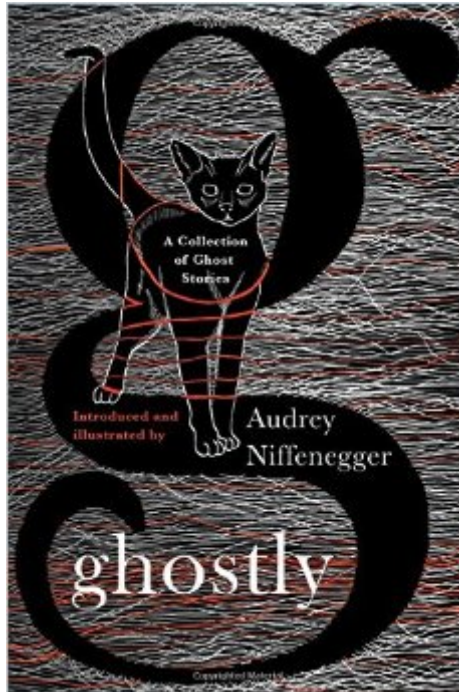


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# Ghostly: A Collection Of Ghost Stories



## Synopsis

Collected and introduced by the bestselling author of *The Time Traveler's Wife* and *Her Fearful Symmetry*—including her own fabulous new illustrations for each piece, and a new story by Niffenegger—this is a unique and haunting anthology of some of the best ghost stories of all time. From Edgar Allan Poe to Kelly Link, M.R. James to Neil Gaiman, H. H. Munro to Audrey Niffenegger herself, *Ghostly* reveals the evolution of the ghost story genre with tales going back to the eighteenth century and into the modern era, ranging across styles from Gothic Horror to Victorian, with a particular bent toward stories about haunting—haunted children, animals, houses. Every story is introduced by Audrey Niffenegger, an acclaimed master of the craft, with some words on its background and why she chose to include it. Niffenegger's own story is, *Secret Life With Cats*. • Perfect for the classic and contemporary ghost story aficionado, this is a delightful volume, beautifully illustrated. *Ghostly* showcases the best of the best in the field, including Edith Wharton, P.G. Wodehouse, A.S. Byatt, Ray Bradbury, and so many more.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dark stormy nights. Creaky floorboards. Vampires. Werewolves. *The Walking Dead*. These are just some of the images we associate with Halloween season. Lovers of a good tale will fondly recall telling ghost stories while around a campfire or improvising at home with the lights out and only a flashlight for illumination. It's the season for happy haunting and trying hard to scare each other. The literary equivalent of the Halloween season can be best experienced in the genre of short fiction. With *GHOSTLY*, author and illustrator Audrey Niffenegger (of *THE TIME*

TRAVELER'S WIFE fame) has attempted to do her part by compiling a collection of classic and more recent short horror stories. Each tale shares a common theme: some sort of ghost or haunting at its heart. "The Black Cat" by Edgar Allan Poe is the first short story and has remained one of his most popular horror tales since its initial release in 1843. Using a cat as an agent of justice and a scourge of bullies ironically mirrors Poe's own life as he himself was the owner of a black cat as a pet. We spend time with other classic giants of horror and the unknown, like M.R. James and Edith Wharton. Niffenegger indicates that James wrote his stories with the intention that they be read aloud --- in classic campfire ghost story fashion. Authors more well known for classic literature are also included in this collection. Rudyard Kipling, Saki and P.G. Wodehouse are featured in contributions that range from the morose to the comical. Kipling's tale, "They," is a story he used to reflect his own feelings over the loss of his young daughter, Josephine. Modern writers also play a part in this creepy collection. Perhaps the best and one of the most effective tales here is Neil Gaiman's succinct short story, "Click Clack the Rattlebag," which does a nice job of sneaking up on you when you least expect it. A.S. Byatt's "The July Ghost" is a powerful story that was born of the grief she felt over the death of her 11-year-old son Charles, who was killed in a car accident. Other lesser known modern authors like Kelly Link and Amy Giacalone are featured here, and offer tales with a spooky babysitter and a group of odd miniature spirits, respectively. The book concludes with Bradbury's literal haunted house story, "August 2026: There Will Come Soft Rains." Niffenegger provides a nice intro to each story, and her unique illustrations complete the package. GHOSTLY may not offer sleepless nights but definitely will creep into your psyche and go boo as you move from one haunted tale to the next. Reviewed by Ray Palen

I received this ARC from NetGalley in return for a review. Audrey Niffenegger is an expert in the off-beat and creepy (see *Her Fearful Symmetry*), so it's only fitting that she bring together a collection of non-traditional ghost stories just in time for Halloween. Sure, it's got your standard work of Poe, but Niffenegger also includes stories from authors not normally known for hauntings, including P. G. Wodehouse, Edith Wharton and Ray Bradbury. This is a book that makes you rethink what constitutes a ghost story, and whether hauntings are really scarier than what exists inside the human mind.

If you enjoy ghost stories, you will very much appreciate this collection. Audrey Niffenegger compiled this treasury, and each story contains an illustration and introduction by her, which is enough to make me love the book right there. However, it's also a wonderful collection of ghost

stories from a wide variety of authors, some more modern and some quite old. Favorites include Niffenegger's own story, "A Secret Life with Cats," the classic Edgar Allen Poe tale "The Black Cat," and the delightful and whimsical "Honeysuckle Cottage" by P.G. Wodehouse (so fun!). If you are familiar with Niffenegger's love of the macabre and personal tastes, you will be prepared for a few selections that are REALLY out there, and this collection contains them, and a few of them and others are stories I could do without. Overall, though, this is a really great collection and a beautiful book in general. I love it and am so glad to have it to add to my Niffenegger collection.

The collection of stories are, for the most part, enjoyable. I read the entire book not skipping obscure stories that I found little interest in or in the end made absolutely no sense, even as fiction! I think out of all the writings I found "The Black Cat," "Secret Life With Cats," "Honeysuckle Cottage," "Playmates," "August 2026" and Kipling's "They" to be among the ones I enjoyed the most. Not sure why Ms Niffenegger should, in her introduction to Kipling's story, interject her ambivalence to Kipling's strong belief in empire and colonialism. Were it not for British colonialism we might not be here today and what does a writer's convictions have to do with the quality of work presented to us?

I really enjoyed this collection of short spooky stories compiled by Audrey Niffenegger, one of my all time favorite authors. I loved that in addition to contemporary stories by both Audrey Niffenegger and the incomparable Neil Gaiman, there are also classic short stories as well. Short story collections can be kind of hit or miss for me, because it's hard to have a collection of short stories where every story hits it out of the park, but this one came close. It was a refreshing "break" from the more contemporary literary fiction I have been reading lately.

This collection contains stories old and new, with a mix of styles. Many are humorous; some dark. Few are actually scary. The stories are mostly low-key. I found the collection enjoyable on the whole, though my reactions to particular stories varied. A bonus of the collection is that it contains not only well-known authors, but also some people I'd never heard of, some of whose work I will look for in the future.

I'm not a huge horror buff. But I do enjoy stories that manage to be atmospheric and still manage to keep a clear story telling narrative at the forefront. This is a deft collection at exploring what is a scary story. Pushing boundaries some might say but for me delivering some solid entertaining reads that were also thoughtful. Even some of the classics here are chosen to fit a theme not just of the

ghostly but what haunts the soul. Poignant and lingering at times. A good collection well worth adding to your shelves.

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