



## The Rules of Magic

*Alice Hoffman*

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# The Rules of Magic

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**The Rules of Magic** Alice Hoffman

*Find your magic*

For the Owens family, love is a curse that began in 1620, when Maria Owens was charged with witchery for loving the wrong man.

Hundreds of years later, in New York City at the cusp of the sixties, when the whole world is about to change, Susanna Owens knows that her three children are dangerously unique. Difficult Franny, with skin as pale as milk and blood red hair, shy and beautiful Jet, who can read other people's thoughts, and charismatic Vincent, who began looking for trouble on the day he could walk.

From the start Susanna sets down rules for her children: No walking in the moonlight, no red shoes, no wearing black, no cats, no crows, no candles, no books about magic. And most importantly, never, ever, fall in love. But when her children visit their Aunt Isabelle, in the small Massachusetts town where the Owens family has been blamed for everything that has ever gone wrong, they uncover family secrets and begin to understand the truth of who they are. Back in New York City each begins a risky journey as they try to escape the family curse.

The Owens children cannot escape love even if they try, just as they cannot escape the pains of the human heart. The two beautiful sisters will grow up to be the revered, and sometimes feared, aunts in *Practical Magic*, while Vincent, their beloved brother, will leave an unexpected legacy.

## The Rules of Magic Details

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Author : Alice Hoffman

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## From Reader Review The Rules of Magic for online ebook

**Susanne Strong says**

**5 Crazy, Dazzling & Reckless Stars!**

**"The Rules of Magic" is a Mystical, Whimsical, Fantastical and Heartbreaking Novel about the Owen family. Siblings, Franny, Jet and Vincent, who are given simple, yet strange rules by their mother Susanna: no walking in moonlight, no wearing black, no wearing red shoes, no cats or crows, no candles and no reading books about magic. Oh.. and the biggest rule? No falling in love.** They are provided no explanation. None. They obey.. though they don't know why - until they are summoned to visit their Aunt Isabelle in Massachusetts. Then they discover the truth. They are witches. And everything falls into place. Jet and Vincent take to it immediately and they study and practice. Franny tries ignores what she knows to be true until one day, she too has no choice but to embrace her true self. She is a witch, through and through. And her siblings need her.

From their Aunt, and from books that they have been warned to stay away from, they learn spells; they learn the secrets of making soaps and how to make potions; and from each other they find strength. They find love; though it terrifies them - for they have been told of the curse on the Owens family. It is beautiful, exciting, haunting and terrifying. Yet Franny, Jet and Vincent are destined for it.

**In "The Rules of Magic" by Alice Hoffman, what you will learn, is that "There is no remedy for love, but to love more." We all strive for this, each and every one of us. This book's magical realism and utter whimsy made me want to dance in my kitchen, learn to fly, converse with animals and make potions, but alas, I had to settle for dancing in my kitchen. Thankfully, it was enough.**

Alice Hoffman does something amazing here, but then, doesn't she always? Her characters are beloved and endearing, yet tortured. The story grabs you from the get go, and not just because it's a Prequel to Hoffman's "Practical Magic" (which you don't need to have read in order to read this) and she just creates this *feeling* that sinks into your soul and soothes you completely. Yes. She does that.

**All I can say is that you must experience its magic for yourself. It worked for me.**

Thank you to NetGalley, Simon Schuster and Alice Hoffman for an ARC of this novel in exchange for an honest review. I am externally grateful that I was given the opportunity to read and review this incredible book.

Published on NetGalley and Goodreads on 8.13.17.

\*Will be Published on Amazon on 10.10.17.

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**Julie says**

The Rules of Magic by Alice Hoffman is a 2017 is a Simon & Schuster publication.

Those eccentric aunts from "*Practical Magic*"? Just what is their backstory anyway? I was so excited when I heard this book was going to be a prequel to 'Practical Magic'. Finally, we learn the history behind the

infamous curse that plagues the Owens women and discover the legacy behind the love potions and herbs, and the complicated emotions swirling around Frances and Jet.

I usually try to reserve my enthusiasm when a sequel or prequel is released for a popular book or movie, especially with such a lengthy time gap in between, but when one stellar review after another began pouring in for this book, I threw caution to the wind and allowed myself some giddiness.

