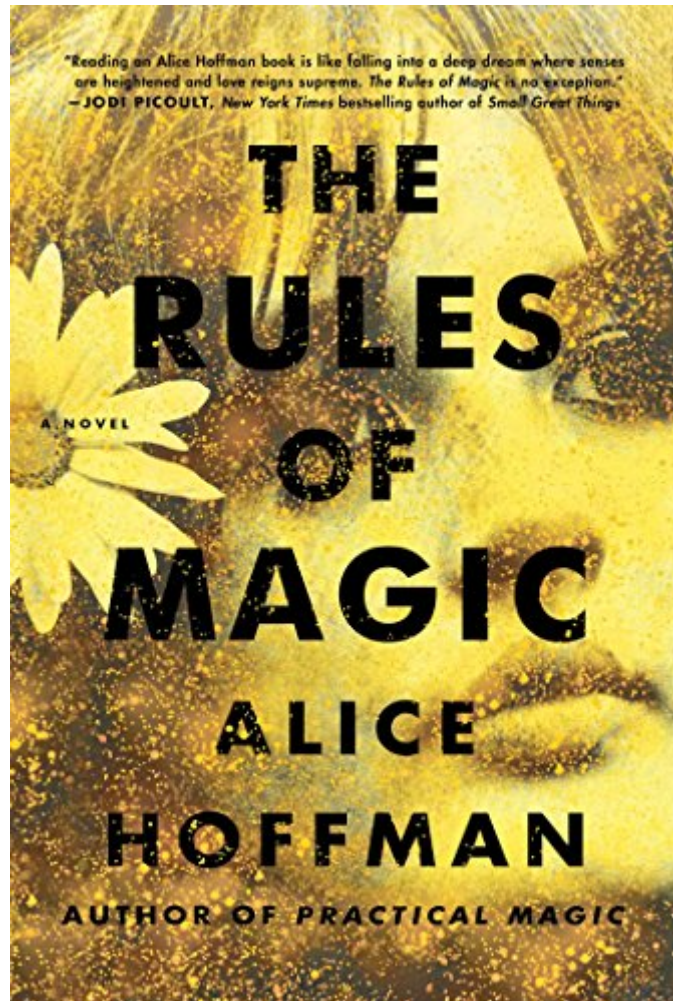




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The Rules Of Magic: A Novel



Synopsis

From beloved author Alice Hoffman comes the spellbinding prequel to her bestseller, *Practical Magic*. Find your magic. For the Owens family, love is a curse that began in 1620, when Maria Owens was charged with witchery for loving the wrong man. Hundreds of years later, in New York City at the cusp of the sixties, when the whole world is about to change, Susanna Owens knows that her three children are dangerously unique. Difficult Franny, with skin as pale as milk and blood red hair, shy and beautiful Jet, who can read other people's thoughts, and charismatic Vincent, who began looking for trouble on the day he could walk. From the start Susanna sets down rules for her children: No walking in the moonlight, no red shoes, no wearing black, no cats, no crows, no candles, no books about magic. And most importantly, never, ever, fall in love. But when her children visit their Aunt Isabelle, in the small Massachusetts town where the Owens family has been blamed for everything that has ever gone wrong, they uncover family secrets and begin to understand the truth of who they are. Back in New York City each begins a risky journey as they try to escape the family curse. The Owens children cannot escape love even if they try, just as they cannot escape the pains of the human heart. The two beautiful sisters will grow up to be the revered, and sometimes feared, aunts in *Practical Magic*, while Vincent, their beloved brother, will leave an unexpected legacy. Thrilling and exquisite, real and fantastical, *The Rules of Magic* is a story about the power of love reminding us that the only remedy for being human is to be true to yourself.

