



The Joy of Funerals: A Novel in Stories

Alix Strauss

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Begun as a Lives column in the *New York Times Magazine*, *The Joy of Funerals* is a riveting look into the disturbing lives of nine young women, each willing to take drastic measures and demonstrate extreme behavior to fill the voids created by longing and loneliness. The first eight face death differently, from Leslie, who grieves for her dead husband by having random sex with mourners she finds at a cemetery, to the unnamed woman who can't stop believing that her recently deceased date was perhaps the perfect man. The ninth woman, Nina, ties them all together by attending these funerals in her search to bond with others. Throughout this dazzling collection, Strauss, with her mordant humor reminiscent of "Six Feet Under," and penetrating voice, explores how our most basic need for connection shapes and defines us.

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