



# The Ladies of Grace Adieu and Other Stories

By Susanna Clarke

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From the author of the award-winning, internationally bestselling *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell*, an enchanting collection of stories. Set in versions of England that bear an uncanny resemblance to the world of *Strange and Norrell*, these stories are brimming with all the ingredients of good fairy tales: petulant princesses, vengeful owls, ladies who pass their time in embroidering terrible fates, endless paths in deep, dark woods, and houses that never appear the same way twice. Their heroines and heroes include the Duke of Wellington, a conceited Regency clergyman, an eighteenth-century Jewish doctor, Mary, Queen of Scots, Jonathan Strange, and the Raven King himself. *The Ladies of Grace Adieu* is the perfect introduction to a world where charm is always tempered by eeriness, and picaresque comedy is always darkened by the disturbing shadow of Faerie.

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## The Ladies of Grace Adieu and Other Stories By Susanna Clarke Bibliography

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## Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Like Clarke's first novel, the bestselling *Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, these eight stories (seven previously published) are set in an England where magic is a serious but sometimes neglected field of study. The first story sees the erudite Strange tangling with country witches. Others show Austenesque concern with love and its outcomes ("Did you not hear me ask you to marry me?"), often involving fairies. In "The Duke of Wellington Misplaces His Horse," the duke visits Faerie, a kingdom located on the other side of the wall in the village of Wall (a location Clarke borrows from Neil Gaiman and Charles Vess), and meets a woman whose needlework affects the future. In the footnoted "Tom Brightwind or How the Fairy Bridge....," a "monumental" stone bridge is built in one afternoon. Clarke humorously revisits Rumpelstiltskin in "On Lickerish Hill," in which it is revealed that "Irishmen have tailes neare a quarter of a yard longe." Clarke may have trouble reaching a new audience in short form, as the stories provide less opportunity to get lost in fantastical material, but the author's many fans will be glad to have these stories in one volume. Illus. by Charles Vess not seen by *PW*. (Oct.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

The eight stories in *Ladies of Grace* resemble *Jonathan Strange* in that fantastical creations change history, the 19th century takes on a modern spin, and charm and sophistication ooze off the pages. Here, Susanna Clarke casts a close eye on women, from fairies to damsels in distress—who, not surprisingly, tend to save themselves. Despite overall praise for the collection, reviewers agree that Clarke hasn't challenged herself enough. While critics lauded "Tom Brightwind or How the Fairy Bridge Was Built at Thoresby," "John Uskglass and the Cumbrian Charcoal Burner," and "Mrs. Mabb," some called other stories slight. An academic framework doesn't help. In the end, *Ladies of Grace* weaves a similar magic as *Jonathan Strange*, but perhaps the book is not magical enough.

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From [Booklist](#)

Revisiting characters and landscapes she created in her best-selling *Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell* (2004), Clarke has crafted eight quirky and devious stories to delight her fans. In the title story, Mr. Strange himself reappears and tangles with three country witches. "On Lickerish Hill" is a clever retelling of "Rumpelstiltskin," with a twist. In "The Duke of Wellington Misplaces His Horse," the redoubtable hero follows his horse into Wall, a village created by Neil Gaiman, and encounters a woman whose embroidery tells the future. The story set farthest back in time has Mary, Queen of Scots, trying to kill Queen Elizabeth with a skirt. And in the final story, the Raven King himself is outwitted by his lowliest subject. All but one of the stories takes place in or around 1811, and Clarke uses the language, diction, and historical settings beautifully, just hinting at Jane Austen. Each character is elegantly drawn and comes to life on the page. These stories are charming, engaging, and deceptively simple. *Elizabeth Dickie*

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