



Looking for Me

Beth Hoffman

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A Southern novel of family and antiques from the bestselling author of the beloved *Saving CeeCee Honeycutt*

Beth Hoffman's bestselling debut, *Saving CeeCee Honeycutt*, won admirers and acclaim with its heartwarming story and cast of unforgettable characters. Now her unique flair for evocative settings and richly drawn Southern personalities shines in her compelling new novel, *Looking for Me*.

Teddi Overman found her life's passion for furniture in a broken-down chair left on the side of the road in rural Kentucky. She learns to turn other people's castoffs into beautifully restored antiques, and eventually finds a way to open her own shop in Charleston. There, Teddi builds a life for herself as unexpected and quirky as the customers who visit her shop. Though Teddi is surrounded by remarkable friends and finds love in the most surprising way, nothing can alleviate the haunting uncertainty she's felt in the years since her brother Josh's mysterious disappearance. When signs emerge that Josh might still be alive, Teddi is drawn home to Kentucky. It's a journey that could help her come to terms with her shattered family—and to find herself at last. But first she must decide what to let go of and what to keep.

Looking for Me brilliantly melds together themes of family, hope, loss, and a mature once-in-a-lifetime kind of love. The result is a tremendously moving story that is destined to make bestselling author Beth Hoffman a novelist to whom readers will return again and again as they have with Adriana Trigiani, Fannie Flagg, and Joshilyn Jackson.

Looking for Me Details

Date : Published May 28th 2013 by Pamela Dorman Books/Viking

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Author : Beth Hoffman

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From Reader Review Looking for Me for online ebook

Beth says

Some early reviews:

“It is calmly delivered ... packs a hefty emotional punch ... a completely original story line.”
- FREDICKSBURG FREE LANCE-STAR

“Hoffman’s novel of a woman putting the pieces of her family’s secrets together combines a deep dramatic impact with Southern charm.”
- PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

“Beth Hoffman is a master at crafting a gentle story fierce with emotion.”
- SCRANTON BOOK EXAMINER

“Intelligent and brilliantly written ... a deceptively complex story.”
- Heather Christman, Warwick’s

“[A] lyrical, almost mystical story that reflects life on a Kentucky farm, the wildness of the Red River Gorge, and the genteel South of Charleston, S.C.”
- PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

“Told with Beth Hoffman’s trademark blend of compassion and optimism ... will touch any reader who has ever followed a dream, disappointed a parent, or said a final goodbye to their childhood home.”
- Jill Hendrix, Fiction Addiction

Sabrina says

Talk about a quiet book that manages to pack quite the punch. Teddi is works with antiques and restoration, embodying the concept of hard work and dedication. We see her family through her eyes—her war veteran father who firmly believed in family and freedom, her glass-half-empty mother who always had a bone to pick, and Josh, the light of her life little brother who was enigmatically one with nature. When Teddi’s mother suddenly passes away, both she and the reader get exposed to the secrets that she never knew her family had. Some of them may lead to answering the question that has haunted her for years; is her brother dead or alive?

When I learned about the premise of this book, I was excited to sink my teeth into a good old Southern murder mystery. If that’s what you’re looking for, look elsewhere. This is a literary drama about maturity, acceptance, hope, and perseverance. Most importantly, it’s about coming to terms with the open-ended conclusions that life often has to offer.

Beth Hoffman isn’t a writer, she’s a painter. I sank into the hot, Southern charms of Charleston and Kentucky and loved every moment of Teddi’s life, from the memories of her past and her family to the

present-day work with her antiques. She sees beauty where nobody else can and Beth Hoffman's novel in turn proves that you don't have to have a whirlwind of activity to be a gripping read. This book comes out in June 2013, making it an idyllic summer read. But don't read it on the beach; read it on your porch with a cool glass of iced tea surrounded by the heat of the sun making your backyard flowers bloom.

Ruth Turner says

When I read this authors first book, Saving Ceecee Honeycutt, I read it in one sitting and was then disappointed because I'd finished it.

With Looking For Me I decided to take my time, reading a few pages a day and making it last. But...by the time I'd read about a quarter of the book I realized that this was not one of my better ideas. I didn't feel any connection to the characters.

So...I went back to the start, immersed myself in the story, and didn't come up for air until I read the very last word.