Still, I was surprised by exactly how much I enjoyed this book. I don't read much magic realism these days, so from that perspective, this was a nice departure from the psych thrillers, and nonfiction that has somehow begun to dominate my TBR pile recently.

But, it was more than just that. I think I enjoyed the era the story was set in and the historical details surrounding the family drama. Of course, the one word that is impossible to escape while reading this book is that it is 'magical'- and it truly is!

The dark family saga, the events that lead us to Gillian and Sally's story and explains the personalities of the Franny and Jet, makes so much sense now.

Is it possible to quell natural magical skills? Is it possible for magic to work without doing harm? Can you really fight love?

This is also a 'coming of age' story, filled with angst, nobleness, honor, triumphs and tragedy. But- and this is going to really upset some people, because they wouldn't be caught dead reading a love story- But, true love is at the center of the book, its very life force, and is at the very heart of everything that transpires. So, those who view romance novels with high disdain- guess what? If you read this book and loved it- you just read a romantic love story, and not just that, but an EPIC love story, with all its conflicts, all its angst, all its heartbreak, its tenderness, anger, and frustration. You loved all the darkness, magic, and all the power- but love is the most potent and powerful magic of all! HA!

Before reading this book, I felt I should touch base with PM, take a quick refresher course, if you will, to try and purge the movie version from my mind, just a little.

I'm glad I did that because this book's familiarity was like touching base with characters I had grown to care for. However, at times, the tone was so different, I sometimes felt the author had taken liberties with her own book, as strange as that may seem, but it wasn't necessarily a bad thing. Of course, the images from the movie version could have been playing havoc with my impressions, as well. But, sometimes I wondered, 'Are these the same aunts I read about in PM?'

Either way, this book will completely turn everything you thought you knew on its ear, while casting a spell of enchantment over you, completely sucking you into the Owens family saga, leaving you bewitched and absolutely spellbound.

So, remember- **'Fall in love whenever you can'** and **"Know that the only remedy for love is to love more."**

4.5 stars

## Jen says

It seems to be a hit and miss with me and Hoffman. I loved *The Dovekeepers* and *The Story Sisters* but not so much with *The Marriage of Opposites*. This one didn't grab me from under the table at the start. I think it's the magic thing- it's difficult for me to suspend belief, BUT, once I finally let go of that conception, the story was at last able to enter into a more fascinating and interesting realm for me.

Because let's face it, Hoffman's skill is in her descriptive writing - successfully transporting the reader into a place far from the one they are inhabiting.

3 siblings - Jet, Franny and Vincent have been endowed with magical powers. However, unless they can keep them in line, and hence the rules, lives will be harmed and the tradition of never being able to fall in love, will continue.

This wasn't just about magic, however. It was more about the choices we make - those that are riskier and requiring courage and those decided with caution. It's about extraordinary family relationships and about love.

I didn't think this one was for me but I'm glad I stuck with it because it did magically deliver.

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## Larry H says

How much did I love this book? I cannot even count the ways.

Franny, Bridget (Jet), and Vincent Owens are siblings growing up in New York City in the late 1950s and early 1960s, raised by no-nonsense parents who discourage their children from exploring their uniqueness. Their mother Susanna knows that her children are different—headstrong Franny can talk to birds, beautiful Jet can read people's thoughts, and charismatic Vincent has been charming people to him since birth, and he uses that to his advantage.

Susanna has many rules she demands her children follow—no walking in the moonlight, no books about magic, no candles, no crows, and most importantly, never fall in love. The Owens family has been cursed since 1620, when their ancestor, Maria Owens, who was accused of witchcraft after loving the wrong man, predicted ruin for anyone in her lineage that dared fall in love. Many bore the scars of that curse, including Susanna herself.

While the children know they are different, at first only Vincent wants to understand what they really are. But after spending the summer at their feisty Aunt Isabelle's house, they are urged to embrace their heritage and their differences, rather than hide who they are and what they can do. Living in the small Massachusetts town where everyone looks askance at the Owens family, believing the rumors of witchcraft and evil to be true, they learn to have pride in who they are, to be bold and unafraid of those who disapprove.

It is in Massachusetts where each of the children come face to face with understanding the curse that plagues their family, and they try to test its limits. As they grow into adulthood, they must wrestle with the dilemma of embracing their identity and keeping love at bay, or risking it all for the magic and fire that love can bring? And what will that risk entail?

