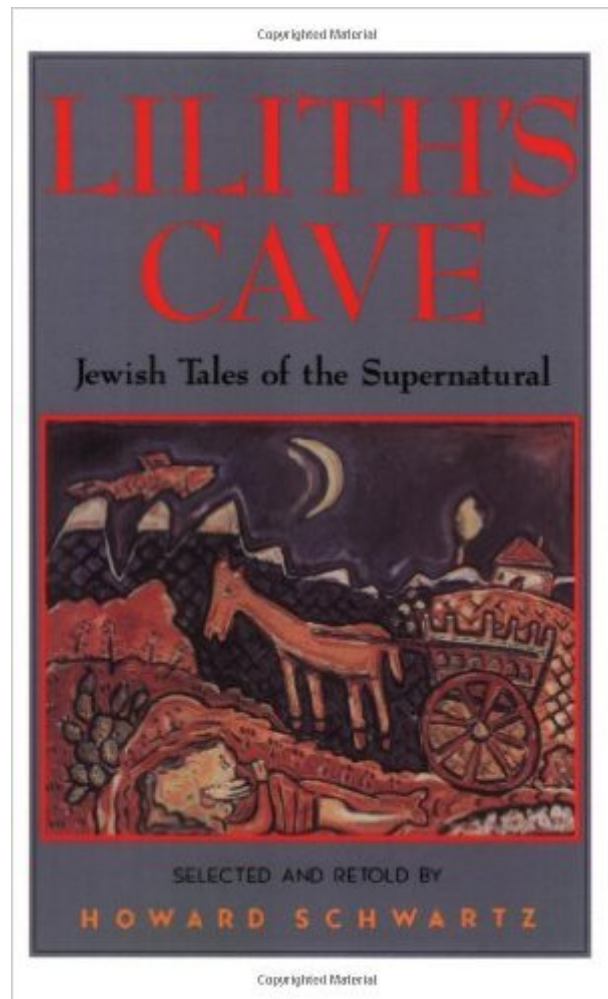


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Lilith's Cave: Jewish Tales Of The Supernatural



Synopsis

Once upon a time in the city of Tunis, a flirtatious young girl was drawn into Lilith's dangerous web by glancing repeatedly at herself in the mirror. It seems that a demon daughter of the legendary Lilith had made her home in the mirror and would soon completely possess the unsuspecting girl. Such tales of terror and the supernatural occupy an honored position in the Jewish folkloric tradition. Howard Schwartz has superbly translated and retold fifty of the best of these folktales, now collected into one volume for the first time. Gathered from countless sources ranging from the ancient Middle East to twelfth-century Germany and later Eastern European oral tradition, these captivating stories include Jewish variants of the Pandora and Persephone myths and of such famous folktales as "The Fisherman and His Wife," "The Sorcerer's Apprentice," and "Bluebeard," as well as several tales from the Middle Ages that have never before been published. Focusing on crucial turning points in life--birth, marriage, and death--the tales feature wandering spirits, marriage with demons, werewolves, speaking heads, possession by dybbuks (souls of the dead who enter the bodies of the living), and every other kind of supernatural adversary. Readers will encounter a carpenter who is haunted when he makes a violin from the wood of a coffin; a wife who saves herself from the demoness her husband has inadvertently married by agreeing to share him for an hour each day; and the age-old tale of Lilith, Adam's first wife, who refused to submit to him and instead banished herself from the Garden of Eden to give birth to the demons of the world. Drawn from Rabbinic sources, medieval Jewish folklore, Hasidic texts, and oral tradition, these stories will equally entrance readers of Jewish literature and those with an affection for fantasy and the supernatural.

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Customer Reviews

This is a reference for every eerie and nasty folktale in Jewish culture. From Maimonides and the Homonculus to tales of the angel of death this book can only be compared to the Grimm Brothers at their most evil. It is so sad that Sarah MacLachlin and neo-pagan feminists have tried to make Lilith into some Gloria Steinem type of symbol. Her destructive and glorious power is something that should never be defanged, and the Lilith stories in this volume prove it.

