country music, sometimes, if you let it, the sound of all those people singing their hearts out can bring to mind big old family barbecues in the backyard and snowy hillsides with kids sledding and Thanksgiving dinners. Wholesome stuff. That's why my mother liked to listen to it on the way to Finn's. Nobody talked much on those trips to the city. It was just the smooth glide of the van and the croony country music and the gray Hudson River with hulking gray New Jersey on the other side of it. I kept my eyes on Greta the whole time, because it stopped me from thinking about Finn too much. The last time we'd visited was a rainy Sunday in November. Finn had always been slightlike Greta, like my mother, like I wished I was but on that visit I saw that he'd moved into a whole new category of skinny. His belts were all too big, so instead he'd knotted an emerald-green necktie around his waist. I was staring at that tie, wondering when he might have worn it last, trying to imagine what kind of occasion would have been right for something so bright and iridescent, when suddenly Finn looked up from the painting, brush midair, and said to us, It won't be long now. Greta and I nodded, even though neither of us knew whether he meant the painting or him dying. Later, at home, I told my mother he looked like a deflated balloon. Greta said he looked like a small gray moth wrapped in a gray spider's web. That's because everything about Greta is more beautiful, even the way she says things. It was December now, the week before Christmas, and we were stuck in traffic near the George Washington Bridge. Greta turned around in her seat to look at me. She gave me a twisty little smile and reached into her coat pocket to pull out a scrap of mistletoe. She'd done this for the last two Christmases, carried a piece of mistletoe around to pounce on people with. She took it to school with her and terrorized us at home with it. Her favorite trick was to sneak up behind our parents and then leap up to hold it over their heads. They were not the kind to show affection out in the open, which is why Greta loved to make them do it. In the van, Greta waved the mistletoe around in the air, brushing it right up into my face. You wait, June, she said. I'll hold this over you and Uncle Finn and then what'll you do? She smiled at me, waiting. I knew what she was thinking. I'd have to be unkind to Finn or risk catching AIDS, and she wanted to watch me decide. Greta knew the kind of friend Finn was to me. She knew that he took me to art galleries, that he taught me how to soften my drawings of faces just by rubbing a finger along the pencil lines. She knew that she wasn't part of any of that. I shrugged. Hell only kiss my cheek. But even as I said it, I thought of how Finn's lips were always chapped to shreds now. How sometimes there would be little cracks where they'd started to bleed. Greta leaned in, resting her arms on the back of her seat. Yeah, but how do you know that the germs from a kiss can't seep in through the skin of your cheek? How can you be sure they can't somehow swim into your blood right through your open pores? I didn't know. And I didn't want to die. I didn't want to turn gray. I shrugged again. Greta turned around in her seat, but even from behind I could tell she was smiling. It started to sleet, and the little nuggets of wet ice splatted against the window as we drove through the streets of the city. I tried to think of something good to say back to Greta, something to let her know that Finn would never put me in danger. I thought about all the things Greta didn't know about Finn.

Like the way he'd let me know the portrait was just an excuse. How he'd seen the look on my face the very first time we'd gone down for the painting sessions. How he'd waited for my mother and Greta to go ahead into the living room, and in that moment, when it was only the two of us in the narrow hallway inside Finn's apartment door, he'd put his hand on my shoulder, leaned in, and whispered in my ear, How else could I get all these Sundays with you, Crocodile? But that was something I would never tell Greta. Instead, when we were in the dim parking garage, climbing out of the van, I blurted out, Anyway, skins waterproof. Greta pressed her door closed gently, then walked around the van to my side. She stood there for a few seconds, staring at me. At my big, clumsy body. She tugged the straps of her backpack tight against her little sparrow's shoulders and shook her head. Believe what you want, she said, turning away and heading for the stairs. But that was impossible and Greta knew it. You could try to believe what you wanted, but it never worked. Your brain and your heart decided what you were going to believe and that was that. Whether you liked it or not. My mother spent the hours at Uncle Finn's in his kitchen, making pots of tea for us in a magnificent Russian teapot Finn had that was colored gold and red and blue with little dancing bears etched around the sides. Finn said that pot was reserved for serving tea to his favorite people. It was always waiting for us when we came. From the living room we could hear my mother organizing Finn's cabinets, taking out jars and cans, plates and mugs, and loading them back in again. Every once in a while she'd come out to give us tea, which would usually go cold because Finn was busy painting and Greta and I weren't allowed to move.

All those Sundays, my mother hardly looked at Finn. It was obvious that she was being broken up into pieces about her only brother dying. But sometimes I thought there was more. She also never looked at the painting. She'd come out and set the teapot down and walk right past the easel, craning her head away. Sometimes I thought it wasn't Finn at all. Sometimes it felt like it was the canvas and brushes and paint she was trying not to see. That afternoon we sat for an hour and a half while Finn painted us. He had on Mozart's Requiem, which Finn and I both loved. Even though I don't believe in God, last year I convinced my mother to let me join the Catholic church choir in our town just so I could sing the Mozart Kyrie at Easter. I can't even really sing, but the thing is, if you close your eyes when you sing in Latin, and if you stand right at the back so you can keep one hand against the cold stone wall of the church, you can pretend you're in the Middle Ages. That's why I did it. That's what I was in it for. The Requiem was a secret between me and Finn.

