



## House of Miracles

*Ulrica Hume*

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*House of Miracles* is about love—the romantic love of days gone by, first love, unrequited love, and the fragile intimacies of a couple living in the last part of the twentieth century.

In these delightful, at times unsettling stories, we meet two very different women: baby boomer Janet MacDonald, who, despite a blossoming career in San Francisco, feels sure that she is cursed, and her elderly, eccentric neighbor, Mrs. von Meurs. When Janet's relationship with boyfriend Jack, a struggling photographer, is tested, they drift dangerously apart. It is Mrs. von Meurs, alone and at the end of her life, who tries to keep them together.

At the heart of *House of Miracles* is the kaleidoscopic way the diverse characters are connected to Janet and Mrs. von Meurs. Secrets are revealed, and each woman must find her way, whether through a troubled past or into an uncertain future. Sometimes it seems that hope is not only “the thing with feathers,” but it is all they have. That, and the real possibility of miracles.

## House of Miracles Details

Date : Published September 5th 2013 by Blue Circle Press

ISBN :

Author : Ulrica Hume

Format : ebook 218 pages

Genre : Short Stories



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## From Reader Review House of Miracles for online ebook

### **Sheela Word says**

Beautiful collection of short stories, set in the Bay area, that adds up to even more than the sum of its parts. Each story is so satisfying that I didn't realize until I was at least a third of the way through that the same characters (not just characters with the same names) recur across stories. The principal protagonists are a woman who emigrated to the U.S. from Nazi Germany, and a contemporary young woman who survived an abusive childhood. This sounds grim, but it's not. The tone is hopeful and sometimes comedic, and the writing is exceptionally good. I'm so glad I read this.

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### **Kristin (Kritters Ramblings) says**

A collection of stories where characters hop in and out, but there are a few that are the main. Janet and her off and on boyfriend Jack were my favorite of the main characters and whenever they were the focal point, I loved it. I was able to follow their story and the ups and downs and enjoyed the real quality of their relationship.

With moments of confusion, I would warn future readers to really sit down with this one and maybe take some notes on the characters. There were a few chapters where I had to take a few pages to find out who was even talking.

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### **Kendal says**

I found House of Miracles a nice set of stories about two very different women; one starting her life and the other at the end of hers. Most of the stories tend to be a little depressing and it's hard to find the romantic aspect to the book.

Janet is a very broken character and you don't really understand how broken she is until you are well into the book. She seems so lost to me and I'm not sure if she found anything. Her relationship with Jack lacked any real passion whether that was due to her past I really couldn't tell. I, also, couldn't tell if she ever came to terms with her past. I thought her character was left a bit unresolved. Also, did Janet truly forgive Jack? I'm not sure. Do they love each other? Again, I'm not sure.

Mrs. Von Meurs is a very sweet character. She's a little old lady coming to end of life. I enjoyed her character and how she found more life at 93 years old. Mr. Haydn is a sweet old man who brings that life to her. I really liked their ending. It is a nice happily ever after.

The relationship between Janet and Mrs. Von Meurs is very sweet. Janet really redeems herself by taking care of Mrs. Von Meurs. She does her cleaning, shopping and laundry. Janet really didn't have a good, loving relationship with her mother so I think she tries to have that with Mrs. Von Meurs.

Overall, I thought House of Miracles was an enjoyable read. I wish that the characters were a little more

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developed but the stories were interesting and engaging.

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### **Kelly says**

House of Miracles proclaims itself to be “a collection of interrelated stories about love.” And it is. But it’s also much more than that. This is a collection of vignettes that, when combined, give piercing insight into the lives of multiple characters. And it is softly, quietly, mightily beautiful.

This book reminded me of one of my favorite movies, Love Actually, with its eclectic, interrelated ensemble cast. In this case, though, time changes as well as point of view, and the narrators aren’t revealed at the start of the stories, so the reader is kept guessing. I enjoy being kept on my literary toes, so to speak, and had great fun trying to guess whose story I was in as well as “when” I was and how this character would tie in with the others.

Ulrica Hume’s writing has a soaring, airy, yet realistic quality that I truly enjoyed. I found myself underlining sentences, not because of their profundity, but because of the beautifully simplistic way she has of making the everyday seem poetic. For instance, of Leong, an immigrant from Thailand whose husband’s life had come to a violent early end, “Her heart was a rain-filled flower.”

Or this gem, as Janet ponders her future while assisting the elderly Mrs. von Meurs: “I feared that one day I’d find myself in the same situation: old and alone in a crumbling gingerbread house of sweetly decaying, once beautiful dreams.”

Don’t let all my talk of beauty fool you, though: there is sadness in these stories, too. Heartbreak, loneliness, and uncertainty abound. But through it all, there is love. And isn’t that what life is all about?

All in all: High-quality writing and interesting, touching subject matter. Much more moving than I expected. (I’m still not entirely sure why, but the parts about the hope chest made me well up. [I’m about to cry just typing this, actually.])

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### **Kimberly says**

I enjoyed the book but I occasionally had trouble following what was happening as the viewpoint moved between characters, places, and times. Despite the confusion it was an effective way to tell the interrelated stories of the characters.

The two main characters are Janet MacDonald, a young woman coming to grips with her past while trying to decide what to do about her future with her boyfriend and Mrs. Von Meurs, a older woman at the end of her life. Mrs. Von Meurs fascinating past is slowly revealed along with episodes from Janet’s life that influenced who she becomes. At its heart, the story is about love: romantic love, parental love, lost love, fear of love, and the agelessness of love.

Disclosure: I received this book as part of a Goodreads giveaway on the premise that I would review it.

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### **Linda Marie Marsh says**

A book of short stories that connect with a fine silk thread that delicately weaves them together. Give it time to feel the flow and you'll be in love with HOUSE OF MIRACLES.

The three main characters throughout are Jack, elderly Mrs. Von Meurs and Janet...yet there is much more, it's a book about life, deep and though-provoking.

One quote stays with me: " Life is full of changes. Everything changes from one thing and becomes something else, and then at the end of all the changes, you disappear."

I think any reader would be doing themselves a favor by reading this one!  
Hume has delved into the human psyche and pulled out treasures.....

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### **Marilyn Stanley says**

I received this book free from Goodreads First Reads.

I enjoyed the short stories about the two main characters although at times it was confusing and a little unsettling - easy to pick up and put down - not spellbinding.

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