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The author of *The War Between the Tates* and the Pulitzer prize-winning *Foreign Affairs* now brings her irresistible wit to the ghost story. In nine spooky tales, Alison Lurie writes of women haunted by ghosts both literal and metaphorical: A woman about to marry Mr. Right is visited by the spirit of his first wife; a dead fiance haunts a foreign service officer every time she has an intimate moment with another man; the ghost of a girl in a Halloween costume disconcerts the perfect housewife. A secretary on a diet begins to see obese people everywhere she looks; a self-conscious poet is shadowed by her intrusive doppelganger; and a capricious, malevolent spirit seems to have inhabited an acquisitive matron's prized piece of furniture. Delightfully strange and beautifully told, these nine tales show Alison Lurie at her luminous best.

Women and Ghosts: Tales Details

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From Reader Review Women and Ghosts: Tales for online ebook

Judith Evens says

This was a surprisingly good collection of short stories! I was a bit hesitant to buy this book because I am usually not a big fan of short stories (once I get into a character I want to know more about her/his story), but this was such a fun and at times haunting read. If you're a fan of Alison Lurie's novels you should give this one a try as well. The characters are very similar to her other novels, which I really enjoyed.

"The volume a poet has touched and signed develops an instant invisible aura, becomes a minor sort of holy icon in the religion of poetry. A religion, yes, or at least a cult, with its own temples and altars, its dead saints, its living hierarchy of priests and priestesses; its deacons, vergers and sextons (the critics), and its statistically small but devout congregations. Yes, and the rare-book dealers are like those shoddy sellers of religious goods whose shops you see near European cathedrals - not true believers, merely peddlers with a sharp eye to profits." - Story no. 10: The Double Poet

Jashvina Shah says

It was passable until she got up to the story that was based in India. You can always tell when a non-Indian is describing the country in a really xenophobic way. Can't in good faith give this anything more than a star

Louise Beilby says

What an intriguing and frequently funny collection of stories this is.

I picked up this book at a BookCrossing meetup, and didn't have high hopes for it because there was nothing on the cover which indicated if it was a novel or a series of stories, or what it was about. In retrospect, the title is a giveaway - it's about a number of very different women who all have an unsettling experience with a spirit, or, in one case, an apparently possessed piece of furniture. That was my favourite of the stories because it was such a ridiculous premise but made no apology for it, and the ending was hilarious even though it should have been unforgivably daft.

I don't believe in ghosts myself so found that occasionally I was unable to suspend the necessary amount of disbelief to really enjoy the story. Still, this is high quality escapism.

Lori says

I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the stories included in this collection- especially after reading earlier comments here on goodreads where readers gave a review of "lame." I guess I should've know from that unimaginative adjective that I shouldn't rely too heavily on those opinions.

This collection is elegant, intuitive, and imaginative. Society is becoming increasingly obsessed with the

paranormal world, and these stories are able to integrate elements of that obsession without being heavy-handed or overly dramatic. A good read, unless you consider Stephen King's fiction to be the epitome of horror and supernatural literature. Then you might find these stories lame...

Fran says

A very enjoyable read -- made me laugh a lot.

Deborah Markus says

This is one of my favorite books. I reread it incessantly. All of the stories enjoy the benefit of Lurie's finely developed sense of humor, even the ones that end on an eerie note. And Lurie is deeply creative, playing merrily with exactly what qualifies as a ghost. A haunted piece of furniture? Visitations from a woman who's still alive (and may not even realize she's "haunting" her ex-husband's new fiancée)? A fertility goddess manifesting in our world just for a moment (maybe)?

Some of the stories are genuinely eerie; some are absolutely upbeat; a few are ambiguous, so far as "happy" endings are concerned. You don't have to be familiar with Lurie's novels to enjoy this book deeply, but those who have read "The War Between The Tates" or "The Truth About Lorin Jones" or "Real People" may recognize some characters in this collection.

This is one of those books I'd pay extra to be able to read for the first time again.

Kirstin says

My first exposure to Lurie's work, this collection of short stories was a fun read. Most of the stories featured in this small collection were reminiscent of a classic Victorian or Edwardian ghost story. A great little tome (little being the sticking word; there are only nine stories and the entire volume is under 200pages), especially if you're after a classic type of story told from an exclusively feminine lens and voice.