Just the two of us. We didn't even need to look at each other when he put it on. We both understood. He'd taken me to a concert at a beautiful church on 84th Street once and told me to close my eyes and listen. That's when I first heard it. That's when I first fell in love with that music. It creeps up on you, doesn't it, he'd said. It lulls you into thinking it's pleasant and harmless, it bumbles along, and then all of a sudden, boom, there it is rising up all menacing. All big drums and high screaming strings and deep dark voices. Then just as fast it backs right down again. See, Crocodile? See? Crocodile was a name Finn invented for me because he said I was like something from another time that lurked around, watching and waiting, before I made my mind up about things. I loved when he called me that. He sat in that church, trying to make sure I understood the music. See? he said again. And I did see. At least I thought I saw. Or maybe I only pretended I did, because...

Revue de presse Advance praise for "Tell the Wolves I'm Home" "[A] transcendent debut... Peopled by characters who will live in readers' imaginations long after the final page is turned, Brunt's novel is a beautifully bittersweet mix of heartbreak and hope."--"Booklist" (starred review)"In ["Tell the Wolves I'm Home"], 15-year-old June must come to terms with the death of her beloved uncle Finn, an artist, from AIDS in 1980s New York. ...What begins as a wary relationship between former rivals for Finn's affection blossoms touchingly."--"PW" "A gorgeously evocative novel about love, loss, and the ragged mysteries of the human heart, all filtered through the achingly real voice of a remarkable young heroine. How can you not fall in love with a book that shows you how hope can make a difference?"--Caroline Leavitt, "New York Times" bestselling author of "Pictures of You" "'Tell the Wolves I'm Home' is a charming, sure-handed, and deeply sympathetic debut. Brunt writes about family, adolescence, and the human heart with great candor, insight, and pathos."--Jonathan Evison, "New York Times" bestselling author of "West of Here" "'Tell the Wolves I'm Home' is a tale as charming and magnetic as the missing character at its heart. It's a love story of the most unusual kind--several love stories, really--vivid and madly relatable, heartening as well as heartbreaking. Brunt is a captivating storyteller and a wonderful new voice."--Rebecca Makkai, author of "The Borrower" "Not since "To Kill A Mockingbird "have I read a piece of fiction that so beautifully captures the point of view of a young person, especially one so inspiringly unable to accept the prejudices of others....at turns getting away- with-it exhilarating and pass-the-tissues heartbreaking -- but also a testament to the power of secrets kept and revealed." --"Metrosource" "An astonishingly assured debut,

set in 1980s New York at the height of the Aids crisis... It's a bittersweet tale of unrequited love, family portraits and uncovered secrets' --Marie Claire's Good Book Club choice'Almost painfully fine-tuned, this rite-of-passage novel draws us into the unspeakable gap between nostalgia for childhood and the fascinating horrors of adulthood' --Psychologies'This debut is moving and tender' --We Love This Book'I thoroughly enjoyed this debut novel. Well written and a very thought-provoking read... A well-balanced and inspiring coming-of-age novel.' --New Books magazine'Carol Rifka Brunt's amazing novel explores life after the loss of a loved one.' --Featured in The Style List in Stylist magazine'This beautifully written coming-of-age story is moving and original' --Irish Times'In this tremendous first novel, Rifka Brunt masterfully uses the subject of forbidden love in a portrayal of grief worked through and identity discovered through facing the truth.

Beautifully written with compassion and insight, *Tell The Wolves I'm Home* must be one of the stars of 2012. A must for your book-list.' --Red Online'It's quite different from many of the books I read and almost the polar opposite of *Fifty Shades* but it more than deserves the buzz. It's set in the mid- 80s, when HIV and Aids were just becoming words people understand. June is 14 when her uncle Finn dies from Aids. Before his death, the celebrated artist paints a portrait of her and her 16-year-old sister Greta, and this painting becomes the heart of her story. What follows is a heart-breaking, insightful novel, in which both June and Greta struggle to come to terms with their confused feelings over their uncle, their parents, boys, and even their sisterly relationship --Fabulous Magazine blog"A beautifully written tale" --Heat"A unique, magically rendered friendship ... As painful on the trials of adolescence as it is about impending mortality" --Guardian"No one is more devastated than June when her Uncle Finn dies of Aids, or so she thinks until she meets his partner Toby. How, though, can they ever console each other when her family blames Toby for Finn's untimely death." --Must-read literary fiction round-up in Sunday Express