



NANCY: The author creates a strange world of somewhat unhappy witches, unlike anything I've ever read. I finished it in the middle of the night and woke up the next morning wondering "what?" I appreciated the happy ending, but felt sorry for most of the ladies throughout the story. Great character development and quite a tale she spins in this look into the life of a family of witches.



KATHARINE: Alice Hoffman is quite the storyteller, for sure. I don't think I'm recommending this for college classes, or at least I'm not sure where it would be helpful. Maybe look at Gillian's loser boyfriend and talk about the problem with drugs and addictive behavior? Or perhaps for a class in Family Dynamics it might add some levity. Sally was certainly the one trying to make it all right.



PRISCILLA: Yes, ladies, this was the strange one. Pretty dark if you ask me. I sure hope they don't read this in the schools these days. But do you watch that show, The Good Witch? Now that's more my speed if you want to talk about witches. Just some good clean fun and the witches help people.



JANE: Some strong women in this book. First, you gotta give it to the old aunts. They certainly didn't allow convention to stop them from being totally different. Something to be said for originality. And Sally has a lot of spunk in going against the grain for many years. And it gives you warm fuzzies at the end when the sisters, well, I won't spoil it for those who haven't read it yet.



MOLLY: Okay, who picked this book? It was supposed to be a break from the more serious books we've been reading. All about discrimination, ladies if you want to be honest. Witches get as bad as a rap we African-Americans. But beyond that, a ridiculous, well-crafted story with unique, crazy characters.



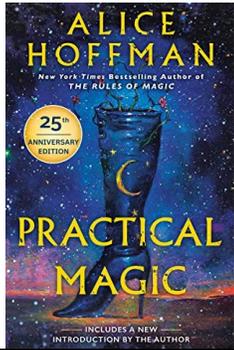
ABIGAIL: These are not your run-of-the mill, average witches. I felt sorry for them. They seemed rather unhappy for the most part, until the end. The aunts lived sequestered away. Sally spent all her time trying somewhat unsuccessfully to be normal. Gillian went wild with the freedom and paid for it. Sally's daughters struggled a lot, too, even though Sally tried to give them a normal life.



SALLIE: I focus on the children. Perhaps this book could be a study on child-rearing. Think about the aunts, giving the children freedom to do whatever. And then you have Sally trying to provide a more structured environment. In the end did the childrearing strategies work? What do we learn?



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Title: Practical Magic

Author: Alice Hoffman

Published: Berkeley, 1995

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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. Who were the witches in this book and how do they compare with your expectations of witches?
3. Discuss the characters in this book: The two old aunt witches, Franny and Jet. Sally, Gillian, Sally's daughters, Kylie and Antonio. How are they alike and different? Who did you like and dislike and why?
4. Have you read the prequel: *The Rules of Magic* or the prequel to the prequel, *Magic Lessons*? If so, how did that inform your reading of this book?
5. Have you watched the Practical Magic movie (1998) or watched the Magic Lessons series on HBO? If so, how do they compare and contrast to the book?
6. Several times in the book the characters talk about fate. Do you believe in fate? How did this theme play out in the book?
7. How were the sibling relationships in the book? Are these alike or different from your own?
8. What most surprised you in this book?
9. Have you read any other Alice Hoffman books? How was this alike or different?
10. Read over the MAMs perspective on the book. With whom do you most agree and why?
11. In what ways, if any, will this book change your life or perspective?

Listen to Alice Hoffman on YouTube:

Alice Hoffman Discusses Magic Lesson 46:13 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y5TBTLlu2P4>)

Meet Alice Hoffman 1:44 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P7Z2AOS1_68

An Interview with Alice Hoffman 1:57 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?>