Gerhard says

Alison Lurie's collection of short stories concerns itself with an array of female characters -- confident, rational and self-assured for the most part -- who are confronted with inexplicable situations that could be construed as supernatural or uncanny. But in at least some of these tales there would appear to be room for indicating that varying degrees of delusion and paranoia could perhaps be the source of these disturbing experiences.

Whether real or imagined, most of Lurie's stories are good for a tingling spine and an involuntary shudder. By this I do not suggest that this book can stand up to any classic horror story collections out there; but then neither would the author expect to be included with any of the illustrious names in that field. Her creation is a literary horse of a different color: subtle glimpses into ordered lives suddenly turned upside down, bringing

confusion and disorientation in its wake.

I think the title is somewhat misleading. Only a few of the pieces here are ghost stories in the strictly traditional sense. The ones that could be classified as such happen to be among the most effective, notably "The Pool People" and "Another Halloween". The former has at its center an eerie swimming pool in sunny Key West that is home to two vengeful spirits, while the latter makes good use of its rainy Halloween setting and delivers a truly unsettling final paragraph in which a "bat-black" umbrella features.

On original publication some prominent reviewers were of the opinion that this collection was disappointing coming from a Pulitzer Prize-winning author (for "Foreign Affairs") and one of the most respected of American novelists. I'm not going to raise arguments for or against this viewpoint. I can only say that I enjoyed Lurie's stories and will continue to think of them with an agreeable glow.

Eugene Pollock says

This was a super Halloween treat, full of clever literary tricks. My favorite 5-star stories were The Double Poet, In the Shadow, and Another Halloween. Very creative twists on what is meant by the word "ghost."

Carol Masciola says

An eerie and enaging collection of ghostly stories -- not always about ghosts in the usual sense. A woman engaged to be married keeps seeing the phantom-like manifestation of her fiance's ex-wife wedged in a space on the kitchen floor next to the refrigerator, a poet becomes convinced that she has a lookalike somewhere giving readings, signing books and pretending to be her, etc. I wouldn't give every single story five stars, but the best ones (including these I mentioned) I would! Wonderful writing by a great talent.

Jo says

A collection of eerie short stories about haunted women at moments of crisis and decision in their lives. Well written, wryly amusing at times, chilling at others. A short, enjoyable read.

Redfox5 says

I'm not the biggest fan of short stories, I find there is never enough time given to each story. However I enjoyed these ghost stories. I didn't find any of them scary though which was a shame because I kinda like being creeped out. I liked 'Something Borrowed, Something Blue' best but didn't really want it to end there. And 'The Double Poet' was my least favorite, I felt it dragged on too much. One of the short stories that could have been shorter!

Saara says

A little gem of a collection, *Women & Ghosts* held me enthralled with its tales. Ten women come face to face with something not quite of this world and find themselves wondering if they have in fact gone mad. We cannot be sure, and that's part of the charm.

I have lately come to appreciate the supernatural genre, so when I found the little paperback in a box of our late professor's books that had been donated to my student guild, I decided to pick it up and see whether it was a good read. Now I'm glad I did, and will probably try to get my hands on Lurie's other work.

While I did indeed like this book, it's an unfortunate fact that I have way too many in my possession already. Thus it shall be freed.

Mindy Steinberg says

Good Eerie Fun

This compilation of "ghost stories" proved an unexpected treat to this reader, a fan of Alison Lurie's novels. The short, beautifully written tales have a gentle, lyrical spookiness that entertains and enchants, providing an especially satisfying experience. It left me wanting more.

Kat says

This is not going to be your supernatural walk on the wild side, a stifled scream and unable to turn the pages and I feel the title, also, doesn't suffice, making it sound as though the stories have a vague, haunting quality: complex and intuitive. Alison Lurie is a good writer, and I think this is why I enjoyed reading them, being walked through pleasantly with nothing in the plot lurching out, terrifying or suspenseful. For another writer I would probably be harsher, but I like Lurie and her style and had a good time reading the book. What can I say?

Also liked how one character- Gary Mumpson, an Oklahoma businessman is seemingly related or recycled into another from 'Foreign Affairs'-Chuck Mumpson.

Also, A+ for the cover of my copy.