*The Rules of Magic* is utterly compelling, exquisitely told, and really just so fantastic. It's a story of family, identity, self-discovery, embracing your fears, love, loss, and, of course, magic. These characters are so affecting and fascinating, and I could have read a book about each of them. Alice Hoffman is once again at the top of her storytelling form with this book, which has so many beautiful, memorable, touching moments which I'd rather let unfold for you than tell you about.

While this book is a prequel to Hoffman's fantastic *Practical Magic*, don't worry if you've never read it or, like me, don't really remember it. (It was published in 1995, so don't feel bad.) You absolutely can read this one without any knowledge of the Owens family and enjoy it immensely. And if you've never read Alice Hoffman before, you're in for a treat.

I'm so sad this is over!!

NetGalley and Simon & Schuster provided me an advance copy of the book in exchange for an unbiased review. Thanks for making this available!

See all of my reviews at <http://itseithersadnessoreuphoria.blog...>

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## Debbie says

**Woo-woo here, woo-woo there. Here a witch, there a witch, everywhere a witch witch....**

Sadly, I couldn't finish this one. I never should have requested it, knowing that magical realism isn't my thing. Reading it has been torture, so I'm stopping right now, a quarter of the way through. Life is too short for me to spend hours reading something I hate. Reading fiction must be fun or intriguing--otherwise, what's the point?

My fault. I let myself get seduced by reviews when I knew full well that witches would be a hard sell.

Other reasons I talked myself into reading it:

-I liked a couple of non-magic-y books by Hoffman, the most recent being *Faithful*.

-Occasionally (hardly EVER), magical realism works for me.

-Long long ago, I actually liked magical realism. (I thought *The House of the Spirits* was cool.)

-I thought perhaps I had dissociative personality disorder, in which case a palm reader by the name of Debrina, who co-exists in my psyche, would love this book.

Mostly it comes down to this: I hoped I would get attached to the characters despite the fact that they were witches. Or maybe I could forget that they were witches? Didn't happen. Frankly, I didn't give a flying eff. Every single page was woo-woo. Every single page.

I believe all the gushers who say that this is a great book. I'm just the wrong audience. Remember, my 1 star means that I hated it, not that it's a bad book. I should have my head examined for trying.

As Judge Judy sometimes says: Dismissed without prejudice.

Thanks to NetGalley for an advance copy.

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## **Brina says**

The Rules of Magic was the October 2017 fiction group read in the goodreads group reading for pleasure. After a two month delay, my library had the book for me, and I was all too happy to read it before the end of the year. Last month, I read Isabel Allende's new book and it left a sour taste in my mouth because it was devoid of her magical realism which I love. I had been searching for a book full of magical realism to read, and The Rules of Magic, while more about actual magic than magical realism, was finally the tonic that I had been searching for. Even though this is not the Latin American brand of magical realism that I crave, The Rules of Magic still fit the bill as an enjoyable story full of supernatural occurrences in everyday life.

Franny, Bridget (also known as Jet), and Vincent Owens come from a long line of Massachusetts witches and wizards dating back to 1620. At this time, their ancestor Maria Owens fell in love with John Hathorne, a married man, who later prosecuted her and other witches of witchcraft. As a result, Maria set a curse on her family that anyone an Owens would fall in love with would be doomed to an early death. Over three hundred years later in 1960s Manhattan, Susanna Owens attempts to deny who she is by marrying a man who she does not love and who abhors all things supernatural. She shields her children from their true selves to prevent them from anguish and heartache later in life, and sets out rules of magic for them so that they do not make the same mistakes that have been befalling their family for centuries. This early section of the book reminded me of Harry Potter for adults and why I enjoy the series: rather than being pure fantasy or supernatural, magical people live in a non-magical world and are labeled as different, blamed for all out of the ordinary happenings around them. Denied their magical existence by their parents, Franny, Jet, and Vincent grew up as outsiders to all those around them.

