



The Lost Wife

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Praga, 1938. Lenka, una joven estudiante de arte, se enamora perdidamente de Josef. Se casan, pero a pesar de esperar un prometedor futuro juntos, sus sueños se hacen añicos ante la inminente invasión nazi y deciden huir a Estados Unidos. Sin embargo, en el último momento, Lenka decide quedarse, y los amantes se separan con la promesa de reunirse tan pronto como puedan.

En Estados Unidos, Josef rehace su vida, aunque nunca olvidará a su primer amor, al que cree haber perdido para siempre. Mientras, en medio del horror de Tezerín y de Auschwitz, Lenka sobrevivirá gracias a la memoria de un marido al que cree que no volverá a ver y a su talento artístico, la única vía que da color al horror y forma a lo que no se puede describir con palabras.

Separados por la guerra, pero unidos por el recuerdo, ahora, décadas más tarde, un inesperado encuentro en Nueva York les ofrece una segunda oportunidad..."

The Lost Wife Details

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From Reader Review The Lost Wife for online ebook

Jessica says

The cause of my latest book hangover:

An elderly man is sitting at his grandson's rehearsal dinner when suddenly a woman catches his eye from across the room. He goes to her, transfixed, and looks at her like he's seen a ghost. This woman, the grandmother of the bride, does not recognize him but he remembers her. "Lenka", he says, "it's me Josef. Your husband."

And that was all it took to suck me in...

Set against the backdrop of WWII Europe, *The Lost Wife* tells the story of Lenka and Josef young lovers whose lives and marriage are torn apart by the Nazi occupation. The book alternates narrators between Lenka and Josef and we get to learn about both sides of their war experience. Josef's escape to America, Lenka's time in the camps, a story of love, loss, and life.

You rarely find me gushing about a book here in more than a few words "I loved it" or something like that, but I felt this book deserved more. *The Lost Wife* was a wonderful book that was made even better by its Audible narrators. I give the book 4 1/2 stars but the audible gets 5 stars.

Toni says

Of the many books with a holocaust theme I have read, this is the first that has centered around the Terezin (Theresienstadt) Concentration Camp, located outside Prague.

The basis of the book is, of course, a romance story, but the heart of the book takes place in Terezin where the Nazi's established a prison camp that was less of a death camp and more of an authentic work camp. Certainly the conditions were every bit as grueling and no less horrifying as Auschwitz and Birkenwald, but there were no ovens and while there prisoners produced an amazing amount of art work, much of which is now on display in various Holocaust memorials throughout the world.

The book is a novel, but several real life people are mentioned, as well as the art work the children of Terezin produced which was made into an exceptionally beautiful book, *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*.

So, for this reason I appreciated the author's efforts in telling not just a tragic love story, but a part of the Holocaust years that is often overlooked.

Betty says

I had just finished reading *The Invisible Bridge* and my Kindle died. I had purchased *The Lost Wife* and put it on hold because I had so many books I wanted to read that I had downloaded on my Kindle. When my Kindle died I began reading *The Lost Wife* after finishing *The Invisible Bridge*. WOW both books left such an impression on me. I find out that today 8/11/12 is the 67th Anniversary of the Holocaust - I didn't plan to read these books at this time, but I did and boy they really left a huge impression and deep feelings for me. I

highly recommend reading both of these books. They are eye openers and leave you with many feelings you may never have felt before. I don't know if I could have survived during the same time - WE cannot forget what so many suffered for such a long time. NEVER EVER FORGET!!!!

Lori says

I was so happy to find out in the Epilogue that many of the characters in this novel were based on real people... this gave an already wonderful story even more merit! I loved that the novel began with the ending scene... thought that format worked marvelously in helping the storyline! A well deserved 5 star novel!

Tammy says

Loved this book. Chapter one sucks you in because you know there is something to look forward to. I have to be honest, I almost gave up in the beginning. It is such a sad, heart wrenching subject that it was almost too much to bare. I read some reviews and everyone raved about it so I stuck with it. It is a beautifully written story. I felt so connected to each character. That you can't put it down because you know from the beginning that there is something to hold on to. My only critique is that I hoped for a little more than what I got at the end. This book will stay with me for a long time.

B the BookAddict says

Let me say first and foremost that I do not read love stories, I loathe books such as those by Nicholas Sparks and Nora Roberts, I have a specially designed crucifix to guard me against the genre of Mills and Boon. And yet... paradoxically, I loved this novel and it is, essentially, a love story, a story of first love, lost love, remembered love. This novel does not abound with all the hearts and flowers of the aforementioned publishers. And, it has quietly, stealthily crept up on me in the last five hours since I finished it, wending its way into my collective bookish affections.