This an absolute delight of a book, with stories that will entertain adults and children alike. A number of the tales focus on Lilith, but there are also a good collection of other supernatural beasties here. Howard Schwartz is a first-rate scholar and even provides footnotes and background on the stories he presents. The information on the history of Lilith here sticks to proven facts instead of farfetched speculation and outright errors and fantasies most other books on the subject are filled with. I highly recommend this collection and Schwartz's other books of fairy tales as well.

Try this : buy this book and read a tale before you go to bed at night. You probably won't be able to stop at just one! Schwartz has put together a great collection of supernatural tales, both long and short, that throw a fascinating light on Jewish folk culture. The general reader will appreciate the writing style, while folklore specialists will be glad he has included notes and references (in the back, thank you!) Fascinating elements to this goyisch reader : the magical power of simply studying the Torah and the frequent resort to a rabbinic court as a form of protection against and release from demons and spells.

This book is a gem. I received it as a gift when it first came out in 1988, and remains one of my favorite books. Be warned, the themes are often mature and so this book is best for readers 14 and up. It is a diverse anthology of Jewish supernatural folklore, with stories spanning over one thousand years and originating from France to Persia. Lilith's Cave also has an insightful Forward, written by Howard Schwartz, which analyzes many recurring times through a socio-historical perspective, offering readers a provocative angle from which to view these stories. For example, Lilith was a female demon referenced in ancient texts, and she is the opposite archetype of Eve because of her assertiveness and dominance. We see her trying to snatch the life from human

infants, but being thwarted by wise midwives. Some stories show "good" demons (similar to European pagan fairies) interacting with humans. Occasionally, humans in conflict with demons set up a trials to decide the outcome of a the dispute, humans vs. demons, based on Jewish Law. I learned many aspects of Jewish culture, religious beliefs, and practices throughout the ages, as well as their occasional Christian influences, through this edgy book. This material is further supplemented by detailed references at the end. This hardcover version contains beautiful illustrations that complement the stories.

What a fun read...if you like the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Anderson and/or mythology, you'll enjoy this read...very much reminds me of fairy tales, but instead of witches, princesses and Huntsmen you have Lilith, Demons, Merchants and Rabbi's. What really struck me about this book is the Rabbi's negotiating contracts, and holding hearings...skilled Jewish lawyers go back way further than I realized! Easy read, lots of short stories, with a great forward and notes.

This book is a blessing for those who like supernatural tales and supernatural folklore. The tales are enticing, and it's got beautiful surrealist black and white illustrations. It's a great pleasure to have it.

This is an excellent book of supernatural Jewish folktales. It's very well written. I would recommend it highly to anyone interested in Judaism, mythology, storytelling or the occult.

Asmodeus and Lilith are the crown regent of the sitra achra or the other side. They rule over all the demon. Both King and Queen are spoken of quite frequently in Jewish literature. Asmodeus threw King Solomon out of his palace and took his place for a number of years. Lilith rebelled against Adam's superiority trip and fled the Garden of Eden. She gives birth to demons. In legend she seduces men and kills children unless they are protected with a certain amulet. This book is a collection of 50 stories regarding the supernatural, collected from the Jews in Europe and from Jewish communes in the Middle East. In these stories Rabbis serve as powerful magicians doing battle against demons, supernatural creatures and other sorcerers. These Rabbis cast circles on the ground, see into the future, raise the dead and cast spells. A good number of stories include Asmodeus and Lilith. In one story a goldsmith is about to die in the forest and in order to survive he makes a deal with Asmodeus. He marries his daughter and she lives in the cellar of the goldsmith's shop. He frequents her there and they even have kids. After the affair is discovered, the demon goddess lives there with the offspring until generations later rabbis compel them to leave. In another

story Lilith or Queen Sheba seduces a man and lives in similar circumstance .I enjoyed reading this collection and finished it in two days. The stories pull motifs from Jewish sources like the bible, Talmud and Kabbalah . Yet they also draw from Faery lore. You have women marrying demons and then living with them at the bottom of the ocean. Lots of Faery kings have seduced many a human in so a fashion. In one story two friends are reunited after one dies. They study Torah for a few hours, but the passes quickly and 150 years go by. In the Faery world time moves in such a fashion.

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