



## Out With Lanterns

*Alisha 'Priti' Kirpalani*

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You venture out into the night, armed with lanterns, looking for yourself. You navigate this path ridden with complexities, questions and undefinable emotions. And sometimes, if you're really lucky, you might just find love.

Out With Lanterns is a genre-breaking novel that traces the delicate, yet intricate nuances of human relationships. It is not just a story about love. It is a tale about the tumultuous journey life sends us on.

Karin Mehra, a mother of two, is happily married to Raoul. Yet she feels empty and getting older adds to her alienation, stirring up trouble in her mind and marriage.

In a chance encounter, she meets the younger and charismatic Aksh Soni, a successful writer, who is in a complicated, long-term relationship with his girlfriend, Sia. Drawn towards each other, despite all that is at stake, Karin and Aksh lose themselves in a secret world of their own.

The choices facing them are difficult. Should they hurt the ones who love them for the beguiling promise of an ideal relationship sizzling with cerebral chemistry? The shades of life and love are not black and white. There are no heroes and no villains. Are these boundaries too heavy a price we pay for being but human?

## Out With Lanterns Details

Date : Published December 20th 2017 by Readomania

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## From Reader Review Out With Lanterns for online ebook

### Aashisha Chakraborty says

It is a journey of finding oneself amongst the babble of mundane matters, of tracing one's path through the slush of expectations and mindless existence. A heart to heart between two writers- one established and another fledgling, both enmeshed in their own worlds, trying to find their way to their releases. As opposed to how potboilers turn out, this is a reflective story, where the characters are real and take decisions which concur with the kind of life a person leads. The author has a striking style of writing that is lilting and poetic.

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### Archana Sarat says

Alisha Kirpalani's book, Out With Lanterns, is a book that would thrill avid readers and writers. Peppered with literary references, protagonists who are writers and mentions of various wonderful books and poems, this book is a treat for every bibliophile.

The story is about the difficult choices that you have to make in the journey of life. The author makes us wonder what exactly it means to be 'happily married'. Does it mean that a person finally feels 'at home' in a relationship? Or does it mean that the person has found love, and has no reason for any more love in her life? Tough are the decisions that face Karen Mehra, a mother of two and a wannabe writer, when she meets Aksh Soni, a successful writer who is already in a relationship with his girlfriend, Sia.

The most beautiful love is one where there is a meeting of minds rather than just hearts. The relationship between Karin and Aksh is one such relationship. While they do want to give it all up and lose themselves within each other in a love that grows deeper with every passing day, they need to decide whether they are ready to shatter the lives of the others surrounding them.

As the blurb says, in this story, there are no heroes and no villains. The shades of life and love are not black and white. Are these boundaries too heavy a price we pay for being but human? My initial years in Mumbai were spent among women like Karen and her 'Gals Gang'. So, when I picked up the book, the first thing that struck me is how realistically the author has been able to depict the life, the language and the attitude of the South Mumbai crowd. In case, you are wondering whether the author has exaggerated in her portrayal of these folks, I would like to clarify that she has been as truthful as possible.

The book follows an epistolary style of storytelling, i.e. the characters in the book move the story forward through written documents. In this case, it is emails that they exchanged with each other. Apart from Bram Stoker's Dracula, and Alice Walker's The Colour Purple, this was the first time that I had read a contemporary book that uses the epistolary style to such a large extent.

The author has taken the effort to keep the tone of the letters as conversational as possible. In fact, since I am a person who loves writing letters (in pen and ink), I found the writing style of the letters pleasant and realistic. However, after reading the book, I realised that epistolary style tends to imbalance the 'show, not tell' ratio of storytelling, with the balance tilting towards 'tell' more than 'show'. The author has compensated that with other gripping scenes that are not in epistolary fashion.

To put it in a nutshell, Out With Lanterns is an interesting read that will make you think about human relationships, love and life.

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### Ashima Jain says

Once in a while there comes a time when you discover a novel that offers a fresh, almost exotic experience in its storytelling. Out with Lanterns was one such surprise.

Karin Mehra, a mother of two, is happily married to Raoul. Yet, she feels empty and getting older adds to her alienation, stirring up trouble in her mind and marriage. In a chance encounter, she meets the younger and charismatic Aksh Soni, a successful writer, who is in a complicated, long-term relationship with his girlfriend, Sia. Drawn towards each other, despite all that is at stake, Karin and Aksh lose themselves in a secret world of their own.

However, this is not a run-of-the-mill love story. Instead, it unravels the human psyche and the nature of relationships in light of angst and turmoil. Karin and Aksh develop a connection over email exchanges. Over time they both become an intrinsic part of the other's being. Though Karin realises her feelings for Aksh, with whom she shares a sizzling cerebral chemistry, could she allow herself to flow in the direction the current is taking her? Are her choices worth the pain they will inflict on those who love her?