I love the way this author writes. She breathes life into all her characters, not only the main ones. They're believable and likable, and I find myself genuinely interested in their lives.

There is a little animal cruelty, but it's not too bad, and I found that I could read it without too much distress. There's also a romance, but it didn't turn my stomach, so that's a plus!

A beautiful story, beautifully written.

Carol Brill says

3.5 Beth Hoffman's writing is lyrical at times, painting a strong sense of place and the strength of this book for me, even more than the story.

Teddi Overman is an artist with a special talent for finding antique treasures and restoring and transforming old furniture into works of art. She lives on the family farm with her hardworking father who she adores, her mother, whose disappointment in life and negativity baffle her, and her younger brother Josh. She and Josh have a unique bond and Teddi worships him. Josh too, has a passion. From an early age, he loves and wants to protect the animals in the forest and gorge that border the farm. He is a loner who seems to know the language of animals and birds, often seeing messages in the bird feathers he finds in the woods.

Teddi's mother never had a chance to go to college and she desperately wants Teddi to go to school after high school Teddi's dream is to open her own furniture refinishing and antique shop and she can't find a college course to teach her that. To overcome her mother's objections, she literally sneaks away from home in the middle of the night to start a new life in Charleston. Through a series of almost too good to believe encounters with good people, she manages to start her own business. Life seems to be turning out okay until Josh mysteriously disappears.

The story is told from Teddi's point of view and alternates between the past when she was a teenager and the present when she is thirty-something. Sometimes the transitions between time periods were confusing. The middle of the book dragged at times, but there was always enough underlying tension about Josh's disappearance to keep turning pages and find out what really happened to him. Is he dead, or as Teddi suspects, he is living among the birds and animals he loves in the deepest part of the forest where even the rangers who taught him as a child don't know how to find him?

Pamela says

I adored "Saving CeeCee Honeycutt," wondering how Beth Hoffman could ever equal or surpass such a brilliant first novel. Well, "Looking For Me" is another luminary great read. Hoffman's ability to express intricate nuances of the human spirit with explicit simple elegance makes for reading joy. The way in which this transformation story unfolds - ebbing and flowing between past and present, Kentucky and Charleston, farm life and cityscape, simple dreams and complex realities – makes it quite tempting to devour in one setting. It's quite heartfelt and engaging. But as with fine wine, embodiment is enhanced with luxuriate-time. And by taking my time, sipping slowly, I found many wonderful restorative nuggets and quotes: "We sift and search and question as we try to discover our truths of those we love and sometimes when we least expect it, a mystery we never knew existed gets solved, while all else remains unanswered." I also found pieces of me: "Not that I have any regrets, but there are days when I wonder what might have been if I'd just reached a little deeper and believed in myself more." Moreover, I found a novel to cherish – 4 1/2 transforming stars.

Note regarding 1/2 star rating reduction: If Teddi's thoughts and/or prior experiences with dating had been hinted at throughout the novel, the insertion of a late-addition 'suitor' wouldn't have seemed so out-of-sync and abrupt. For me, it was more of a diffusing distraction rather than a story enhancement. Then again, I'm one of those odd southern women who prefer their tea straight-up - no sugar added.

Liza Wiemer says

An exceptional story that will leave antique lovers drooling, nature lovers longing for the outdoors, animal lovers running to make a donation to their local animal shelter or humane society, and hopeless romantics swooning.

I seriously can't believe that I waited a whole month to read this novel. I should have picked it up immediately. *Looking for Me* is storytelling at its best. Teddi and her brother Josh grew up on a farm in Kentucky. While she loves to give new life to old things like furniture, Josh becomes a protector of nature. Their father fosters their passions while their mother begrudgingly goes along with it. As Teddi and Josh grow up, they take their own journeys away from home. Their stories are both heartwarming and heartbreaking. Some of the overall themes of this beautiful novel are the power of family ties, the bonds of friendship, and the power of love.

I highly recommend this touching story. It's so well written, you'd think that these people exist in the world, not just on the page. I don't think I will ever look at an antique or go into a resale shop without thinking about this novel. Nor will I ever take a walk in a national park or wildlife preserve without it coming to mind. It's simply beautiful. Memorable.

Thank you to Pamela Dorman Books for the review copy.

