

In the Gloaming

By Alice Elliott Dark

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The gloaming is the hour when dawn or dusk works its spell, making all the world as purple as the Scottish highlands on a summer night. In Alice Elliott Dark's heart-catching title story, a loving mother shares this favorite time of day with her dying son, all the while realizing that for him it is already dark. "In the Gloaming" is populated by characters yearning for twilight moments, existing as they do in indeterminate emotional states not easily defined. Their hearts twist, making our own rush toward them. In "The Secret Spot," Helen dodges the knife of confession during a chance encounter with an old rival. In "Maniacs," two sisters unexpectedly see a man they have both loved. In "Dreadful Language," Frannie follows in her mother's footsteps by marrying for security rather than love. In austere beautiful prose, Dark lays bare the emotional core of her subjects with almost surgical precision. As they go about the business of living -- caring for ailing family members, spending a lonely, sleepless night in a hotel far from home, or reminiscing in an airport coffee shop -- they reveal the ache of adoration and devotion that so poignantly marks our inner lives.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Alice Elliott Dark's second collection of stories evokes the same reaction one might have to a terribly beautiful, unabashedly smart woman--the reader is left both captivated and unnerved. Dark, of course, has a great many expectations to live up to. There's not only the success of her debut collection, *Naked to the Waist*, but the numerous bouquets tossed at the title story of *In the Gloaming*: first John Updike chose it for inclusion in *The Best American Short Stories of the Century*, and then it was made into a fine (and highly visible) film. Yet she meets the challenge with wide range and descriptive acuity--and, better, with an emotional intensity that unifies the entire collection. Her stories largely concern what is said, and what is unsaid, between lovers, neighbors, and family members. "In the Gloaming," for example, revolves around the valedictory conversations of a mother and her son who is dying of AIDS. In "The Secret Spot," a young wife encounters a woman whom she mistakenly identifies as a rival for her husband's affections, and chats herself into an awful, artful epiphany. The protagonist of "Dreadful Language" is haunted by her dead lover, who seems to pass judgment on the suburban existence she has settled for:

He came to me more and more often and was so himself, so surprising and other, that I had to reason with myself severely on my train rides back to Wynnemoor to remember that I was making him up. Or was I? Has anyone ever known for sure the provenance of either art or apparitions?

At times Dark demonstrates an almost Victorian impulse toward melodrama--*almost* because she grounds her coincidences in the ordinary mess of modern life. And her mastery of atmosphere will persuade us of almost anything. Witness the spooky and authoritative opening of "Maniacs": "Silent sound, vivid absence, pressure from beyond the quilts and walls, the taste of pennies on the tongue; several miles apart two sisters awoke within moments of each other and instinctively knew it had snowed." Whether you're seeking exquisite prose or raw emotion, you'll find yourself perfectly moved and plainly edified by Dark's capacious talent. --Amy Grace Loyd

From Publishers Weekly

The title story of Dark's second collection was a major 1994 hit, published in *Best American Short Stories of the Century* and made into a critically acclaimed HBO film starring Glenn Close, directed by Christopher Reeve. The other nine stories collected here prove that Dark is by no means a one-hit-wonder. Probing the murkiest and the more illuminated regions of the human psyche, these tales reckon with relationships between lovers, spouses, sisters, neighbors and parents and children with a masterful combination of subtle humor, emotional precision and devastating narrative tension. The collection opens with the celebrated title story about a woman tending to her adult son who's dying of AIDS; the tone throughout is one of sorrowful, unnerving quiet until the final, cathartic line. "The Tower" is a spirited tale of a suave, detached bachelor who, upon finally meeting his soul mate, falls madly in love, setting up a chain of coincidences that leads the new couple to a hilarious, unexpected plateau. Similarly twisted humor abounds in "The Secret Spot," which suspensefully skewers a vengeful woman who obsessively plans a long-awaited confrontation with her husband's mistress. Other stories perceptively plumb the relationships between sisters, with "The Jungle Lodge" following two teen sisters on a jaunt in Peru that turns nightmarish, and "Maniacs" showing the despair and longing in a mother taking her two pubescent daughters to the airport so they can fly alone to visit their divorced father. The author manifests the voices of men and women, teens and seniors, with equal dexterity, and whether it's an elderly woman facing the frightening immediacy of relocating to a rest home, a man trying to choose between his wife and his lover, or a dying celebrity desperate for a favor from the home-town neighbors she's always scorned, Dark's characters ring fearlessly, plangently true. Dark (*Naked to the Waist*) belongs in the annals with literary peers Lorrie Moore and Alice Munro, and with this

collection she should garner widespread acclaim and attention. Agent, Henry Dunow. (Jan.)
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From Kirkus Reviews

