



Green Angel

Alice Hoffman

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Left on her own when her family dies in a terrible disaster, fifteen-year-old Green is haunted by loss and by the past. Struggling to survive physically and emotionally in a place where nothing seems to grow and ashes are everywhere, Green retreats into the ruined realm of her garden. But in destroying her feelings, she also begins to destroy herself, erasing the girl she'd once been as she inks darkness into her skin. It is only through a series of mysterious encounters that Green can relearn the lessons of love and begin to heal enough to tell her story.

Green Angel Details

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Author : Alice Hoffman

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Genre : Young Adult, Fantasy, Fiction, Magical Realism

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From Reader Review Green Angel for online ebook

Susana says

This story was beautifully written. Each and every phrase evocative of a deeper meaning, that i honestly find myself lacking the proper words to describe how much i liked it. Liked it, is just too insignificant... i guess it became part of me, as only the greatest stories; the ones that truly touch our hearts, are capable of doing it. If we let them...

For me, this author is outstanding in this gender. She weaves the most sad, heartbreaking stories, in perfect tapestries, made of memories and ghosts, tears and love.

This is the story of fifteen year old Green. The older daughter, the quiet daughter...

I was the least among them, nothing special, just a girl. I was a moody, dark weed; still, they called me Green because of my talents in the garden

When her sister and parents are killed, Green's starts to disappear beneath the cover of **thorns**

One night when the sky was ash-coloured, I went into the ruined garden and clipped the thorns from the bare rosebushes, then sewed them to my clothes, one by one, until my fingers bled. Now I was ready to feel nothing. I was protected from feeling anything at all.

and **tattoos**....

I didn't deserve anything, not food to ease my hunger or water to ease my thirst. (..) That was when I took a pin and some black ink. I began to mark my arm. I outlined a raven, and then a bat, then a rose that looked like a flower found at the end of the world. That's who I was now without my mother and my father and my moonlit sister. Blood and ink. Darkness where before there had been patience, black where there'd once been green.

...that she starts using as **armor** against the world, even against herself.

After a while, Green starts to give place to Ash. A girl that lives among ashes and pain...a girl whose own sight becomes cloudy...

This is a story about surviving grief.

A evocative, quirky, sad little story, sprinkled with bits of wisdom as just Alice Hoffman is capable of doing. I'm looking forward to read the next one Green Witch.

Anushka says

Um, was I supposed to love this highly acclaimed crap?

This is probably the smallest book I've read but it sure as felt like a billion pages long. I am not joking, by the end of it I fell flat out asleep. Really.

This book's outline is kind of like *If I Stay* but rest of the story is very different and equally boring. I am telling you, I love these depressive, sad kind of books but *Green Angel* wasn't even close to it.

I have got to stop reading these waste-of-time books!

Jaemi says

Amazing book. I can see why it's on a favorite's list. It's one of those things where I just want to hand it to people. Hoping maybe even if they never read it, somehow the message would be understood. The magic would just come through. That's what I had to say after finishing this book Friday, not all that long after having picked it up. I'm not sure I could do it much justice by adding to the original impression. This is one of those stories you just know you could read again and again. It's Life, it's Hope. And what can you ever say about those without sounding little?

Colin says

Well, I only made it to page nine of this overwrought, strained book. Soon after learning that the protagonist's younger sister was so precious that "bees would drink the sweat of her skin," and that she was in fact made of "laughter and moonlight" and that "white moths would rather circle around her than fly into the sky up above" I abandoned her to whatever wretched, flute-music-infused fate awaited her.

Amanda says

Nothing spectacular--it's almost like a trial size sample of Alice Hoffman's writing. There's the usual fairytale like quality and hints of magical realism; standard Hoffman stuff. What's strange is the approach it takes. There's been some type of disaster (perhaps the result of some form of terrorism in this unnamed seeting), but we never get the back story as to what happened or why. Instead, the novella focuses on how the loss of her family and way of life affect the main character, Green. It's a quick and easy read, but not as gripping as perhaps a more fleshed out story would have been.

Daphne says

I found this a beautiful and deceptively simple book.

Tania says

I recently read *The Dovekeepers* by Alice Hoffman, and absolutely loved it. Based on this I decided to try this YA title by her, and although it wasn't in the same league as *The Dovekeepers*, it was still beautifully written. I think I'll try *The Museum of Extraordinary Things* soon.

The Story: Green Angel is a post-apocalyptic young adult novel, it tells the story of a girl's isolation, suffering and gradual recovery after her family dies in a catastrophic fire.

Tawny says

Author: Alice Hoffman

Title: Green Angel

Genre: magical realism, tale of survival

Publication Info: Scholastic. New York. 2003.