Amy says

I'm not sure the title really fits-- Looking for Me. Maybe she was looking for herself in the context of the larger family that she lived within, but it seems to me that Teddi was pretty sure of herself and confident of who she was and what she wanted to be. I felt that it was only after she learned more about her mother and other family members that she became comfortable with all that she was. And that isn't even right. I'm not quite sure how to explain it. There is a complexity with Teddi's relationship with her brother that borders on mystical, but it never goes so far to fully push that envelope. The brother was the one part I didn't like about the story. At times the author made us think he had become a raven or a hawk himself-- a part of the Kentucky wilderness, and then she would back away from that. Why did he have run away to do what he felt he needed to do? I just felt something lacking there. I grew to love Teddi's mother as Teddi learns more about her, and I immediately loved her father. I loved the setting of antiques. I loved the opportunities she was given by mere strangers in life. We all need those opportunities. There were great themes about family and pursuing one's dream, but I am still hung up on the brother ...

I enjoyed this story. There were funny (laugh out loud) moments and then there were a few that brought tears to my eyes.

In my world, a book is good when I don't want to put it down to go to bed and when I can't stop thinking about it at work the next day-- when I can't wait to get home and read again. This book didn't make me feel obsessed, but I was I thrilled and surprised at a few turn of events. It won't go on my top ten list of favorite books, but any book read is a good book!

Tara says

By the bestselling author of *Saving CeeCee Honeycutt*. While *Saving* was a sweet, charming story, Hoffman has outdone herself in her second novel. Her writing now crosses over two genres, popular and literary, and I felt that she wrote this novel for me. Love antiques? Check. Love nature? Check. Love landscape? Check. Love rural settings? Check. Love mysteries? Check. Love art? Check. Love strong women? Check. Love unsentimental love stories and eccentric characters? Check. This novel has everything in it that I love reading about. The plot, while "quiet," is complex and intricately woven, and I was so happy to read a woman's novel that is for a change 98% devoted to life and family and job and only about 2% devoted to romance. A brave move on Hoffman's part.

I highly recommend this book if you love all or most of the same elements I do.

Nancy says

I am really trying to determine if this is a 4 or 5 star book. I'm leaning more to 5 star. It's not a book that moves quickly or hits the reader with a big "AHA!" but more of a quiet life, moving along that sneaks up on you by a reflection of life through one of the character's passions.

I don't really know how to explain what the book is about except perhaps a glimpse of the way we make our choices and and choose our paths. We don't get to choose for others but we do get to choose our perspectives and amount of optimism. Our life often reflects our attitude.

Hoffman paints her world with splashes of word color. I've never been to Kentucky but I've seen enough in my head to want to go to Teddi's childhood home. I want to meet Teddi's grandmother in Charleston, if she is still alive. I want to walk into Teddi's shop and watch Albert work his magic and listen to Inez. Of course these are all fictional people but I kept forgetting that was true. Hoffman is truly an artist.

Admittedly, I forgot more often than not to watch for the symbolism in the writing. It was just a book I enjoyed quietly. In retrospect, however, I realize that much of Teddi's life is reflected in work. When struggling through an intricate piece, she is working out a complex life problem. When making repairs on a particularly beautiful and expensive piece of furniture, it is indicative of something in her life. When one of her favorite antiques goes missing from her collection, she mourns the loss only until she finds it and does not reclaim it. It is symbolic of her heart.

Josh is near and dear to my heart for personal reasons reflecting on my own life. Josh is the baby brother of Teddi who becomes one with nature. He is closer to animals than people and becomes symbolic of the Raven, making right the wrongs. The big mystery is if Josh is still alive or if he is dead. He simply disappeared one night. This was his red, white, and blue. Teddi's was the car from her father and some cash to get her through. Also, her chance crossing with Mr. Palmer who changed her life. Later, she pays it forward.

The themes repeat throughout the book and could be studied and discussed at great lengths. The characters can be compared and contrasted in regard to optimism, hope, resistance to change, giving spirit, freedom, work and love. It is apparent when Teddi opens herself to love and uncertainty as she opens herself not only to a man but to life, in general. She becomes more generous and able to let go of memories and physical objects. She also gains much more in return.