This changes the summer Franny turns seventeen and she is invited by her aunt Isabelle to spend the summer at her rural Massachusetts home. Susanna balks at this turn of events and only allows for this coming of age ritual when Jet and Vincent agree to accompany her. In the company of Isabelle, the Owens siblings discover their true magical selves and feel at home in her presence. Alongside their cousin April Owens who embraces her magical self from day one, the siblings begin to call aunt Isabelle's house their true home. The sections featuring April Owens and her descendants end up being some of the more enjoyable sections of the book. Meanwhile, Franny, Jet, and Vincent turn to floating on water in the otherwise dangerous Leeches Lake, assisting their aunt in preparing black soap, gathering herbs for potions, and choosing courage over caution, the Owens siblings come to terms with their magical selves. Franny even uncovers Maria Owens' diaries at the local library and researches as much family history as she can in an attempt to reverse their curse, yet to no avail. While Franny and her siblings are encouraged by Isabelle to choose courage, they know that they should proceed with caution in regard to love.

The curse plays a role throughout the plot which Hoffman weaves in conjunction with events taking place in New York throughout the 1960s. Jet falls for Levi Willard, who is killed alongside her parents in a nasty taxi accident. She then loses her sight, which she can only regain if she and Franny can somehow break the curse. Vincent appears to be a powerful wizard but one who finds it difficult to cope with losing his parents as a teenager. Until he finds himself as both a wizard and a person, he turns to drinking and sex, with only Franny to shield him from the world. And Franny herself, the girl who could talk to birds and appears to be the most powerful wizard of the three siblings. She has been in love with Haylin Walker since the third grade and is afraid to heed her aunt's message of loving and living a lot and choosing courage because she does not want to ruin the one love of her life. When knowing the truth about the Owens lineage, Haylin does not turn his back on Franny, but rather vows to help her beat and break the family's curse once and for all.

I found *The Rules of Magic* to be a fast, fun read. I was immediately drawn to the yellow, sparkling cover, which ended up playing a role in the plot as well. When I was a young mother with many commitments, I would read the entire Harry Potter series each year as mindless reading because I had little time or energy to read much else. With many classics and quality award winners to read, at this point in my reading life I only happen to skim through a Potter book if my children have one in the house. It is no secret that I was thrilled to read *The Rules of Magic* and I look forward to its sequel (although written years earlier) *Practical Magic*. While more magic than magical realism, *The Rules of Magic* fit the bill as a tonic for my recent reading of books that did not contain an ounce of magic to them.

4 sparkling stars

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## Cheri says

!! NOW AVAILABLE !!

*I'll tell you about the magic, and it'll free your soul  
But it's like trying to tell a stranger 'bout rock and roll*

*If you believe in magic, come along with me  
We'll dance until morning 'til there's just you and me  
And maybe, if the music is right  
I'll meet you tomorrow, sort of late at night  
And we'll go dancing, baby, then you'll see  
How the magic's in the music and the music's in me*

*Yeah, do you believe in magic*

*Yeah, believe in the magic of a young girl's soul  
Believe in the magic of rock and roll  
Believe in the magic that can set you free  
Ohh, talking 'bout magic*

- Lyrics by John Sebastian

**”There is no remedy for love but to love more. –Henry David Thoreau**

**”*The Rules of Magic*”** is a prequel to Alice Hoffman’s **“*Practical Magic*”**, which I have not read, so I can’t compare the two, but this was just magical, and I still feel a bit under its spell, wishing for more.

Cursed. For the Owens family, love has been something to avoid, a curse harkening back to 1620, when loving the wrong man sealed the fate of an entire family.

More than three hundred years later, over six hundred solstices later, the Owens family is still avoided, eyed suspiciously by all who live there, where some members of the family still lived in Massachusetts.

When she was younger, Susannah had left it all behind, gone to Paris and returned to live in New York City, where she sits on this morning June, 1960 opening an invitation for her eldest daughter, Franny, to visit her Aunt Isabelle. A tradition, once they’ve turned seventeen. Their father objects, but tradition wins, on the condition that her younger siblings, sister Jet, and brother Vincent, accompany Franny. Their lives are about

to change, even as the country is poised on the cusp of a change most are unprepared for.

They've known from the start that they are different from others, but their mother had kept them from exploring their abilities by establishing rules. Rules only go so far, especially for these exceptional children about to be immersed in a magical setting, filled with flourishing gardens and magical herbs and familiars. Still, there is one rule they all know, whatever you do, do not fall in love. Love is perilous.

Family is everything, and the theme of family is at the heart of this novel about a family and the weight and heartache of secrets and loss, and the power of love to overcome, the inescapable feeling that they will never fit in, no matter how hard they try.

