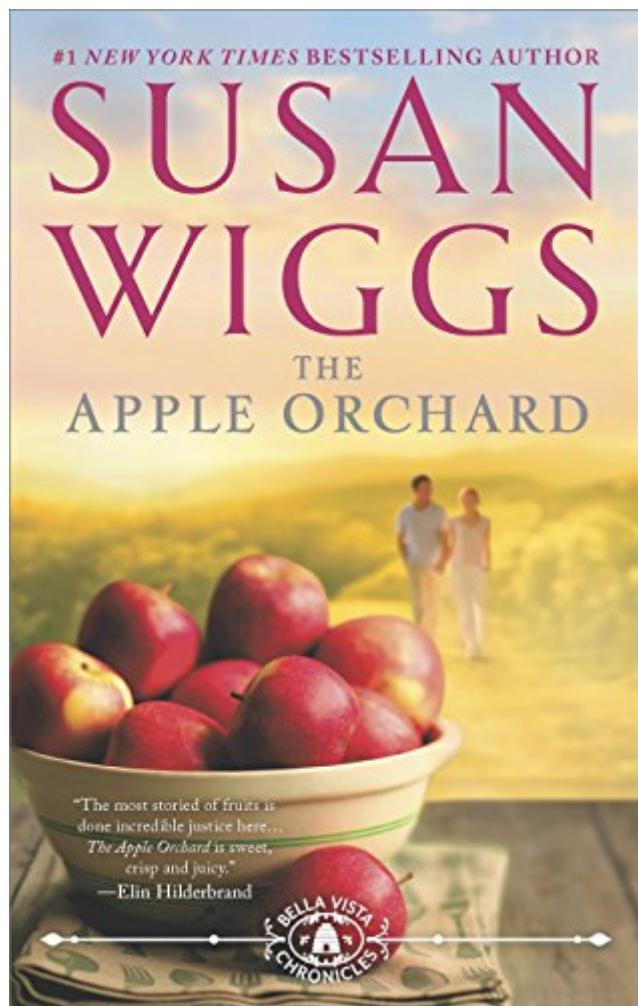


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The Apple Orchard (Bella Vista Chronicles)



Synopsis

#1 New York Times bestselling author Susan Wiggs brings readers into the lush abundance of Sonoma County, in a story of sisters, friendship and the invisible bonds of history that are woven like a spell around us. Tess Delaney loves illuminating history; returning stolen treasures to their rightful owners and filling the spaces in people's hearts with stories of their family legacies. But Tess's own history is filled with gaps: a father she never met, and a mother who spent more time traveling than with her daughter. Then the enigmatic Dominic Rossi arrives on her San Francisco doorstep with the news that the grandfather she's never met is in a coma and that she's destined to inherit half of a hundred-acre apple orchard estate called Bella Vista. The rest is willed to Isabel Johansen, the half sister she never knew she had. Isabel is everything Tess isn't, but against the rich landscape of Bella Vista, with Isabel and Dominic by her side, Tess begins to discover a world where family comes first and the roots of history run deep.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Tess Delaney works at The Sheffield Auction House tracking down stolen art and heirlooms and restoring them to their rightful owners. At only twenty-nine, she is already a success in her field. On

the verge of a promotion she is jolted by the news that a grandfather she didn't know existed has had an accident and is in a coma. If he dies, Tess will inherit half of Bella Vista, his apple orchard. The other portion will go to Isabel, a half-sister she never knew she had. This shocking news was delivered by her grandfather's banker, Dominic Rossi. He convinces her to take a few days off to visit Bella Vista and her newly discovered family. It wasn't difficult to resist Dominic who was very persuasive and drop-dead gorgeous. She couldn't reach her mother, who wasn't returning her calls, so she agreed to the trip. Once she arrived she discovered there were more than a few old family secrets and that Bella Vista was on the verge of foreclosure. I was not expecting to enjoy this book as much as I did, but within a few chapters I was immersed in the beautiful setting, rich with detail and vivid descriptions. The characters are well-developed and likeable. Tess is a strong, independent woman and easy to relate to. In contrast, Isabel is more family oriented and an accomplished cook. Mealtime at Bella Vista was filled with descriptive images of food and I could almost smell the breakfast muffins and taste pasta sauce for dinner. The ten sections of the book each begin with one of her recipes, a bonus for those of us who enjoy cooking. Most of the story takes place in the present day at Bella Vista with occasional flashbacks to World War II where the story of Tess's grandfather, Magnus, unfolds.

Set in beautiful Sonoma county, this is a story of friendship, love and memories. San Francisco-based Tess Delaney restores stolen treasures to their rightful owners, a vocation at which she is very good and from which she derives immense satisfaction. Often her finds lead her to heirlooms lost during the Nazi occupation of Europe. One such example is a necklace that belonged to Annaliese Winther's mother. The impoverished elderly woman refuses to sell it despite knowing the money received could substantially improve her life. But to Annaliese, possessing the necklace means more; its value is in the memories. Memories and traces of memories are all Tess has of her own childhood--a father she never met and a mother whose travel left her with her grandmother, a memorable Irish woman who owned a second-hand shop in Dublin. When she discovers she's been left half of a one hundred-acre apple orchard in the town of Archangel, she is puzzled. Even more puzzling is that the other half of Bella Vista has been left to Isabel Johansen, a half sister she never knew she had. Tess travels to Bella Vista to dispose of the estate, but something magical begins to unfold. As she spends time there, she begins to experience many things, the simple pleasures of family and wonderful food, the haunting beauty of Sonoma county and a world where the roots of history run deep. Here, she's reminded of something Annaliese said: if you don't believe memories are worth more than money, then perhaps you've not made the right kind of memories. As she

begins to learn about her grandfather Magnus and his escape from Nazi occupied Europe, searching for information about him becomes a driving force in her quest.

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