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Shani Struthers

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"The dead of night, Jess, I wish they'd leave me alone."

Jessamin Wade's husband is dead - a death she feels wholly responsible for. As a way of coping with her grief, she keeps him 'alive' in her imagination - talking to him every day, laughing with him, remembering the good times they had together. She thinks she will 'hear' him better if she goes somewhere quieter, away from the hustle and bustle of her hometown, Brighton. Her destination is Glenelk in the Highlands of Scotland, a region her grandfather hailed from and the subject of a much-loved painting from her childhood.

Arriving in the village late at night, it is a bleak and forbidding place. However, the house she is renting - Skye Croft - is warm and welcoming. Quickly she meets the locals. Her landlord, Fionnlagh Maccaillin, is an ex-army man with obvious and not so obvious injuries. Maggie, who runs the village shop, is also an enigma, startling her with her strange 'insights'. But it is Stan she instantly connects with. Maccaillin's grandfather and a frail, old man, he is grief-stricken from the recent loss of his beloved Beth.

All four are caught in the past. All four are unable to let go. Their lives entwining in mysterious ways, can they help each other to move on or will they always belong to the ghosts that haunt them?

From the author of the bestselling *The Haunting of Highdown Hall*.

Jessamine Details

Date :

ISBN :

Author : Shani Struthers

Format :

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From Reader Review Jessamine for online ebook

Julia Peet says

I LOVED this story. I found it very emotional and I must admit, it had me in tears at times! The emotional conflict of "letting go" a loved one was uppermost in this lovely story. The beautiful Highlands of Scotland were brought to life by the author - I could almost have been there! The new relationships built up by Jessamine in her "escape" to Scotland were intriguing and the brooding "Finn" was a character I was attracted to straight away. Finn's grandfather was a heartwarming addition to the characters and was instrumental in moulding the whole story together. As a stand alone novel, I found it unputdownable, and it made me so thankful for my Kindle, without which I probably wouldn't have discovered this talented author. Thanks again Shani, and keep 'em coming!

Carol Peace says

Jessamine's husband had died and she wanted to move away as she felt she was instrumental in his death and she was haunted by his voice. The place she moved to in Skye was a memory of a painting that her parents had found when her grandfather had died. No one knew why he had it but it looked like just the place for her to sort her thoughts out. She meets the painter while she is there and is told the loch in the picture really exists and she can't wait to visit it. The descriptions of the Scottish highlands made me feel quite at home there and I couldn't help but fall in love with the area and the people she meets and makes friends with while she is there. Her husband is still with her in voice only so it's not a conventional ghost story but it is haunting.

I really enjoyed this book and it is so different to the Psychic Surveys books yet just as compelling. I loved it.

Thank you to TBC for introducing me to this book.

Carol Oates says

I want to live in Skye Croft, let me just get that out there first. Oh my gosh, this book...

My disclaimer is that I knew before the first page that I would enjoy this book based on reading Shani's past writing. She has a magical way with prose, her descriptions are sublime, and the reader is submerged into the emotion of every scene.

I wouldn't exactly call Jessamine a ghost story. That's just too simple. It's a haunting story of lost love and guilt and how the past can destroy the present by holding on too tightly. It's also a mystery that unravels slowly and draws you in to the point you think you won't be able to breathe without answers.

Jessamine was blissfully happy and desperately in love with her slightly older husband, but blames herself for his death because of a stupid fight before the accident that took his life. He took care of her in life and in death, left her financially, if not emotionally secure. She continues to hold onto him, convinced he is still with her in spirit. James is the only thing she wants really, so, she retreats to a place that did give her comfort as a child – an old painting of an unnamed loch in Scotland. Her only clue to its whereabouts is the area her

grandfather came from.

Glenelk has a tiny population and is deep enough in the Highlands to retain a touch of Celtic magic. Shani Struthers captures the entire area with such vivid enticing imagery, that there was a couple of times that I stopped reading to look at pictures. She made me want to be there among the people, glens, fairy pools, and mountains.

The Highlands are almost a character in their own right in this book, one of a number of fascinating characters. Each so fully developed, that they were ready to walk off the pages into real life.

It's through loss that Jessamin connects with the other main characters, each holding onto their own almost as tightly as she is. The problem for all of them is moving forward means letting go and none of them are capable of doing it alone.

I laughed and I cried reading this. I felt the characters' exhilaration when life began to creep back into their blood, but also their fear. If I can describe it, it would be like emotions tied up and as a reader I was desperate for the characters to break free.

This really is a must read. A absolute gem of a read, especially now during the winter months when it's perfect for curling up by a fire.

