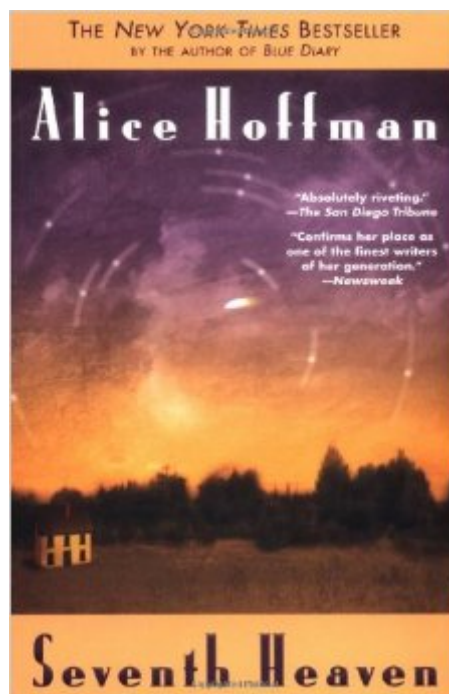


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Seventh Heaven



Synopsis

Nora Silk doesn't really fit in on Hemlock Street, where every house looks the same. She's divorced. She wears a charm bracelet and high heels and red toreador pants. And the way she raises her kids is a scandal. But as time passes, the neighbors start having second thoughts about Nora. The women's apprehension evolves into admiration. The men's lust evolves into awe. The children are drawn to her in ways they can't explain. And everyone on this little street in 1959 Long Island seems to sense the possibilities and perils of a different kind of future when they look at Nora Silk...This extraordinary novel by the author of *The River King* and *Local Girls* takes us back to a time when the exotic both terrified and intrigued us, and despite our most desperate attempts, our passions and secrets remained as stubbornly alive as the weeds in our well-trimmed lawns.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Seventh Heaven is the sixth book I have read by writer, Alice Hoffman. I obviously think she is an interesting storyteller, as well as an excellent writer of words, or else I wouldn't keep reading her novels. Some I like better than others, though I haven't come across a horrible book yet (though *Here On Earth* is still my least favorite thus far). I noticed one main thing that all of her books have in common, and that's the feeling of wistfulness and despair in her books. Like many of her other works, *Seventh Heaven* centers around a town -- a community. Nora Silk, who is one of her main characters, but certainly not the only one, moves into this town as the only divorced woman on the block. This book takes place in 1959 where people just stayed married, regardless of whether or not the two people involved are happy in the relationship. Not only is Nora divorced, but she's raising

two boys: Billy, an elementary-school aged child, and James, a baby. Billy has problems in school fitting in, and becomes withdrawn to the point where he tries to make himself invisible. Nora is a woman whom the other mothers steer clear from at first. She's a woman who doesn't appear to raise her children in a conventional way. She's also a woman who will take romance regardless of the form when she starts having an affair with a seventeen-year-old neighbor, Ace McCarthy. This story isn't just about Nora being dejected, as well as her kids, by a whole neighborhood, and then later accepted. No, it's also about the neighbors: The McCarthy boys, Ace and Jackie, who can't seem to stay out of trouble. It's about the cop, Joe Hennessy, who lives across the street from Nora with his wife, Ellen, and boy, Stevie, who likes to torture Nora's son, Billy, in school.

"Seventh Heaven" by Alice Hoffman is a most unusual coming-of-age tale. Here, it is not just one youth who matures into self-discovery and understanding, but a whole community of neighbors--children, adolescents, and adults. The catalyst comes in the form of Nora Silk, a vibrant, independent, freethinking divorcee who moves into the neighborhood with her two young sons. Twenty months later, everything and everybody has changed. Don't expect detailed character development--there are far too many characters in this novel for that. This work is more like a collection of interlocking short stories than a traditional novel. But this is Alice Hoffman writing so, trust me, you will not feel shortchanged. Her characters are spot-on perfect--so credible, they practically bleed off the page. With just a few deft words, she can capture an emotion, a life, emptiness, a dream, and make you feel that person's essence. It's uncanny, magical--it's Alice Hoffman. Clearly, I love this author! The whole plot takes place in a mere 20 months. It is 1959 in the suburbs of New Jersey. This is a time way before the women's movement. This is like Pleasantville, U.S.A. From the first moment they see her, the neighbors know that Nora Silk doesn't fit in. She wears tight pants and high heel shoes. Her house is untidy, her kids unkempt. She runs her household, holds down a job, and does all the manly fix-it jobs around the house...and she acts as if all this were perfectly normal. From the very beginning, all the mothers in the neighborhood give her the cold shoulder, but the husbands can't keep their eyes off of her. Naturally, this doesn't help the situation. The children take cues from their mothers and start taunting and bullying Nora's third grade son, Billy.

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