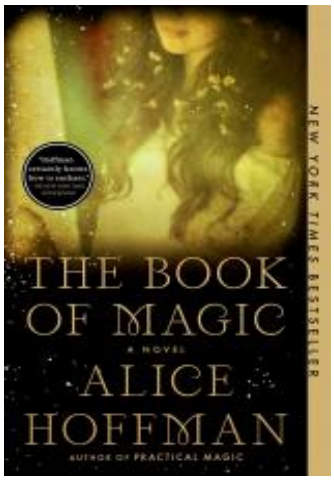
The Book of Magic

by Alice Hoffman



About the Book

Master storyteller Alice Hoffman brings us the conclusion of the *Practical Magic* series in a spellbinding and enchanting final Owens novel brimming with lyric beauty and vivid characters.

The Owens family has been cursed in matters of love for over 300 years, but all of that is about to change. The novel begins in a library, the best place for a story to be conjured, when beloved aunt Jet Owens hears the deathwatch beetle and knows she has only seven days to live. Jet is not the only one in danger --- the curse is already at work.

A frantic attempt to save a young man?s life spurs three generations of the Owens women, and one long-lost brother, to use their unusual gifts to break the curse as they travel from Paris to London to the English countryside where their ancestor Maria Owens first practiced the Unnamed Art. The younger generation discovers secrets that have been hidden from them in matters of both magic and love by Sally, their fiercely protective mother. As Kylie Owens uncovers the truth about who she is and what her own dark powers are, her aunt Franny comes to understand that she is ready to sacrifice everything for her family, and Sally Owens realizes that she is willing to give up everything for love.

THE BOOK OF MAGIC is a breathtaking conclusion that celebrates mothers and daughters, sisters and brothers, and anyone who has ever been in love.

Discussion Guide

1. Centuries before the events in THE BOOK OF MAGIC, the Owens family matriarch, Maria Owens, invoked an enchantment meant to protect generations of her family to come. Discuss how the generations within THE BOOK OF MAGIC each deal with the curse and its restrictions. What other legacies did her family inherit?

2. THE BOOK OF MAGIC is both contemporary fiction and magical realism. How does Alice Hoffman blend both

genres? What are examples from each genre in the book?

3. Libraries play a critical role throughout the novel, and the Owens children were taught to find their way to a library if they were ever lost. What are some libraries, literal or otherwise, that have been havens for you? What do you seek out when feeling lost?

4. Sally is fiercely protective of her daughters, and keeps the truth of their magical inheritance and Maria?s curse from them. Do you think Sally had a right to keep the truth from her daughters? How does Sally evolve throughout the novel?

5. A few of the characters have a particular talent when it comes to their magical gifts. Vincent, for example, is a finder, and Kylie can see auras. Consider all the specialized talents detailed throughout the novel. Is one more valuable than another? If you could choose to have a particular ability, which would it be and why?

6. Antonia is a scientist and the most logical of all the Owens women. How does she fit into the rest of the family? What was the significance of having her unlock the secret to breaking the curse?

7. In one of Jet?s last messages before passing on, she writes, ?Everything worthwhile is dangerous.? What does she mean by this? Do you consider this a warning or encouragement?

8. Another piece of advice Jet leaves for Kylie, and one that is invoked by others throughout the novel, is to trust no one. How is this advice valuable? Was it ever detrimental?

9. Baking is used throughout the novel as its own form of magic, one that attracts goodwill and loved ones. Margaret welcomes her son home with favorites like ploughman?s pasties and ginger pudding, while the Owenses make pies to draw Kylie to them. What other food and drink play a role in the novel? How does the novel?s fare affect the characters and their relationships? Do you have any recipes that act as magic in your own home or family?

10. Consider Tom and Ian; both were exposed to the ?Crooked Path? early in life, each with drastically different outcomes. What else is similar about these two men? Discuss what led to their contrasting conclusions.

11. One of the family traditions is making Chocolate Tipsy Cake (at one point Franny even says, ?If you can?t eat chocolate cake for breakfast, what is the point of being alive??). What other traditions are mentioned throughout the novel? Share your own family or community?s traditions with the group.

12. ?Ian was covered with ink, nineteen tattoos in all, and every one told a story.? Do you have any tattoos? If you?re comfortable doing so, share the story or inspiration behind them, or whether you?ve ever considered getting a tattoo. What would you have inked if you decided to get one?

13. ?Love was inside every story,? Franny thinks toward the end of the novel. Discuss the different ways and different types --- familial, romantic, mania, etc. --- of love in this book and how it shaped the story.

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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Publication Date: October 18, 2022
Genres: Fiction, Magical Realism
Paperback: 416 pages
Publisher: Scribner/Marysue Rucci Books
ISBN-10: 1982151498
ISBN-13: 9781982151492