Recommended Age: 13 and older

Plot Summary: Green, a moody, introspective 15-year-old, stays at home while her parents and younger sister travel to the city to sell their vegetable produce. Being intentionally left behind to tend the garden causes her to not say goodbye to her family. From across the river, Green watches in horror as the city explodes into flames. Even at her distance, she is not kept safe from embers entering her eyes. She becomes partially blinded. She waits for her family for days, but they never return. Green feels guilty for her previous behavior. She punishes herself by carving dark tattoos all over her body. The outside world is in anarchy and even Green—having a supernatural talent for gardening—refuses to help the suffering plants from the ash that blankets them. By putting on a tough front, she protects herself from looters and others who try to cheat her. She even sews thorns and pounds nails into her clothing so that no one can get close to her. Several surviving animals and people come into Green's life and somehow restore her love of nature and life. One boy shows up long enough to help replant the garden and instill in Green a reason for living again. At the end of the book, her vision is restored and she sets out to tell her story of heartache and survival.

Personal Notes: I found the book hard to grasp at times. This may have been because of the magical realism. There were times the story seemed hauntingly real, and other times where things just did not make sense. For example, why were so many youth who had lost their families allowed to live on the streets and on their own? Where was the police? Child Protective Services? Extended family members? I had a hard time imagining her needing to sell off all the family belongings for food and making bread out of ground chestnuts for so long. I wouldn't really know how to go about teaching this book in the classroom, so I would recommend it for individual reading only.

Evaluation: This book is somewhat difficult to read. It delves into some deep issues of survival, solitude, and hope. While written for a younger audience, the story also calls for sophisticated readers. I think that students with a taste for the gothic would particularly enjoy this story.

Other Comments: I wonder if this book was written with the intent to help youth cope with the horrors of 9/11. The actual disaster in the story was not explained well at all. It was quite confusing, really. What would cause the whole city to shake and burn down? Why would people have felt the need to jump from the buildings? These are some of the questions I had while reading the novel.

Will Byrnes says

Alice Hoffman by way of Cormac McCarthy. Fifteen-year-old, raven-haired, and green-thumbed Green

would love to go to the market with her parents and her practically moon-glowing sister, but someone needs to stay behind and take care of things. The three most important things after location, location, location are timing, timing, and timing. The family picked the wrong day to bring produce to the city. A fire. Think London, 1666, with a dash of 9/11. Green not only loses her family but is affected physically as well, as ash from the event damages her eyes, reducing her vision severely, but not entirely. Cormac-like events beset poor Green. Nothing will grow in her precious garden. She survives, inking her skin with dark images reflective of the new reality, writing over who she was with who she needs to be to survive.

Hoffman uses the hellscape, a very Road-evocative environment as the foil, the struggle Green must take on. How Green grows, changes, redefines herself as someone outside her parents, her family, and redefines herself again to cope with changing circumstances, how she finds ways to survive, how she copes with other survivors, human and animal, and struggles with connection and loss makes for a compelling and moving story.

This being Alice Hoffman there is a fairy tale feel to the tale. Grimm indeed. She tosses in some bits of magical realism, or maybe just plain magic, and a lot of feeling.

This is a YA title and is a very fast read, 116 small pages, and I so wish it had been much longer, as it is satisfying beyond its length, even for a geezer like me.

Wall-to-wall books - wendy says

Well this is nothing short of a truly AMAZING book! I absolutely loved it and can't wait to read "Green Witch" the sequel.

This book got real mixed reviews. In my opinion, the people who gave it a low rating just didn't "get it". There are books that are read purely for entertainment and those that have a deeper meaning. This is one of those books. Every single paragraph in this book is dripping with meaning. You don't have to read between the lines, you read into the lines. This book is "Magical Realism" it is not meant to be real! So you have to read it with an open mind, knowing that this would not happen in real life, or would it?

There are so many lines in this book that just grabbed me. One of them being - "I wanted silence, peace, blue skies, yesterday." When we are struck by tragedy, a death in the family, a fire, even a break-up, what do we wish for most? For it to have never have happened. We wish to go back in time. We wish for... yesterday.

At the end of the book She says - "Every page white like a garden, in which anything might grow." again, what a beautiful line. Writing words on paper, forming a story is a lot like planting seeds in a garden. Words are seeds for our mind and how they grow is up to you, how you nurture, cultivate and harvest them. A garden is what you make of it, and a story is how you feel it, how you interpret it, and what you take away.

This book is all about giving and receiving. Its more than just pay back, or paying a debt. It is just simply returning the favor, taking care of others that took care of you, maybe even a little of "Do unto others..." Heather hushed the others and told them to leave Green alone, in return Green left food and clothes for her. Green saved a couple baby birds, they in turn knitted a fishing net of her own hair. She nursed a dogs burned feet back to health, he in return shook the trees till all the chestnuts fell for her to gather. He also led her to her neighbor's house so she could find out it was the neighbor who threw the stones saving her from the

looters. In return Green took her food. Green took in a boy who lost his mother, she shared her home and all her food with him. In return he cooked and re-started the burned garden.

This book is about Re-birth and renewal. After a forest fire the forest renews itself. New shoots of green plants start growing. After a loved one dies, after all the sadness, you go through a re-birth, acceptance and living your life again. A town goes through a re-birth after a disaster (tornado, flood etc.) when they start rebuilding. This happens in so many ways in the book. Even Green herself goes through a huge re-birth, not only her appearance, her name, the house and garden, but also her spirit! Her soul and her heard is renewed.