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Customer Reviews

I've loved Alice Hoffman's stories since *Practical Magic*, which still stands out as one of my favorites of all time. I was excited to learn more about the family and go back in time a bit. This book immediately pulled me in. I couldn't put it down! I love the siblings, Jet, Franny and Vincent. They're well-woven characters with good dimension to them. Sometimes you wonder if you like them at all, and I think that's a sign of excellent character development. They make mistakes but also learn. When reading a typical thriller, I sometimes skip around to dialogue when I get kinda bored. With Alice Hoffman books, you want to read every.single.word. No skipping. She's a really great writer with a knack for great storytelling. This book spans a good amount of time and I never once got bored. I like that there's a cool Aunt in Massachusetts at the same house, just like the two in *Practical Magic*. Great read.

In *Practical Magic*, we had Maria Owens, Aunt Jet, Aunt Frances, Sally and Gillian. That book centered on Sally and Gillian. Here, we have the story of Jet and Frances when they were the younger generation, full of longing and fears. There is the dreaded curse that threatens doom to any man who loves an Owens woman, but these are women who deserve to be loved and would want to be loved, if only it weren't for that darned curse. We also learn more about Maria Owens and the origin of the curse. Other family members are introduced, including Vincent, the brother of Jet and Frances. I don't believe he was mentioned in *Practical Magic*. It's a compelling story, with strong writing and fascinating characters. I couldn't put it down. I liked it much more than *Practical Magic*, which I found rather depressing. (Oddly, I loved the movie, and how often can someone say they liked the movie more than the book!) This book is about love and joys and sorrows, but I would never call it depressing. I am going to go back and re-read *Practical Magic*; I'm sure I will see it differently now. I mentioned *Practical Magic* several times, but this book stands alone. It is not necessary to know anything about *Practical Magic* to enjoy it. *The Rules of Magic* is up there with the best of Alice Hoffman.

The Owens family has always been different. Their mother tried to protect them from that knowledge, but there is only so much you can do to hide your children's own abilities from them.

Franny called birds, Jet could see, Vincent was Vincent and had a splash of darkness in him, that he always seemed to try to outrun. Charming and powerful even as a fourteen year old, all of them were special. The summons came one day when Franny turned 17, that she was to go to visit her Aunt Isabelle, in Massachusetts. Their mother, Susanna was distressed by the call, but it was a tradition for each of the young women in the family to make this visit when they reached that age. This time, the three of them went together, to meet their Aunt, and to finally figure out who they were. Then their lives begin to unfold. I love Hoffman's books, each and every one. Magical realism and the tugs and tragedies of real life in each and every one. This one is a favorite now, but I say that each time a new one comes out. Each stands alone, and each makes you part of the story, so that you hate to reach the last page. The Rules of Magic is no different.

Alice Hoffman is one of those prolific writers who rarely makes a misstep. Her ability to weave a tale and invite us in so that we become part of things is truly legendary. Every book I have read thus far by Alice Hoffman has embraced me and drawn me in from page one! I knew from before I opened the book that this was a prequel to Practical Magic and I was very excited to begin. Practical Magic is one of my all time favorite books (and movie!) and much like other fans, I wanted to see where things began. I wasn't sure if this was going to be about Maria Owens or about the aunts when I first heard about it, but now I know that it was focused primarily on the two aunts and their brother, Vincent. It was so wonderful to get a glimpse of what these awesome ladies were like as young girls. What I would LOVE to see next would be a book that takes us all the way back, to Maria...to the very beginning of the magic. I hope that this will be considered in the future...hint, hint! If you love magical realism...if you love Alice Hoffman's writing...even if you have only watched the movie...you MUST give this a try. It's such a beautiful story of love, devotion and the strength of family ties. As usual, Ms. Hoffman weaves us a lovely tale, with well developed characters and a setting that is easily viewed in the mind's eye via her vivid storytelling. I can't recommend The Rules of Magic enough. Please...do yourself a favor and get lost in this wonderful story. You just might find yourself believing in love again.

AH is quickly becoming one of my favorite authors. Since Dovekeepers which I read for book club, then on to Museum and my all time favorite BLACKBIRD HOUSE, I have been working my way through her books. The stories pull you in and her characters are fully developed, you feel for them and I would catch myself putting down the book to ponder a sentence that hit me on an emotional level. This is a family story with all the usual family interaction and drama, it will not disappoint. Now

I'm on to PRACTICAL MAGIC to get the background info on the story and the people.

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