The Stonewall Riots, Vietnam, The Summer of Love, the inaugural Monterey Pop Festival ... these are in the past, but the events of that era infuse this story, grounding you solidly in a time that is felt and seen, if only through the eyes of the past.

The characters are wonderful, charmingly quirky, sometimes peculiar, but never boring. The writing is wonderfully descriptive, occasionally humorous, and filled with the magic of love, in all its many forms. This reads as though it were conjured by magic, the words flowing freely, an enchanted labor of love.

Recommended

Pub Date: 10 Oct 2017

Many thanks for the ARC provided by Simon & Schuster

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## Angela M says

If you don't read this book because you don't believe in witches or in magic, you would truly be missing out on a wonderful story that is about so much more. If you don't read this book because you haven't read Practical Magic, the book to which this is a prequel, you'd be missing out. I haven't read Practical Magic (although I intend to now), but yet I loved so much about this book. It is not just a story of spells and potions and special powers. It is a story of family, of love, a story that reflects so much about the times in the 1960's. There IS real magic in this story, though. It was the spell that Alice Hoffman's writing cast over me that made me accept who these characters are in spite of not really believing in witches. Not just accepting them but caring about them and hoping that they will make it through their tragedies, their fate and wishing for them to be happy.

I couldn't help but be drawn into this story of these three siblings, Franny, Jet and Vincent Owens who are told the rules they must live by in order to avoid the family curse, which goes back to 1620's in Massachusetts when their ancestor, Maria Owens is "charged with witchery for loving the wrong man." The most important rule - do not fall in love. Well, of course they do and this becomes a story of the heart. I loved everything about it - the writing, the characters, the places. As I said I have not read Practical Magic, but I will definitely read it because I don't want to let go of this family. Alice Hoffman is a treasure, such a versatile and prolific author, writing of past and present, such very different stories in so many novels. This is just the fourth novel of hers that I have read and I feel lucky to have so many others yet to read.

I received an advanced copy of this book from Simon & Schuster through Edelweiss and NetGalley.

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## Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says

**5 (un)magical, but magical anyway (magical in the best way) stars to The Rules of Magic ?? ?? ?? ?? ??**

The Rules of Magic was not as full of magic as I expected it to be. At times, when discussing this with my friends, I was asking for more magic! What I found was that the real magic was in the life happenings of these notable characters and *not* in the magic itself. For the magic lovers, there was some. I would say it took the backseat in this story, which ended up working beautifully.

Alice Hoffman introduced the three main characters at the same time early on in the book, and I found it hard to follow at first. I finally relaxed into the book and let it lead me where it led me, and I became enveloped in the entrancing writing.

There were some deeper meanings to this story that I don't know if I would have processed fully without our group discussion. These meanings *made* this book for me. They were profound and resonant. Themes of **don't love a little, love a lot, and the only remedy to love is to love more**. The ways in which the characters learned these messages were quite a journey, and one I don't want to spoil.

Enjoy this book. Savor the delectable words. Discuss it with friends. Maybe it will change your perspective, too.

Thanks to the Traveling Sisters for another special read. I am grateful for each of you and the light you shed on this precious book. For the combined sister review, check out The Traveling Sisters blog: <https://twogirlslostinacouleereading....> ?

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## Berit??? says

**??5 wonderfully witching stars! With the perfect touch of magic??**

This was a five star Traveling Sister Read! That's why I bumped my rating up to the full five stars! I figured a book that had inspired such an amazing discussion was more than worthy of a five star rating! So thank you ladies for making this book even more special for me!

Not going to lie at the beginning of this book I was slightly disappointed, I was waiting for all this spellcasting and broomstick riding, but that didn't happen.... but as I continued reading I got it the **MAGIC** was in these amazing characters and the message of the book... this isn't to say that they didn't have any supernatural powers, they just were subtle, just a touch of magic!

The siblings Frannie, Jet, and Vincent had such an incredible bond.... they were really there for one another through the good times and the heartbreak.... they also all had a very special bond with their pets/familiars.... really this book had the theme of love running through out.... because really what is life without love? Not necessarily romantic love, but the love between siblings, friends, parent and child... The book also was about forgiveness, sometimes it is the hardest thing to do, but I think it is the greatest healer of one's heart....

If you are hesitant to pick this up because of the magical realism, I'd say definitely give this a try! Because really the real **MAGIC** is in these amazing well develop characters and the story of their remarkable life....

don't just love, love more?