Interspersed throughout the book are also Teddi's memories of her childhood; of Josh, her Grammy, her mother and father. New information is offered by Stella and Grammy, along with discoveries as she cleans out the house and barn. The characters are contrasted by their acceptance of what life has dealt them, their willingness to see opportunity or become bitter, and how they either hang on or let go.

The book is much deeper than the story. It touches on many life lessons but I need more time to think about it for a couple of days. Beautifully written.

Lisa of Hopewell says

My current audio pick. NOTE: If you are a dog lover there is one brief (mentioned in 2 chapters so far) story of cruelty, but justice is served. A very brief mention is made later in the story of an act of animal terrorism. It is not graphic, just mentioned. I love the way Beth Hoffman writes! The parts of this book on antiques and rare books just SING to me! Her complete authenticity in describing rural Kentucky may even top Barbara Kingsolver's command of the back roads. This book is simply GREAT. It does get confusing in the audio when the scene shifts back to an earlier time--this would not happen in the print I don't think since you would see the date clearly at the beginning of the chapter. It is READ in the audio, but I often missed it and had a WT? moment in listening. Very, very minor problem. Should be one of the best books of the year. And, can't

everyone find a Sam or a Michael at the 11th hour? Wouldn't that be GRAND!

Jen says

Looking for Me by the author of Saving CeeCee Honeycutt has much to recommend it, and yet....

What I liked: great ambiance in the settings of the family farm in Kentucky and in Charlston, S.C.; lovely Southern charm and flowing descriptions; nature and wildlife; the love of junk picking and quality antiques; the feathers and the notes from Josh; gardens; and near the end, Teddi's refusal to sell her father's old Allis-Chalmers tractor. (All of the above are things I personally love, and my father gave us an old Allis-Chalmers tractor many years ago that I adored and called Alice. I also had an antique shop for a while and still love junking.)

And yet...it was about half-way through the book before any real plot developed; there were too many time-shifts; much of the detail, while interesting and well-written either didn't advance the story or slowed it down and dispersed interest; Josh's disappearance did not feel realistic to me (leaving a family and sister he loved with no word or follow-up contact); too many themes going on. It seemed as if every good idea and description and interest that Hoffman had, she tried to use in one book.

Initially, I loved it. The minor characters are especially well done, and Hoffman's skill in creating an environment is wonderful. Even nearly half-way through with no idea what the plot was, I was still enjoying the book because I am interested in all of things Hoffman writes about. My thought was that it was like little essays or anecdotes about avocations and incidents and that I could be satisfied with that. At a certain point, however, I would have preferred more of a sense of continuity, a clear direct priority of theme and narrative.

Hoffman writes beautifully about her passions. Maybe that is recommendation enough.

NetGalley/Penguin Group, Viking.

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Don says

Hands down this is the best read of the last six months or more. I read "Saving CeeCee Honeycutt" as an advanced reader and really enjoyed it.

A new coworker, and new friend, received an advanced reader copy from Ms. Hoffman who is a friend of hers. After she read it she loaned to me. I was hooked by the characters within the first few pages. I told Lesa that the storyline did not matter so much to me as I really cared more for the characters and the writing itself.

I was wrong. The story is wonderful.

A melding of great writing, great characters, and a wonderful story that is different than first expected come

together to form a read very different from "CeeCee." At first I was expecting, then a little disappointed, that Grammy didn't play a bigger role. Then I remembered what my grandma always said - "Good things come in small packages."

I cannot wait for the next Beth Hoffman book.

Jennifer King says

"Never tie your happiness to the end of someone else's kite."

The patches and quips of wisdom within the pages are part of the charm of Teddi Overton's story found in Beth Hoffman's second novel, **LOOKING FOR ME**. The voice is another, so engaging and powerful that the story is unputdownable (if that can be a word).

In the opening pages, the reader gets a glimpse into the heart of the main character: a scrappy and endearing Kentucky farm girl as she learns to cope with the world, her difficult family, and her brother's mysterious disappearance. Over time, Teddi begins to find her place in the world, refinishing mistreated antiques with a dream to sell them in her own upscale antique shop.

I laughed out loud at Teddi's eccentricities (having lunch with Pernelia) and loved her heart for animals and flowers and art. As Teddi begins to discover herself and her purpose, I experienced the discovery right along with her.

LOOKING FOR ME is a treasure of a novel, one sure to touch readers deeply with its generous helping of heart. It's a perfect sit-on-the-porch-with-a-glass-of-tea book.

