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Practical Magic



Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author of *The Dovekeepers*...For more than two hundred years, the Owens women had been blamed for everything that went wrong in their Massachusetts town. And Gillian and Sally endured that fate as well; as children, the sisters were outsiders. Their elderly aunts almost seemed to encourage the whispers of witchery, but all Gillian and Sally wanted was to escape. One would do so by marrying, the other by running away. But the bonds they shared brought them back-almost as if by magic...

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The movie version of this story is one of the most fun, exhilarating movies - a favorite in this household. This book bears very little relation to the movie. The only similarities are that the main characters exist as they do in the movie, but they don't live with the aunts and magic is not quite the focus as it was in the movie. Now, that said ... This is one of the best books I've had the opportunity to read. Written in the beautiful prose Alice Hoffman is so well known for, it follows the life of Gillian and Sally as they go on their diverse paths. Sally is the stable widow with two girls in tow. She leaves the aunts in New England, leaving her sad life behind, and moves to a Long Island suburb with her two girls where tries to live a normal life. Meanwhile, Gillian is a bad girl who is in and out of relationships and in and out of trouble. She finds the awful, abusive Jimmy and eventually kills him accidentally while enroute to visit her sister. Unsure of what to do, she brings him to her sister's house dead in the passenger seat of the car - she thinks stable Sally would know what to do to keep her out of jail. Sally meets the situation with borderline hysteria at first, then the two decide to bury

him in Sally's backyard. Gillian moves in with Sally and her girls and tries to forget the body in the back yard. Sally's boring, stable life changes dramatically while Gillian's naughty life changes to a more stable one. Meanwhile they are haunted by the evil spirit of Jimmy, threatening to destroy the tenuous stability they try to build. This book is not written in standard chapters - instead it is written in four large sections. Fortunately there are enough scene breaks in each section that you can put it down and read it in separate sittings.

My first taste of Alice Hoffman was *Here on Earth*. While the prose was beautiful, I was disappointed in the characters and plot. However, deep in my gut, I had a feeling there was more to Alice Hoffman than what she was displaying in that book. I couldn't write her off with all of the books she had written, and I felt there was more to her than I was shown. So, I did a little research and took some of her books out of the library. The second book I read was, *Practical Magic*, and I'm glad to see my instincts were right. This bewitching, captivating novel is full of spellbounding characters, which is the main thing that was missing from *Here on Earth*. Sally and Gillian are sisters who, because of the passing of their parents, end up getting raised by their two aunts, who are witches. Because of this, the sisters are ostracized a bit from their peers, and long to be free from the house and the Aunts on Magnolia Street. Raven-haired Sally is the older of the two sisters. She's practical, hard-working, good, responsible, and afraid to love. Golden-haired Gillian is wild, lazy, coniving, airy, and also afraid to love. Gillian is the first to escape, by running off with a boy. She moves from town to town, from guy to guy, with three failing marriages behind her, before she shows up on her sister's doorstep with the dead body of her recent boyfriend, Jimmy, in the car. Sally, who continued to stay with the Aunts, fell in love and got married to a wonderful man named Michael, finding a happy life of her own. She had a man she loved, and two daughters, Antonia and Kylie. Her world came crumbling down on her when Michael got killed by a drunk driver.

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