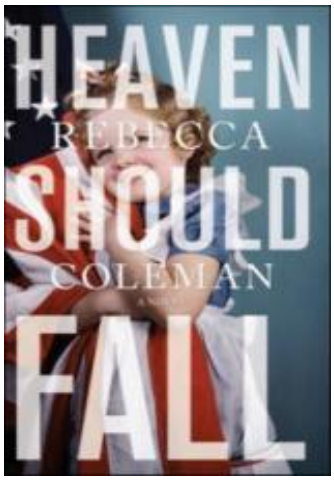
Heaven Should Fall

by Rebecca Coleman



About the Book

Alone since her mother?s death, Jill Wagner wants to eat, sleep and breathe Cade Olmstead when he bursts upon her life?golden, handsome and ambitious. Even putting college on hold feels like a minor sacrifice when she discovers she?s pregnant with Cade?s baby. But it won?t be the last one she?ll have to make.

Retreating to the Olmstead?s New England farm seems sensible, if not ideal: they?ll regroup and welcome the baby, surrounded by Cade?s family. But the remote, ramshackle place already feels crowded. Cade?s mother tends to his ailing father, while Cade?s pious sister, her bigoted husband and their rowdy sons overrun the house. Only Cade?s brother, Elias, a combat veteran with a damaged spirit, gives Jill an ally amidst the chaos, along with a glimpse into his disturbing childhood. But his burden is heavy, and she alone cannot kindle his will to live.

The tragedy of Elias is like a killing frost, withering Cade in particular, transforming his idealism into bitterness and paranoia. Taking solace in caring for her newborn son, Jill looks up to find her golden boy is gone. In Cade?s place is a desperate man willing to endanger them all in the name of vengeance?unless Jill can find a way out.

Discussion Guide

1. Jill?s relationship with her mother was a close one, which leads to her sense of anxiety and guilt at not having intuitively known when her mom died. Do you think Jill?s feelings about that are irrational or natural?

2. Cade is ambitious and outgoing, and early on he and Jill have a strong relationship. Did you see signs even then that a ruthless element existed in his personality? Did his behavior set off any red flags for you, or did you feel that the change in him was entirely brought on by his grief and circumstances?

3. Jill?s mother was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and Jill is well versed in their philosophy, which becomes a kind of spirituality that she draws from during difficult times. Have you known anyone in a recovery program, or participated in one? Have you learned anything from such a program that applies to your life, regardless of whether you are in recovery?

4. At the beginning of the story Cade seems uninterested in his old girlfriend, Piper, but as things deteriorate in his own life he grows obsessed with her. What do you think is behind this change of heart?

5. How do you think Elias?s upbringing affects the way he feels about his experiences of war? What do you think is the biggest contributing factor to his suicide --- is it his PTSD, or something else?

6. Candy uses religion as a way to see the world as inherently just and, as a result, feels no compassion for others. This backfires on her when Elias dies and she feels punished for her own feelings and misdeeds. What is your opinion of Candy?s way of approaching her faith?

7. Even Leela, who is one of the most sympathetic members of the Olmstead family, has moments when she takes a hard-hearted approach to people close to her --- Eddy and Lucia in particular. Do you think her callousness toward them is justified?

8. It?s implied that Candy had more involvement in Lindsay Vogel?s drowning than she owned up to. What do you think her role was, and why?

9. Elias suffers from PTSD, a condition that affects as many as one-quarter of soldiers returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. What do you think can be done to reach soldiers who struggle to readjust, or who need help but are reluctant to seek it?

10. Cade professes to deeply love his son, his wife and his brother, yet throughout the story he commits acts that violate their trust and risk their safety. Do you believe he truly loves them and is limited by his human flaws, or that he doesn?t fully grasp the meaning of love and loyalty in the first place?

11. How did you feel about Jill?s actions toward the end of the story? Did you feel she was doing the best she could with what she had, or that she was too complicit in her own problems in the end? Were you satisfied with the way the story was resolved?

Author Bio

Rebecca Coleman is the critically acclaimed author of HEAVEN SHOULD FALL and THE KINGDOM OF CHILDHOOD, a semifinalist in Amazon?s Breakthrough Novel competition. A native New Yorker, Rebecca now lives and works near Washington, D.C.

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