The book is a Bibliophile's delight. Flavoured with scrumptious literary references, it is a process of finding oneself, navigating the complex cycle of human emotions, and pulling yourself to surface when all you can imagine is drowning in the tumultuous journey that comes with being a writer. As Oprah said: "You have to find what sparks a light in you so that you in your own way can illuminate the world." Sometimes, we may have to do something as crazy as holding a lantern in the dark to be able to find that light within, and this novel shows it really is possible.

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### **DeeJay says**

This is a bloody good book! The author has very adeptly captured the male perspective in relationships through the characters of the two male protagonists Aksh and Raoul. The female protagonists, Karin and Sia are obviously very strongly etched. Penned with fluency, this book compels you to think deep about all relationships. I feel connected to her because Alisha almost seems to know my every thought. Hmmm. A woman who understands the emotional content of men. The characters stay with you long after.

Men. I highly recommend you read this novel. It will get you in touch with reality like you never thought possible and maybe help you improve your own relationships while figuring the enigma of women. Romance is a genre I don't usually read and I suspect that applies to most other men too but I'm glad I listened to the recommendation on reading this book. Trust me, you should too. It's different and deep.

The language used in this book is a dying art form. The stringing of sentences, the visual imagery, the incisive understanding of human nature clearly shows that Alisha is a very mature author. This seems to be her first novel, but clearly she's no novice. Like the blurb says, " if you are really lucky, she just might soon write another". Be waiting.

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### **Kavita Shah says**

Alisha has brilliantly captured the stark hopelessness of men and woman in this disturbingly ruthless expose of the married world. Regardless of where the story is based..South Mumbai or the South of France the human emotions transcend all geographical boundaries . Brutally invasive it compels women and men to

take second and third look into their empty yet full lives . As the story progresses one begins to have a love hate relationship with the heroes ...yes heroes..their heroic attempts to grasp at something ...a glimmer of the life they once envisaged for themselves without losing all sense of self.

Ponignant, desperate grasping at lives lived unfulfilled . Beautifully written it makes one feel for each and everyone in that story! This is a book clubs dream book! Well done Alisha..you made me feel way beyond any other book has.

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### **Suanne Laqueur says**

DNF. Buddy read this one with Amy. She loved it, I didn't connect at all. And thus the world goes round. We're still buddies and the world has sooooooo many books to read and disagree on. Ain't it grand?

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### **Rishika Assomull says**

This was a very gripping read! Alisha has a remarkable ability to conjure vivid imagery with her words. The characters are alive and draw you in. The story is bold and realistic as opposed to idealistic, providing readers with a candid take on love and marriage in the modern world.

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### **Bhaswar says**

Out With Lanterns explores the dynamics of relationships, through the journeys of Karin and Aksh. 46-year-old Karin feels imprisoned within her marital existence suffocated by the perimeters of her domesticity-husband and two children and meaningless societal associations with her "Gals Gang". A wannabe writer, she reaches out to 37- year-old Aksh, an established writer who too feels limited within the confines of his live-in relationship and the floss of superficiality that success bestows upon him.

The mail exchanges between Karin and Aksh, are the most engaging part of the book, for they not only thread the independent lives and independent relationships of Karin and Aksh but also their frightening childhood experiences which incarcerates them.

Alisha Kriplani's writing is near flawless; though some may find her too dark or cynical. In parts too, the metaphors appear contrived and laboured. However, it is her biggest asset, for it holds a mundane plot about the entrapments and thanklessness of relationships in a binding narrative; peppered with a variety of flavours: humorous, lilting and gut wrenching.

The dissipation of societal relationships in the chimera of our chasing inspiration outside them is thankfully arrested by Kriplani eventually as she firmly underscores their importance as a bedrock for our aspirations- Aksh is able to complete his elusive novel and there is hope for Karin as she begins hers.

Some parts of the plot could have been dovetailed better, like the sudden introduction of Flurry or the weak development of Karin's and Raoul's friends, but overall Alisha's power of the written word and her imagery deserves a round of applause. We are waiting for an encore, Alisha!

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### **Parnika says**

Superb storytelling, Engaging characters and brilliant narrative is how I would describe "Out with Lantern's"

by Alisha Kriplani. Her style of narration, mainly through letters exchanged between the 2 main protagonists – Aksh and Karin was surely engaging.

Aksh and Karin meet accidentally at a book launch where she accuses him of “stealing her story.” Then begins their virtual affair. It is a story portraying the eternal struggle of the human mind to balance between individual desires and those of family and society.

Sentences remained in my head days after I finished the book.

Karin’s character is one with whom 90% of Indian women will identify with.

Finally a book I could not put down and read it cover to cover in a single sitting. It is a highly recommended read for people who are keen students of human nature.

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### **Amit Sharma says**

There are some books that are completely beyond reviews. Out With Lanterns is one such book. I was pleasantly surprised by the concept, the method and the maturity of the author. On the basic level, the book is about the lives of Aksh, an established and successful author and Karin, a mother of two who always wanted to be a writer but was stuck in the whirlwind of her life as a mother and wife.