The story contains an impossible choice: faced with the encroaching threat of the Nazis, who would you choose – your family or your husband of one day? Two Czechoslovakian Jews, Lenka and Josef face this monumental situation and Lenka's decision is the basis of this novel. Her decision is forced by time, the die is cast, Lenka will stay with her family while her husband Josef will flee with his family to America. Germany invades Czechoslovakia as expected, the Czech government capitulates and Lenka and her family are sent to the work camp Terezin. Alyson Richman leads you through Josef's life in America with the sombre burden of what he has left behind and Lenka's harsh reality with her internment at Terezin.

This novel is quite light in description but rich in dialogue and it is rendered beautifully with emotional scenery. With a deft hand, the author uses the riches of the palette to furnish images. I never underline passages in a book but here I sincerely wish I had so that I give some examples. Quite oddly, I found the rendition of Josef's life more emotive than Lenka's story tethered as he was in America and bound to lead a life he had little interest in. It was the beauty of his richly textured remembrances which moved me. The Lost Wife is a novel that I am very glad to have read. I suggest that you read it. Highly recommended 4.5★

Myrna says

What an emotional book! The base of *The Lost Wife* is a beautiful love story but you will get so much more. I learned new facts about the holocaust and I've read lots of WWII books. The author did a great job with her research.

Favorite quote: *"And I saw for the first time how, despite the isolation of our own lives, we are always connected to our ancestors; our bodies hold the memories of those who came before us, whether it is the features we inherit or a disposition that is etched into our soul."*

Fergie says

One of the most beautifully written, moving historical fiction novels I have ever read. The book actually deserves 4 1/2 stars. Alyson Richman evokes magic in her telling of the love story of Lenka and Josef, two Czechoslovakian Jews whose fate is determined by forces beyond their control.

Richman effectively pulls the reader in by creating interesting characters and an equally compelling story. It is hard to fathom what the Jewish population in Europe had to endure during the reign of terror under the Third Reich, but Richman does a more than admirable job. Her research is flawless and serves as a true testament to what those who suffered at the hands of the Nazis endured. The spirit and courage that the Jews possessed is documented well in this book.

For anyone who loves historical fiction, especially set in the era of WWII, this book is for you. The added bonus is that the story is written beautifully and with such a depth of compassion that you will find yourself forever changed after having read it. If that is not the true mark of outstanding writing, then I don't know what is.

Kimberly says

This is not my typical genre but this book really is gut wrenchingly good. I enjoy the author's notes at the end where she explains the reality behind her characters.

Jeanie says

I am sorry that this love story came to an end. It was more than a love story, it was a love affair of words that show the beauty of our souls. With the verse "I am my beloved and my beloved is mine. Song of Solomon 6:3, it is the main theme of this poetic love story. The verse also signifies the hope one can have having one as a beloved and being one of a beloved. The story is a loose historical fiction of actual events which makes it even more enjoyable to read. It starts in the year 2000 when the great grandfather of the groom and the great grand mother of the bride come upon each other and how it is that they know each other. Then the story goes back in time before the war in Prague. The main character of Joseph is a beloved that has found his beloved in Lenka. He is shown to have respect for the women in his life, his mother and sister and how he loves life. Lenka who has a younger sister; and who is loyal to her family. The loyalty is tested when she stays in Prague right after her and Joseph are married. Joseph's family has obtained boat tickets to leave the country with his parents and his sister, however, Lenka will not leave without her family. You see the

contrast of each one's story in the narration. The narration is told by each one and the longing for the other. The narration is seamless as you see the heartache of of Joseph and Lenka. It tears at your heart, however, it is good to see a love story so pure. I appreciate a love story without vulgarity because it gives a high view of a love relationship and everything else is gravy. And you get plenty of gravy.

The story shows the plight of the Jews and it also touches on the loyalty that Lenka's family remain together and not be separated in the concentration camps. Where so many of other families did not stay together. They were separated by one being sent to another camp, or by death or worse turning on each other. Evil has a way of doing that. It also shows what is evil and when we loose hope which we are created to hope and how hope is the only way we can continue. Hope is the fuel for the soul. I cannot do the justice of the characters or the story of how two people in love continue thru so much heart ache. One thing I also appreciated in this story is the Jewish tradition and what soulful people they are. To be reminded what it means when God given rights are taken away from a certain group of people that they cannot live, cannot work and to live in fear. I am my beloved and my beloved is mine...to see that in the grandchildren of Lenka and Joseph gives hope.

Dem says

The Lost Wife by Alyson Richman.

In Pre War Prague the hopes and dreams of two young lovers are shattered when they are separated by the Nazi Invasion.