There is so much more to this book than just an amusing story. Allow yourself to dig deeper, allow yourself to feel, allow yourself into Green's world, only then will you truly "Get it".

Linda Lipko says

When reading another Alice Hoffman book, I'm reminded that she is one of my favorite authors. She consistently weaves magic into characters that have a mystical, yet down to earth, quality about them.

The setting of this haunting book is a town and countryside destroyed by a terrible conflagration.

Using metaphorical symbolism, Hoffman tells the tale of Green who stayed behind on the day her mother, father and sister went to town to sell their vegetables. Resentful, Green does not say goodbye. Thus, when her family perishes in the fire, she bears tremendous guilt.

As the sky is gray, blocking the sun, the land is unproductive and societal rules seem to fall apart. What remains is a band of people who eek out a living, some of whom cannot overcome their grief and live sad apathetic lives.

Green remains cut off and lives alone, hardened and thorny. As slowly she reaches out to a neighbor, a dog, a few birds and a forsaken emotionally distraught young woman, Ash begins the process of healing.

In her usual style, Hoffman transforms the character in a fairytale fashion. Thorns and nettles are replaced with new growth of food as the ash is pushed aside to allow earth that produces and inner strength that rejuvenates.

Derby says

3.5 Stars

I needed a book I could read in a couple of hours and entertaining enough to keep my tired brain engaged. Green Angel certainly did the trick! I was unsure about the book for the first 5-10 pages, but all of a sudden I found myself absorbed in Green's story. I ended up finding the book to be poetic and beautiful

Cheri says

Only took me about an hour and a half to read this while waiting for an appt. A very short but lyrical book.

N.T. Embe says

A story like this will never grow old. It is timeless as the sun, the moon, and the stars in the sky. As ageless as the trees and the grasses in all their richness in summer, and all their love in fall. It is the story of rebirth and, most of all, of Hope... and how that hope will grow from the darkest depths of anyone's prisons. Horrors, pain unimaginable, loneliness, sorrow unending--all these ashes that cover our souls, and darken our days.... This is the story we live through. Through the softest, gentlest, most profound of ways, this is the story we read in *Green Angel*, and it is the story we are born again through.

I do not know where to even begin to describe the profound impact this story had on me. It has settled in my heart like the heaviest of stones, but one that I know is not only a mere stone. It is a seed. A seed, or perhaps an egg--there settled in my chest, awaiting the chance to softly break, to steadily expand, to spread itself from the depths of me, throughout every muscle, every strand of nerve and thought--to become actions, to be born of dreams and turn into reality. It is like a magic spell, that captures the mind's attention so surely that you are swept away in this river, and are not aware you've been swallowed whole until in a sudden blink, you awaken to find yourself drenched and heavy with the tale. It brings a hand over one's heart, or a bittersweet tear and smile to our faces; it echoes like sorrow so close, and like laughter in the midst of pain. It is a book of memories. A creation so deeply endowed with emotions and the murmurings of the heart that our own hearts wrench in its presence, are torn from within us, beg to be close--because they know those feelings; they have each been there. We are all a witness to that pain. We have all ached and lost so deeply. We can all walk in the ashes. Sometimes, we still remember or know what it is to be lost in them--nothing but ash yourself.

Smiles gently ...and then... throughout the midst of our sorrows, our loss... in this shadowed world we have come walking into... like pale beauty, a sun we cannot see, a moon we long greeted only with cries, the stars we shed tears to--softly the warmth of color shades this world. A faint spot: in the earth, on the shelf, or suddenly looking up and noticing: the sky is *blue*~ ...how blessed that first recognition is of what we forgot: that this is, and forever will be--ours and ours undeniably!--*life*. ...how *great*! How the depth rushes around us, and suddenly we realize like the very earth and its offspring, the saplings that push up from the pallid dirt, that we are moving again--moving forward--and that we cannot stop ourselves. Our hearts, our souls--they will not let us.

...this is the story of life again. Of going through the darkness, and finding the light. Of learning that to live is not impossible, even when silence and loneliness and the veil of apathy have claimed us. It is written elusively, and yet persuades the heart to listen and respond. All we have to do... is give it the chance to speak, and it will unfold worlds for us. Without words, without complications of language, or situation, or happenstance. Like fairy tales and magic, it will give us a meaning deeper than what words can weave. It takes only a willing heart--an open mind--to understand it.

Though my review is cryptic for some, and too elusive for others, the book is one that speaks and is written from the heart. You have only to read the first few pages to realize why I have written in a manner so unfitting the everyday language of honest critique. *Smiles* I feel that this book deserved an emotive response, because for me, it is my memories, my present, my heart, and my soul it touched.

Readers, give this book a shot. It is beauty without the need to describe itself as such. And it is a miracle of life that no one should turn away, even if you end up not enjoying some aspects of it. Look beyond that. Give

it a chance. It can be liberating.

Jillian Marie says

I was captivated. Lured into this fantasy of wisdom, pain, and love. The authors way with words made me actually cry while reading. If you're not into books that are poetic, this is not for you. Truly lovely to read.