I loved **LOOKING FOR ME** and recommend buying two copies -- one for yourself and one as a gift for a friend.

Patrice Hoffman says

Looking For Me is the first novel I've read by Beth Hoffman. This is the type of novel that gives the feeling that I should be enjoying it on the porch of some grand Victorian with a pitcher of sweet tea. I loved this book. **Looking For Me** definitely put me in touch with the summer's I spent at my great grandmother's home in Mobile, Alabama as a child.

Teddi found her life's calling at the tender age of 11 in the form of a beat up chair discarded along the highway. She took that furniture home, restored it, and then eventually sold it. Teddi grew up on a farm in Kentucky with her mother, father, and younger brother Josh. Leaving behind her family, she embarks upon the journey of owning her own antiques business. But she leaves behind a broken family. A mother who doesn't seem to be happy for her decisions at all. A brother who's leaves without a trace. And a loving father who tries to hold things together all the while having his own skeletons to sort through.

As the book progresses, Teddi narrates seemlessly between the past and present. There are some instances where something mentioned in the present intices her to reflect on the past. These moments help to define

Teddi and explain her intense hold on the past and its relics. She refers to herself as a healer in the sense that she takes the most damaged piece of furniture and breaths new life into it. Beth Hoffman supplies us readers with a well developed character who isn't catty or unloveable. Most of the time I wanted to be in Teddy's shop looking at the items she restored and just chatting it up with her.

As much as this novel is heartwarming it is heartbreak. Teddi's young brother's disappearance and her mother's negativity are the catalyst for much of the tension in this novel. There is a sadness of the loss of her brother that she carries around with her and it oozes from the pages so believeably. And the hope she has is gut-wrenching when the mind is screaming that Josh isn't ever going to be found.

Beth Hoffman's *Looking For Me* is an exceptional read that I'm sure fans will not want to miss. There are so many quotable passages in this book that I'm sure a highlighter will be necessary for those interested. I recommend this novel to lover's of women's literature, although I do think it's written very smartly in comparison to most "chick lit" out there. *Looking For Me* is a story of hope, loss, love, guilt, and family. It makes me wonder what stories my old furniture will say about me.

Helen Barlow says

Originally published on my blog [My Novel Opinion](#)

First off, I wanted to be clear why I chose to read this book...after being drawn to the delightful looking window display on the cover the one and only other reason was the first 7 words in the synopsis "A Southern novel of family and antiques"! I am a sucker for novels set in the South, I'm not even sure why having never visited or really interacted with anyone from that neck of the woods. I'm also going to throw my hands up and admit that I had not heard of Beth Hoffman before (sorry Beth), BUT I am now going to request *Saving CeeCee Honeycutt* from the library.

So, what did I think of *LOOKING FOR ME*? I thought it was wonderful and captivating. It was another unputdownable (which I seem to be reading a lot of lately). I have this thing (maybe some of you are familiar with this) where I can only put a book down at the end of a chapter, but as I came to the end of chapter after chapter I just had to carry on and find out what was coming next.

The story revolves around the life and family of Teddi Overman, an ambitious business woman who sought out her dream and leapt with both hands to grab it and didn't let it go (my kind of woman!). After discovering she had a knack for restoring old unwanted furniture, and successfully selling it in rural Kentucky, she wants to make a living out of this. Upon turning 17 and being gifted a car by her parents she ventures to Charleston to pursue her dream, with mixed feelings from her parents. Her father encourages her to carry on with her life, where her mother feels that there isn't a stable future in the path Teddi has chosen.

While Teddi is gone, her brother goes missing, her father dies, and her grandmother comes to live with her in Charleston; leaving her mom with the family farm, alone and seemingly bitter. Teddi struggles to understand why her mom is the way she is and also why her brother left and what may have become of him.

Teddi never lets go of the possibility that her brother is out there, even when everyone else presumes he is dead. After all how long can someone survive in the wilderness?

My Rating:

5/5 - There was no two ways about it - I was giving this book top marks! I loved every moment of it, and I will definitely be reading more of Beth Hoffman. But the stickler? I have to go to Charleston and shop for antique furniture. Oh and did I mention Teddi's best friend loves books? In fact she restores old books and hunts down first edition bargains!