I listened to this novel as opposed to reading it and I really enjoyed the narrators as they were both eloquent and easy to listen to. This is s a story that explores the horrors of the beautiful city of Prague under the occupation of the Nazi's during World War Two. Having visited both Terezin and Prague many years ago I was very interested in reading this book and I was not disappointed with the images captured by Alyson Richman and her storytelling.

I was amazed to learn that the story was inspired by true events similar to that of Lenka and Josef and the novels conclusion the author explains what events are true within the story and I found this really helpful.

I did not find the Novel heavy or difficult reading in comparison to other Holocaust books that I have read.

I liked the story and enjoyed the narration and this is why I have rated it 3 stars. I did however find the story ended abruptly and I wasn't quite satisfied by the conclusion of the story.

Vivian Valvano says

Read for one of my book groups (library) as the April selection b/c it has been designated as the Long Island Reads Book - libraries throughout Long Island encouraging the reading and discussion of the same book. It is essentially a holocaust novel, and I read everything I can on the holocaust. This novel, unfortunately, is written in such a sophomoric style, and the prime element of the plot is given away within its opening pages.

I can understand its being chosen for Long Island Reads; that program does not choose difficult books. Last year, SAG HARBOR was the choice. The program is obviously seeking to get many people who don't ordinarily read, or rarely read, to read. As such, THE LOST WIFE may serve its purpose. For people who do not, have not read widely on the holocaust, important information will be imparted; they will learn something. Many of the characters, particularly the two principal characters, are deeply engaging and prompt empathy and care. But this is not a well-written novel.

Noeleen says

Rating 3.5

The Lost Wife by Alyson Richman appears to be on everyone's reading list at the moment and is receiving some great reviews, so I had to bump it up my 'to be read' list to see what all the 'hype' is about. It tells the story of Lenka and Josef who meet on the threshold of the start of WWII. It is a sad story of true love lost during a most awful time in history. The story alternates between Lenka's account of her time in the concentration camps and Josef's time in America. The structure of the narration works really well and whilst Lenka's story is most horrifying, I found myself more interested in those parts of the book when the story was being told from Josef's perspective.

There are many themes explored throughout the book, lost love, separation, family love, family loyalty, survival not only during the terrible times of WWII but the survival of people in the marriages of both Lenka and Josef after the war. Art and colour also play a significant role throughout. I wasn't aware of the underground artist movement during the war, so it's great when a novel educates us on subjects we didn't know about before. I also liked the fact that some of the artist characters in the book were actual real characters, so this book was very well researched too.

Overall, 3.5 stars is probably a more accurate rating of my enjoyment of this book. The story for me was very good and while I really did like the book, I didn't love it and it isn't a story that would stay with me. I wasn't eagerly waiting to find out what happens next. The real winner for me with this book was the writing. I think the writing was so good that it may have overshadowed the story somewhat. It is a book that's definitely worth a read and I would recommend it, but for me personally, it's not one that I would 'gush' about.

?Karen says

I loved the premise of it, and the character development was well handled. Some of the prose resonated with me; but initially, I had a hard time getting into the book. The short chapters and switching POV made it difficult to become fully immersed in the story. But then I ended up very glad to have finished it, not having read a WWII story about the underground artists or from the Czechs' perspective before. 3.5 stars.

Martha says

This was a difficult book to read, but rich with story. The fictional tale reads more like a biography, a tale of truth than one of fiction. You know throughout the story, that it is fiction, but the stories are truth.

A husband and wife, separated after three days of marriage, each other believing one another dead for the majority of each of their lives, their stories unfold in the time apart.

It was slightly different as those facts are right up front in the beginning of the novel, painting the scene for us of the previous story. Throughout the book, we hold onto that hope, knowing that through all the horror, they will find one another.

The deep faith, hope despite the crushing pain the Jews endured, is worth reading about. For those that struggle with this, there are some swear words here and there throughout this book.

Phyllis Eisenstadt says

THE LOST WIFE

From the very first page, "The Lost Wife" is so powerful as to pull you in and force you to keep reading. I read 48% on my Kindle the first night.

Using the technique of the two protagonists as their own narrators keeps them front and center, and makes their story more personal and believable. Had there been an omniscient narrator it is doubtful that this would have been the case. This technique renders the many events in their lives and the distances between them, both in time and space, more effectively understood. It imbues clarity and deeper meaning to the bifurcating paths of two people and their families.

To the extent that a Holocaust novel could be considered beautiful, it would certainly apply to this bittersweet, poignant story.

Phyllis Eisenstadt

Lewis Weinstein says

If you don't cry when you read this book, I guess I feel sorry for you. From the stunning prologue to the very last page, this is a remarkable read.