You can find all the Traveling Sisters reviews at Norma and Brenda's fabulous blog...  
<https://twogirlslostinacouleereading....>

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## **Will Byrnes says**

**It was clear from the start that they were not like other children, therefore Susanna felt she had no choice but to set down rules. No walking in the moonlight, no Ouija boards, no candles, no red shoes, no wearing black, no going shoeless, no amulets, no night-blooming flowers, no reading novels about magic, no cats, no crows, and no venturing below Fourteenth Street. Yet no matter how Susanna tried to enforce these rules, the children continued to thwart her.**

Do you ever read a wonderful book and wonder what happens next? How about wondering what might have happened before the action of a book? If you read Alice Hoffman's 1995 novel, *Practical Magic*, or saw the wonderful 1998 film adaptation with Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman, I bet you'd like to spend a bit more time with the Owens family. Hoffman wanted to go there some more as well. But sometimes life intervenes.

**The set of the film was built in two locations. The exterior of the house was constructed on a small island off Washington State (so gorgeous and realistic that Barbra Streisand is said to have wanted to buy it) while the interior was built in a hanger at a Hollywood studio. I went to visit in California, invited by star and producer Sandra Bullock, and when I walked into the house I had first created in my novel, I was stunned. There I was in the Owens kitchen, a place I had only imagined, now brought to life. I realized then, the person on the film whose work was most like mine was the set designer. We both created the world for the characters to step into.**

**I might have continued on with the Owens family then, for certainly there was more to their story - a mysterious past, and a relative who had begun a curse that still affected the family, but on my return from Hollywood I was diagnosed with breast cancer. During my treatment, ideas of returning to the Owens family of *Practical Magic* evaporated. During my treatment, and after my illness, I moved on to other books. Still, I felt haunted by the world I had created, as if the family had been trapped in time, waiting to come alive. -**

from the Foyle's article

Only twenty two years after the original, Hoffman has finally brought us back into the magical world of the Owens family, not Bullock and Kidman's characters, but a tracing back of their elderly aunts, born in the 1950s and growing up in New York, with serious exposure not only to the Massachusetts house where they will end up, but in the allure that was Manhattan in the 1960s. Hoffman had a pretty good time setting her tale, mostly, in that very lively decade.

**It is my favourite time period, a time of enormous change when the attitudes of young**

**people, women, gays and lesbians, and of people of colour radically changed, and when an unjust and unpopular war was affected by protests in the streets. A cultural revolution took place, one in which young people were able to change attitudes during a time when America was horribly divided, as it is now... Artistically, the sixties was a thrilling, magical time... The sisters, and their...mysterious brother, Vincent, live in Greenwich Village, the epicenter of music, art and politics in the States in the sixties.** - from the Foyles article

There was particular personal resonance for me, a contemporary of Franny and Jet, and a native of the city. It was particularly fun to learn some facts about The Village that I had never known. I cannot say how much the at-homeness of that setting invoked warm feelings, maybe a bit, but whatever the cause, those feelings were sustained by plenty more.

**Alice Hoffman** - image from The Palm Beach Daily News

Frances, Franny, is the oldest, sulky, pale skin, red hair, six feet tall and has a particular ability to communicate with birds. Bridget, aka Jet, has hair appropriate to her name. She is beautiful, but shy, and both sensitive and kind. Finally, there is Vincent. We meet him at age 14, already a musician, already deadly attractive. We follow the three as they discover and develop their latent witchy talents. Most significant is a summer-long visit to a Massachusetts aunt, who gives them the direction and free reign they need to grow into their talents.

It is not just their talent at conjuring that we track, but their romantic entanglements as well. The latter arrives with baggage, however. It is believed that there is a family curse on the Owens line. (*ruination for any man that fell in love with them*) Woe to any they love, for those unlucky souls are surely doomed. Well, that's what they believe, anyway. Is it true? Maybe. There are certainly enough interested others who meet dark ends that there is a real-world basis for taking the curse seriously. One might conjure a bit of Edward Gorey, and dash off sets of couplets for the many who find a foul fate once enchanted by the siblings Owen.

J is for Jack struck who was struck down by lightning  
Along with his twin. It was all rather frightening  
One caught a train or did it catch him?  
Another dove in for a deep one-way swim.