The book beautifully portrays the struggles of both of them. Will you be happy and content once you have everything you craved for? Or dreams come true at a cost of more complications? Will you be happy if you let go of your dreams as life takes over? Will you have the courage to wait until you have completed your responsibilities to dream again?

The email exchanges between Aksh and Karin are to die for. You can read them again and again. They are so rich in intelligent and meaningful thoughts that you have to stop and think before turning to the next page. The end of the book would not have been more perfect. You go through myriad emotions and are forced to reflect on the fragility and strength of human emotions and dreams.

Congratulations to Alisha for writing this book which has definitely found a place on my list of one of the best books I have read in the last few years.

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### **Piyusha Vir says**

What’s not to like about this book?!

I loved each word, pausing after each chapter just to reflect on what I had read. I loved the flow; loved the style of narration.

The editing is flawless and Indrani Ganguly deserves full marks for the plot does not slacken even for a moment.

The email exchanges between Karin and Aksh are my favourite bits of the novel. Full of insightful peeks into Karin and Aksh’s lives, they keep the narrative racing ahead. Interspersed with the actual story-telling, it makes for a very entertaining and engaging read.

The book also captures a writer’s life and struggles brilliantly. For anyone who wants to be a writer, or anyone who idly wonders what it is to be a writer, this book is a must read! This is a writer’s bible as much as it is a delight for the reader.

For me, it truly was a page-turner, and is very much one of my favourite reads of 2017.

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### **Privy Trifles says**

There are certain books that speak to you in a tone , you have never heard before. This book by Alisha 'Priti' Kirpalani did this to me, every night for the past few days as I read it just before going to sleep. It also made sure I had vivid dreams of people and places long forgotten, who were not more than a hazy memory till now.

Read the full review on my blog:  
<http://www.privytrifles.co.in/2018/09...>

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### **Niranjan Navalgund says**

I loved the email exchanges between the main characters! I picked the book at the book fair because I liked the cover. The story deals with intricacies and layers of dynamic relationships. A cool read!

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### **Atima Mankotia says**

Book Review: Out with the Lanterns by Alisha 'Priti' Kriplani

Some books leave you with a gazillion lingering thoughts and a bucketful of introspection. Alisha 'Priti' Kriplani's 'Out with the Lanterns' is one such book. Through beautifully crafted language, each sentence with its exquisite turn of phrase a delight to read, one delves into the lives of Karin Mehta, a woman torn by some deep-seated angst despite having it all and Aksh Soni, a successful writer, rebelling against unknown devils despite being on the threshold of fame and fortune. What attracts them to each other is the fact that both are rebels without a cause, hankering after the unknown, unaware and unappreciative of the favorable parts of their lives. The writer expertly rummages through the minds of many women thorough her female protagonist, extricating their innermost thoughts and putting them out in the open through the story of a woman who goes with the flow of life, dedicating years to being a wife and a mother till the realization of her own unfulfilled dreams and ambitions hits her and begins to frustrate her.

The frantic search for something to fill the unfathomable overwhelming emptiness, the pursuit of that elusive happiness is what the book is all about. It urges the readers to reflect upon their own lives, review their own foraging into the jungle of life looking for a paradise. Is the paradise really lost or we are looking in the wrong place? That's the relevant question that the book raises.

The style and structure of the book, consisting of emails interspersed with chapters, holds the story tightly together, the narration compelling the reader to keep turning pages. The development of characters and relationships is subtle yet powerful, each one coming alive through a perceptive, skillful and gradual unfolding that keeps the reader wanting more. The mother-daughter relationship described so dexterously is what I found exceedingly poignant, some of it touching a familiar chord.

The only tiny negative about the writing style is that in the email exchange both Karin and Aksh have a similar style of writing. I would have preferred a distinctive difference in their styles, use of words and phrases given their gender and age difference and the fact that one is a successful writer while the other is still struggling to write.

Out with the Lanterns leaves one with a feeling of completeness yet makes one ponder about one's own

journey of life. The real test of a good book is whether it leaves behind a riot of thoughts frolicking in the reader's mind and this one certainly does that. It is the perfect book to read if you are looking for articulately presented slice of life.

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### **Mala Jhangiani says**

Alisha,

“Whether it was a fight with my friends. Write. Quarrel with my parents. Write. Happy. Write. Sad. Write.”  
(page 55, Out With Lanterns)

Your unfailing fountain pen scribble turned into a wizard's wand and dished out a book that has been - worth the wait.

The unique flirtatious literate banter that hints at fantasy, romance, intrigue, holds the reader enthralled and wanting more. I loved the quotes on page 52/54.

And still, after all this time, the author never says to the reader, “you owe me”. Look what happens with a love like that, we get a book like ‘Out With Lanterns’.

Mala

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