The first few pages of the prologue reveal that a man and a woman, married and then separated for 60 years by the Nazi invasion of Prague, and both thinking the other dead, meet at the wedding reception of the grandson of one and the granddaughter of the other.

Now you might think that revealing this much in the very beginning of the book would reduce the emotional content of what follows. Not in the least. Knowing they will eventually meet makes each aspect of their separate stories even more poignant. At least to a romantic like me.

Megan says

This book disappointed me. I think this is the first Holocaust book I've read where I haven't cried, and I should have, especially reading the author's notes whereby she based a lot of the characters and storyline on actual events. Don't get me wrong, I did feel affected by it, but on reflection, it was actually my prior

knowledge of the Holocaust and memories of other stories I've read and/or watched which stirred the emotions rather than this specific book.

This book is essentially a love story, and a poor one at that, particularly considering it turned out to be such an anticlimax in the end. I wish there was less cheesy romance in the first half of the book (well actually Josef's entire storyline) and was written exclusively from Lenka's point of view. There was not enough dialogue, there were too many grammatical errors (one paragraph was written in past tense and the next in present tense) and the parallel storylines just didn't work, especially when they were set 50 or so years apart. Very disappointing...

J. Schlenker says

Would give this book six stars if I could.

Katrina Passick Lumsden says

I've been going back and forth on whether or not to give this book three or four stars. I'm starting out with three, let's see where we end up, shall we?

For as many things as I liked about this book, there are several things I disliked. I'll start with the negative.

First, I didn't like the way the romance tried to blend in with the story. There were times when it felt like it shouldn't be there, and yet, I found myself only wanting to finish to see if Lenka and Josef ever found each other again. The beginning of the book revealed the answer, but I had hoped the ending would hold more. Sadly, it did not.

Richman admitted that the story was originally going to just be about an artist who survived the Holocaust, but that she decided to weave the romance in. This shows as it was obvious she spent far more time on Lenka and her storyline than she did on Josef and his. An author shouldn't show preference for one character or storyline over another when the author has herself chosen to portray both. Either put your all into both storylines or leave one out. Don't try and pacify us with romance for the sake of sales. Richman's callous treatment of Josef made him seem like an afterthought, and that was unpalatable to me as he was probably my favorite character.

Second, Lenka irritated the shit out of me, and her "noble" actions were, in my opinion, incorrectly portrayed. She has the choice to go with Josef and his family, to leave Prague and reach safety before the occupation reaches its fervor, but she insists on staying behind with her family, claiming she won't leave them because she loves them too much. I call bullshit. I don't deny that there are people who make rash decisions like this and wholeheartedly believe they're doing the right thing, but Lenka's refusal to leave with Josef was a decision based not in love or loyalty, but in fear. She was afraid to leave her family and her home. Had she possessed even a tenth of the courage we're supposed to believe she did, she would have gotten on that ship, set out for parts unknown, then fought like a bulldog to get her family out of Prague. As it was, she denied her parents some peace of mind, separated herself from her husband (causing him a lifetime of guilt), and abandoned any hope of getting her family out of Prague. Those are not the actions of a heroine, but of a selfish coward.

Third, I thought this book was, at times, a bit heavy handed. Obviously, a book about surviving the

Holocaust is going to be emotionally jarring, and I'm not ashamed to say it made me cry on more than one occasion. But there were points when it felt like it was trying too hard to be poignant. Still, the writing was beautifully lyrical, and this brings me to what I *did* like about the book.

"You hear in the person you're destined to love the sound of those yet to be born."

"Every person has an image or a memory that they hold secret. One that they unwrap, like a piece of hidden candy, at night. Pass through there and you will fall into the valley of dreams."

"One finds love in transparency. To see wholly and without question."

"There are two sensations of skin you will always remember in your lifetime: the first time you fall in love - and that person holds your hand - and the first time your child grasps your finger. In each of those times, you are sealed to the other for eternity."

"In my old age, I have come to believe that love is not a noun but a verb. An action. Like water, it flows to its own current, If you were to corner it in a dam, true love is so bountiful it would flow over. Even in separation, in death, it moves and changes. It lives within memory, in the haunting of a touch, the transience of a smell, or the nuance of a sigh. It seeks to leave a trace like a fossil in the sand, a leaf burned into baking asphalt."

"Inhale it. Breathe it. It will not leave you. If you place sunlight in your palms, it will turn to shadow. If you put fireflies in a jar, they will die. But if you love with wings on, you will always feel the exhilaration of being suspended in flight."

Strangely, all but one of those is from Josef's perspective. I truly loved Josef as a character. I wish he could have been done more justice.