Pride of place in this second collection of ten stories by Dark (*Naked to the Waist*, 1991) is given to a tale that has already become something of a contemporary classic. The title piece (successfully adapted for TV) portrays the restrained sorrow of a mother who cares for her adult son as he's dying from AIDS, and her eventual realization that her buttoned-up cold fish of a husband has been "the love of her life. It's the most immediately arresting, though not nearly the most accomplished, of Dark's knowing, if occasionally slightly clichéd, dramatizations of romantic obsession, marital discord, and family unhappiness. In "Close," for example, a disoriented father-to-be wrestles fairly predictably with the temptation to cheat on his pregnant wife. "Home" depicts the confused reminiscences of marriage and motherhood of an Alzheimer's patient being herded into a nursing home. And "The Jungle Lodge" portrays two sisters matured in different ways by a vacation in Peru with their doting stepfather. The more ambitious tales are generally better. "Dreadful Language" encapsulates the whole lifetime of a "judgmental" girl who coolly distances herself from loved ones, marries for comfort, and finds she has condemned herself to a life of unfulfillment. In "The Tower," an amusing parody of Henry James's tales of renunciation, a fortyish bachelor encounters at home and abroad an enticing young woman with whom he finds he must settle for a platonic friendship. The story even apes James's penchant for injecting workaday metaphors ("Clara, . . . had depleted her tanks") into otherwise ultra-genteel periodic sentences. And "Watch the Animals" deftly chronicles an unconventional heiress's effect on her social set, in a story narrated in an eloquent first-person plural voice. Interesting forays into Cheever and Alice Adams territory, with a trace of Deborah Eisenberg's range of subject matter. A generally worthy successor to Dark's well-received debut volume. (First serial to Harper's) -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Deborah Brantley:

Do you certainly one of people who can't read gratifying if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys that aren't like that. This *In the Gloaming* book is readable by you who hate the perfect word style. You will find the facts here are arranged for enjoyable studying experience without leaving perhaps decrease the knowledge that want to provide to you. The writer associated with *In the Gloaming* content conveys prospect easily to understand by lots of people. The printed and e-book are not different in the written content but it just different as it. So, do you nonetheless thinking *In the Gloaming* is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

Kimberly Langdon:

People live in this new time of lifestyle always aim to and must have the free time or they will get wide range of stress from both way of life and work. So, when we ask do people have spare time, we will say absolutely of course. People is human not really a huge robot. Then we inquire again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to you actually of course your answer will certainly unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative within spending your spare time, the particular book you have read will be *In the Gloaming*.

Albert Jones:

In this era globalization it is important to someone to receive information. The information will make someone to understand the condition of the world. The fitness of the world makes the information simpler to share. You can find a lot of referrals to get information example: internet, newspapers, book, and soon. You can see that now, a lot of publisher that print many kinds of book. The particular book that recommended for your requirements is In the Gloaming this reserve consist a lot of the information of the condition of this world now. That book was represented how do the world has grown up. The language styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. The writer made some exploration when he makes this book. This is why this book appropriate all of you.

Gregorio Leslie:

What is your hobby? Have you heard in which question when you got college students? We believe that that question was given by teacher on their students. Many kinds of hobby, Everybody has different hobby. And also you know that little person including reading or as reading through become their hobby. You must know that reading is very important in addition to book as to be the point. Book is important thing to include you knowledge, except your own teacher or lecturer. You see good news or update with regards to something by book. Many kinds of books that can you choose to adopt be your object. One of them is In the Gloaming.

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