Caroline Mitchell says

I listened to this book on audio and in my opinion, it's the best way to enjoy it. The narrator's voice was amazing, full of depth and emotion. I thoroughly enjoyed it. Funnily enough, I've been watching 'Outlander' on Amazon prime, so this book tied in nicely. I've never been to Scotland but I've always been in love with it - which may sound quite strange! Perhaps it's my own Irish upbringing that lends me an affinity to the rugged landscape, dark and enchanting waters and people who are brimming with character. Jessamine brings all of this to life and more. It is a gentle read, and such a pace invites you to get to know all the characters as you walk with them on their journey. I enjoyed each and every one of them, and the story played out in my mind as if it were on screen. I wasn't sure what to expect when I began this book, it has supernatural undertones but those which enchant rather than scare. For me, it is a love story which is beautifully brought to life by the author, who has a wonderful way with words. A warm and mystical read - I highly recommend this book.

jhanami says

I have to start by admitting that this is absolutely not my usual genre and I was wondering if I might have made a terrible mistake to pick up not just one but both volumes in this series... but lo and behold, I really enjoyed myself and whizzed through them in a couple of days. They are very well written, insightful but still entertaining, the setting is fabulous, the supernatural elements work extremely well, the characters are likeable and interesting and whilst they are true to what one expects from romantic leads, they also stay mercifully clear of being clichéd cardboard characters. Highly enjoyable and just the thing for a cosy night in!

Gary Dowden says

If there is such a genre as “gentle paranormal” then Jessamine by Shani Struthers would fit neatly into it. Having read all the Psychic Surveys series, and it's spin off's, I was looking forward to this standalone and surprised at how I'd managed to miss it previously!

Jessamin Wade is haunted by guilt over the death of her husband James, eighteen months after the event, and decides that a clean break away from her home in Brighton is needed. She's drawn to Glenelk, a remote village in Scotland where her grandfather originally came from and, on arrival, is relieved that she is still able to have conversations with James, despite his death.

As time wears on and she becomes easily accepted and integrated into her new home, she becomes firm friends with Maggie, Finn and Finn's elderly grand-father Stan, all of whom are long term residents and all have secrets from the past which gradually become uncovered and unravelled as the story progresses. Jess spends a lot of time chatting to, and helping Stan and it soon becomes clear that a much loved painting from her youth is actually a loch very near by.

This isn't a “shock scare” or “blood and guts” story of the afterlife or paranormal. It's about grief, regret and blame and although it's a slow burner, it's never dull or drags as the reader really gets to know the characters and gradually begin to learn of their past and how they all have been through shocking events that have changed them permanently.

Jess and Stan's conversations are great as revelations of generations past come to light and Finn is a very complex character who, right until the end, I really couldn't make up mind about how I felt about him.

Oddly for a paranormal novel, the characters of the afterlife aren't actually touched up that often and when they are, it's not for revenge or for violent means, it's because the living still need to keep that connection for whatever reason. It's a really well told story, poignant at times and even with a bit of a message as regards “blame” and how we sometimes hold onto it unnecessarily

Jesse Christiansen says

This is a novel that is remarkable in its natural, unhurried flow, as well as a hauntingly beautiful charm that births from making its surroundings, along with its past, equally vital characters in the story. The only other time I have been this enchanted by such a tale was when I first watched the movie, Ghost Story (1981), which achieves a similar narrative tapestry.

Just like the simple, eerie painting that Struthers makes into a minor character, everything in this well-crafted novel is unveiled in a seamless, less-is-more, gentle ghosting of the reader. While all the characters are appropriately developed, Jessamine, Stan, and Finn are particularly well done. I can even still hear Finn's voice after the novel has ended. The personal character growth of Stan, but especially Jessamine and Finn, is impressive. The scenery adds such integral setting to the novel, and is so well described, I find myself desperately wanting to visit Scotland and its lochs. Furthermore, the main house of the novel ranks up there with top haunted house settings. Finally, I really enjoyed the way the ghosts in this book add chills without

going too far. And the denouement is as beautiful as it is deft.

What a delightful novel. One I shall remember.

Yours in literature,

J.G.C.

A.J. Griffiths-Jones says

Hauntingly written & exquisitely narrated, this audiobook had the hairs standing up on the back of my neck. Young widow Jessamine is a strong main character but is holding on to her beloved James by imagining that he is still with her. Setting up home in the Scottish highlands only pricks the young woman's senses further, as she soon discovers that she's not the only one keeping ghosts from the past. A beautiful tale of loss, love & mystical journeys, the author has captured her subject in a mesmerising tale. I highly recommend the audio version as the narrator has a wonderfully soft & enticing accent that lends itself perfectly to the story.

Caroline says

Shani Struthers is one of my favourite horror authors, I got hooked with *Eve*, read *The Haunting of Highdown Hall* and now this. This novel is very different to *Highdown Hall* but still as eerily haunting. I was captivated by the characters in it and felt like Finn, Stan, Jess and Maggie were my friends by the end of the novel. These are ghost stories with a difference, intelligent and well written. I highly recommend them.

