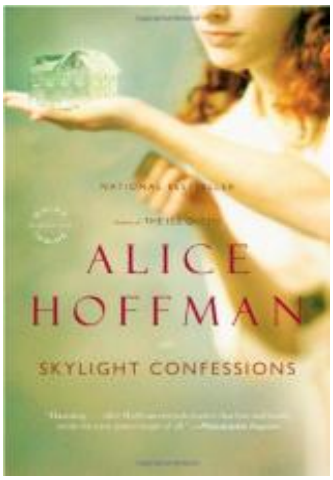
Skylight Confessions

by Alice Hoffman



About the Book

On the night her father dies, Arlyn is certain that the man she is meant to be with will walk into her life. But fate seems to be playing a trick when John Moody knocks on her door to ask for directions. Cool, practical, and deliberate, John is dreamy Arlyn's polar opposite. Yet the two are drawn powerfully together even when it is clear they are bound to bring each other grief. Their marriage is dangerous territory, tracing a map no one should follow. It leads them and their children to a house made of glass in the Connecticut countryside, to the rooftops and avenues of Manhattan, and to the blue waters of Long Island Sound, all in a search for family and identity.

Walking this path of ruin and redemption are Sam, their son, a brilliant, explosive artist who is drawn to self-destruction and dreams; Blanca, the beautiful loner who tries desperately to protect her brother from his destiny and lives her own life in a world of books; and Will, the grandson, who is left a legacy of broken pieces he needs to put together, an emotional and mysterious puzzle made up of people who don't know the first thing about love.

Here is a family so real, so tragic, so devoted, it is as if they have written their own riveting history --- a quest for love and truth. Glass breaks, love hurts, and families make their own rules. No one who reads this book will ever forget it or look at their own family in quite the same way. **Skylight Confessions** is a luminous and elegant work of true originality.

Discussion Guide

1. There is much speculation by characters in the novel as to whether John and Arlyn were fated to find each other. Do you think they were destined to be together? Or do you think that Arlyn was meant to be with George Snow? Would Arlyn ever have met George if she hadn?t first fallen in love with John?

2. Arlyn?s hair is described as being several different shades of red in the book, from fire-red to blood-red. How do you think these varying descriptions affect the way you perceive Arlyn in these scenes?

3. Why is it significant that the Moodys live in a glass house, and that the design of this house is the crowning achievement of John?s father?s career?

4. Why do you think Arlyn haunts John Moody for so long after her death?

5. After Arlyn?s death, John and his son, Sam, manage to clash on just about everything. Is there anything besides Arlyn that you think these two have in common?

6. Birds make notable appearances in several scenes in the novel. Identify a few such scenes and discuss the role that birds play in the story.

7. Arlyn passes on to her children specific items that they wear like talismans: Sam gets her gray coat and Blanca her pearls. In what ways is each of these gifts appropriate for its recipient?

8. ?Sam Moody wasn?t like other people. The things he thought most often about were dishes, bones, vases, model planes, buildings made of blocks --- things that could be broken? (page 44). What do you think this passage says about Sam?s personality? To what do you attribute Sam?s addiction to drugs?

9. Discuss the role that Meredith, as an outsider to the family, plays in the novel.

10. How do you think Blanca?s life will change after the novel ends? What do you hope will happen for her? What effect will the revelation of her true father?s identity ultimately have on Blanca?

Author Bio

Alice Hoffman is the author of more than 30 works of fiction, including WHEN WE FLEW AWAY, THE WITCHES OF CAMBRIDGE, THE INVISIBLE HOUR, THE BOOK OF MAGIC, MAGIC LESSONS: The Prequel to *Practical Magic*, THE WORLD THAT WE KNEW, THE RULES OF MAGIC, FAITHFUL, THE MARRIAGE OF OPPOSITES, THE MUSEUM OF EXTRAORDINARY THINGS, THE DOVEKEEPERS, PRACTICAL MAGIC, THE RED GARDEN, and the Oprah's Book Club selection HERE ON EARTH. She lives near Boston.

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