Kinda makes it tough, though, for three young people to develop as loving human beings if they have to worry that anyone who gets too close might run terminally afoul of ancient craft. So, there is a constant tension between loving and fearing the consequences of that love. Like the rest of us, I guess, but with just a teensy bit more oomph.

**I've always been interested in witchcraft, and I've done research my whole life. I did a bit more for *The Rules of Magic* because I was writing specifically about a particular judge, Judge Hathorne, at the witchcraft trials in Salem. I read whatever I could find about him, and I found him a really interesting character. As to magic, for me it's always a pleasure to study magic and to find out more and more. Everything in the book about magic lore was something that I researched. For instance, the use of medicinal plants and herbs. Still, while the research is interesting, it's not what's important. Really, the most important thing is writing the novel and creating the characters. That's the big difference between an historical novel and a history. What I'm mostly interested in is the novel part of it. All the research that I do is in service to that.** - from the writermag interview

One of the true bits of magic in the book is the strength of the relationship among the siblings, particularly between Franny and Jet. They face a series of challenges, but their connection to each other offers strength to face what comes.

You might keep an eye out for wind as a recurring motif. Franny gives the prisoners in the Women's House of Detention a cool breeze on a hot day, for example. In another circumstance *It came on the wind, the way wicked things must, for they are most often weighted down with spite and haven't the strength to lift themselves*. There are others. Hoffman uses scent as well to keep us grounded in earthly sensations while rapt in a tale that touches another plane.

Alice Hoffman is one of my favorite writers. So, I started off more than a bit receptive to this novel, despite having never read *Practical Magic* (I did see and love the film). I quite enjoy her fondness for fantasy and fairy tales. She even begins this one with *Once upon a time*. Coming of age tales are common enough, but work best when one cares about the characters. I am not certain Vincent, as interesting a character as he is, will get as warm a welcome as his sisters, but he also gets a lot less screen time. That said, you will most definitely care for Jet and will certainly love Franny, and suffer with her as she struggles to balance the needs of love with the existential demands of real-or-imagined sorcery.

You don't need *the sight* to see that this is a spellbinding novel. It's time to switch on your midnight light, and let everyone in the neighborhood know. The magic is back and it is totally bewitching. Once again, Alice Hoffman will put you under her spell.

Published – October 10, 2017

Review posted – November 24, 2017

=====EXTRA STUFF

Links to the author's personal and FB pages

### Interviews

----The Writer - Alice Hoffman interview: Story Magic - by Jack Smith

----Fort Myers Magazine - Magicalice - by Paula Bolado

----Psychology Today - Alice Hoffman Talks About New Book: "The Rules of Magic" - by Jennifer Haupt

### Other Hoffman books I have reviewed:

----Local Girls

----Green Angel

----Blackbird House

----The Ice Queen

----The Red Garden

----The Dovekeepers

### Other

----Foyles - Alice Hoffman on Revisiting the Owens Family in her Prequel to Practical Magic - an article by AH

----AWiki on John Hathorne

## Elyse says

It's FANTASTIC!!!!

"The Rules of Magic", is such a wonderful world to visit.

Most people avoided the Owens family believing any entanglement with them would taint not only their present but their future as well.

It was said that some family members could place a single horse hair into a pan of water and turn it into a snake.

Yikes... that might scare me away from them too! Ha!

But -- oh how I loved this family who came from a long line of witches as far back as the year 1620 when Maria Owens was charged with witchery for falling in love .... with the wrong man.

The siblings- Franny, Jet, and Vincent are colorful fascinating distinct characters each with special powers - gifts- personality- temperament and charm. Aunt Isabelle is a standout, too. They made me laugh. They made me cry.

From Manhattan to Massachusetts to California--the storytelling is irresistible - filled with magic and imagery -many scents throughout: wildflowers, herbs, eucalyptus, peppermint, trees, patchouli, chocolate, bittersweet scent of almonds, curries, coffee, even bacon.... etc. etc.

Flowers were everywhere at "The Summer of Love" gathering in San Francisco.

You'll even visit the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967..... The grateful dead, Janis Joplin, the who, Jimi Hendrix, and Otis Redding: Music Love Peace

Page after page.... are delightful surprises... gorgeous prose!!!

I devoured this book....taking away wisdom-which brought me back to the 'magic' of our everyday lives. ----- but... I miss these folks, their stories and their rules, already!