Mistress #darklings says

It's no secret to any of you that I am a huge fan of Shani Struthers. To my deep shame, this is an author I have only just discovered. However, now I've started I'm hungry for more. After reading all of the *Psychic Surveys* series, I was excited about this one as it's a standalone, and promised something completely different. So when I got the opportunity to listen on Audible, I did.

The thought that stays with me after finishing the book is brooding. The whole book from the cover, to the highlands of Scotland, to the characters themselves, all just scream brooding. In a good way obviously.

Jess has lost her husband James in a car accident and is devastated. He was the love of her life, and she doesn't know how to go on without him. So she doesn't. She starts talking to James, asking him for advice, discussing her plans with him, everything. She can't bear to stay where she is, living her old life, seeing the same things day in day out and not have James by her side. So, much to the chagrin of family & friends, Jessamine moves to the Highlands of Scotland. Taking inspiration for the move from a painting her Grandfather had.

Once safely ensconced in her new home, Jess takes her time in meeting the locals. It doesn't take long to make new friends. All the while, Jess is still talking to James. As the story unfolds we are privy to a whole

host of emotions. With this story I found the sense of loss ran deep through all of the characters. Each and everyone had lost something of themselves or someone. From this stemmed the feeling of guilt. Deeply intertwined and playing a major part in this was the emotion of love. The author shows as this story unfolds, that it's extremely difficult to separate your feelings and emotions, how rarely you can have a single feeling or emotion without another being joined to it. It's a well paced storyline, no big surprises jumping out at you, rather a steady tale of the characters stories unfolding with the end result of the reader saying, Aahhh, yes! It all makes sense now.

As we return to the characters themselves, Shani has written some excellent, strong & believably flawed people into it. As a result, we are given characters that as a reader, you can feel a connection with and relate too. A must in a story like this, where you get so drawn in with the emotional side, you feel invested in them as people. We are given a different piece of them as the story unfolds, snippets at a time that come together at the end to make the whole thing come together. The author shows such a descriptive prowess in this book when telling us about the Lochs and mountains, that they, along with the eerie atmosphere are almost like a character in themselves! Always there, always watching, the backdrop to everyones lives. Oh, what they have seen and the secrets they hold.

So what we ultimately have here, is a haunting tale of love & loss. Do coincidences happen or does fate play a part? How long can you keep a secret and at what cost? How one moment, one decision can change the course your life will take for ever. A beautifully written atmospheric novel that draws you and at times is so emotionally charged, it makes your heart race, palms sticky and will leave you with a silent tear or two.

As I listened to this on audible, I need to just tell you how good the narrator is! Toni Frutin brings this fabulous story to life. She has such a clear soft voice, it has an almost calming effect, which makes those emotional points all the more poignant. It's a 10 hour listen, which just flies by! I finished it in two days, which is almost unheard of for me, as I don't always get that time. For this though, I found myself making the time.

Kaz says

Jessamin, is a story with a soul, it is so hauntingly beautiful, Shani Struthers has such a talent for writing supernatural novels, she makes you feel as if you are immersed in the story, and scene, after scene, unfolds around you. Based in the Scottish highlands, where the background is a rugged countryside with raw natural beauty, it is the perfect backdrop for the story of Jessamin, and the characters she encounters after moving to Glenelk to heal after the death of her husband. The friends she makes have their own stories, unbeknown to each of them their futures are so tightly entwined, the question being, will the past, and the broken souls lost in time, let them find the path to happiness, or is it too much to overcome?. I love how Shani Struthers style of writing brings her characters to life, gives them depth and a purpose to fulfil. I can only say, if you enjoy a story that will put a spark into your emotions.... Highly recommended.

Sal says

Beautiful

This a beautiful yet sad story and one I am so glad I read. I have been a fan of Ms Struthers for a while and I have to say this story has really touched my heart.

Richard Gough-Buijs says

Intense, mesmerising and vivid, a novel that will stay with you for a long time to come. Turning a closure into a new beginning. Beautifully written.

Gina Dickerson says

A hauntingly beautiful story which I thoroughly relished from start to finish. The characters are fully fleshed out and the settings so well written it is easy to imagine the delights - and perils - of the Scottish highlands. This is an emotional read which tugged on my heartstrings and I enjoyed the brooding nature, not only of the story in general, but of one of the main characters in particular! Looking forward to devouring the sequel!

Terry (TBC) says

Audiobook Review

This story has it all, ghostly, haunting, loss, guilt, love, hatred. It is a story with friendship tested and the haunted past, ghosts of time. The descriptions of the house and the Loch, so vivid and bring the place to life. The characters seem true to village life and are very likeable. I do have ebook versions of these books by Shani Struthers, but listening to them just gives them an extra life.

I really enjoyed this and the narrator has a lovely voice that goes so well with it, she carries it along.

A good author that is definitely worth listening or reading