Thank You Netgalley, Simon & Schuster, and Alice Hoffman

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## Diane S ? says

It has been many, many years since I read Practical Magic, or seen the movie. I do remember loving it, loving the sisters and the magic. So here the Owen sisters return, as young witches, parents still alive, and with the added twist of their younger brother Victor. Of course they soon notice how different they are, exploring their talents in various ways until a horrible tragedy threatens to derail everything.

Loved it, this book was just what I needed after reading This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen, something lighter, magical. Though there is plenty of sorrow here too, mixed with some delightful magic, quirky pets, and some new faces, some with magic, some without. Ultimately, if I had to pick a theme, besides magic for this book, it would be love. This book is full of love in all its permutations, messiness, wonder and heartbreak.

Whether writing historicals, or contemporary, Hoffman has never failed to delight me with her characters, her word choices, and the ways she assembles her plots. There is some history in this one too as it takes place in the sixties, and the Vietnam war will play a big part for some of the characters

Wonderful story about the power of love, what it forgives and how hard it is to forget, was actually teary eyed at the end. Have to wonder where this author will go next, she is so incredibly versatile.

ARC from Edelweiss and Simon and Schuster.

Release date: October 10th.

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## **Norma \* Traveling Sister says**

5 brilliant stars for this magically written story!

I absolutely loved everything about this book and savoured every single word that was written.

THE RULES OF MAGIC by ALICE HOFFMAN was a fantastic, endearing, and a spellbinding novel that was an absolute joy to read. It was a touching, heartbreaking, heartwarming, and a powerful story with a strong message of love and courage within the pages of this book. I absolutely love a little bit of magical realism within my books but I think there was so much more to this story than that. The words written were just as magical as the magic within the story.

This was a Traveling Sisters Group Read that we all absolutely raved over and didn't want it to end. I was quickly drawn into the magical world of the Owen's family and the family curse. Would highly recommend!!

Thank you so much to NetGalley, Simon and Schuster Canada, and Alice Hoffman for the opportunity to read an advanced copy of this book in exchange for a review!

Review written and posted on our themed book blog Two Sisters Lost In A Coulee Reading.

<https://twosisterslostinacoulee.com>

Coulee: a term applied rather loosely to different landforms, all of which refer to a kind of valley.

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## **PorshaJo says**

Rating 4.5 (Release date 10-10-17)

Magical! Enough said, end review. Seriously, I loved this book. I got an email one day asking if I was wanted to read this new book by Alice Hoffman. I didn't even think, I just replied YES!

The Rules of Magic is the 'prequel' to Hoffman's huge selling book and movie, Practical Magic. Even though this is a prequel, I will say this.....You DO NOT have to read Practical Magic before reading this one. In Practical Magic, the main characters had two aunts that took care of them for a bit. They were really not in the book that much. Fleeting in and out a few times. In the Rules of Magic, you learn about the lives of those aunts, starting when they were children.

The Rules of Magic is the story of Franny, Jet, and their brother Vincent. They know they are different from others, but not sure why. They know their mother rules them and keeps things from them, but they are not sure why. She urges no walking in the moonlight, no red shoes, no wearing black, no cats, no crows, no candles, no books about magic, again, they are not told why. What they do know, is that they can never fall in love. Oh there are so many quirky, interesting characters in this one. I loved hearing about their aunt and so many others. I also loved hearing about NYC (always a favorite for me) and the books they read (The Magus, Maria Owens diary, The Scarlet Letter, and more). You learn how they began to grow and grow into

their magical abilities, starting with a summer visit to their aunt they knew nothing about. I loved the addition into the story the man John Hawthorne. John Hawthorne is a real person, known for his early and vocal role as one of the leading judges in the Salem witch trials. John and his loathing for witches and magic is weaved beautifully into this story.

If you love magical realism, this is the perfect read for you. If you like to hear about witches and spells, this is for you. And if you love reading Alice Hoffman, then you must simply pick this one up. I do have to say, this is my favorite book of hers that I have read to date (though I do have more of hers to read). I like how she seems to have a common theme across her books, the color red, characters with red hair, birds (mainly black birds/crows), and of course, love.

Finally, I did get an advance copy of this via NetGalley. Thanks to NetGally, Simon & Schuster, and Alice Hoffman for this early release. This does not influence my review in any way. I just really enjoyed this one and now must get the print version for a future re-read.

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