

The Lovely Bones

By Alice Sebold

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Once in a generation a novel comes along that taps a vein of universal human experience, resonating with readers of all ages. THE LOVELY BONES is such a book -- a #1 bestseller celebrated at once for its artistry, for its luminous clarity of emotion, and for its astonishing power to lay claim to the hearts of millions of readers around the world. Now in an audiobook edition read by the author, with movie tie-in art.

"My name was Salmon, like the fish; first name, Susie. I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973."

So begins the story of Susie Salmon, who is adjusting to her new home in heaven, a place that is not at all what she expected, even as she is watching life on earth continue without her -- her friends trading rumors about her disappearance, her killer trying to cover his tracks, her grief-stricken family unraveling. Out of unspeakable tragedy and loss, THE LOVELY BONES succeeds, miraculously, in building a tale filled with hope, humor, suspense, even joy.

The major motion picture version of THE LOVELY BONES, directed by Peter Jackson and starring Rachel Weisz, Susan Sarandon, Mark Wahlberg, Stanley Tucci, and Saoirse Ronan is scheduled for release on December 11, 2009.

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The Lovely Bones By Alice Sebold Bibliography

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- Binding: Audio CD

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

On her way home from school on a snowy December day in 1973, 14-year-old Susie Salmon ("like the fish") is lured into a makeshift underground den in a cornfield and brutally raped and murdered, the latest victim of a serial killer--the man she knew as her neighbor, Mr. Harvey.

Alice Sebold's haunting and heartbreaking debut novel, *The Lovely Bones*, unfolds from heaven, where "life is a perpetual yesterday" and where Susie narrates and keeps watch over her grieving family and friends, as well as her brazen killer and the sad detective working on her case. As Sebold fashions it, everyone has his or her own version of heaven. Susie's resembles the athletic fields and landscape of a suburban high school: a heaven of her "simplest dreams," where "there were no teachers.... We never had to go inside except for art class.... The boys did not pinch our backsides or tell us we smelled; our textbooks were *Seventeen* and *Glamour* and *Vogue*."

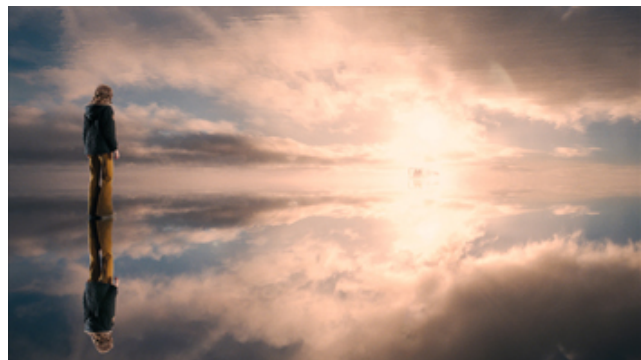
The Lovely Bones works as an odd yet affecting coming-of-age story. Susie struggles to accept her death while still clinging to the lost world of the living, following her family's dramas over the years like an episode of *My So-Called Afterlife*. Her family disintegrates in their grief: her father becomes determined to find her killer, her mother withdraws, her little brother Buckley attempts to make sense of the new hole in his family, and her younger sister Lindsey moves through the milestone events of her teenage and young adult years with Susie riding spiritual shotgun. Random acts and missed opportunities run throughout the book--Susie recalls her sole kiss with a boy on Earth as "like an accident--a beautiful gasoline rainbow." Though sentimental at times, *The Lovely Bones* is a moving exploration of loss and mourning that ultimately puts its faith in the living and that is made even more powerful by a cast of convincing characters. Sebold orchestrates a big finish, and though things tend to wrap up a little *too* well for everyone in the end, one can only imagine (or hope) that heaven is indeed a place filled with such happy endings. --Brad Thomas Parsons

Look Inside the Motion Picture *The Lovely Bones* (Paramount, 2010)

(Click on each image below to see a larger view)



Saoirse Ronan as Susie Salmon



Saoirse Ronan as Susie Salmon



Mark Wahlberg as Jack Salmon



Saoirse Ronan as Susie Salmon and Director Peter Jackson

From Publishers Weekly

Sebold's first novel after her memoir, *Lucky* is a small but far from minor miracle. Sebold has taken a grim, media-exploited subject and fashioned from it a story that is both tragic and full of light and grace. The novel begins swiftly. In the second sentence, Sebold's narrator, Susie Salmon, announces, "I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973." Susie is taking a shortcut through a cornfield when a neighbor lures her to his hideaway. The description of the crime is chilling, but never vulgar, and Sebold maintains this delicate balance between homely and horrid as she depicts the progress of grief for Susie's family and friends. She captures the odd alliances forged and the relationships ruined: the shattered father who buries his sadness trying to gather evidence, the mother who escapes "her ruined heart, in merciful adultery." At the same time, Sebold brings to life an entire suburban community, from the mortician's son to the handsome biker dropout who quietly helps investigate Susie's murder. Much as this novel is about "the lovely bones" growing around Susie's absence, it is also full of suspense and written in lithe, resilient prose that by itself delights. Sebold's most dazzling stroke, among many bold ones, is to narrate the story from Susie's heaven (a place where wishing is having), providing the warmth of a first-person narration and the freedom of an omniscient one. It might be this that gives Sebold's novel its special flavor, for in Susie's every observation and memory of the smell of skunk or the touch of spider webs is the reminder that life is sweet and funny and surprising.

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From School Library Journal

Adult/High School-"I was fourteen when I was murdered on December 6, 1973," says Susie Salmon in this intriguing novel. Teens will immediately be drawn into this account of a girl who was raped and killed, and tells her story from "heaven." She realizes gradually that she is in an interim heaven until she can let go of her earthly concerns. The place is like school with *Seventeen* for a textbook and no teachers. On Earth, her mother needs to leave the family for a time, her sister seems to have Susie constantly in her thoughts, her young brother grows into a pensive preteen, and her grief-stricken father spends much of his time seeking out the murderer, even after it seems that the police have given up. The narrator observes the disparate ways her family and friends cope, and finally sees that they are resolving their grief as "the lovely bones" of their lives knit themselves around the empty space that was her life. While the subject matter is grim, the telling is light and frequently humorous-Susie remains 14 even though 8 years pass in the other characters' lives. This novel will encourage discussion. There is a slight feeling of magical realism, but there is grounding in real adolescence.

Susan H. Woodcock, Fairfax County Public Library, Chantilly, VA

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Holly Silva:

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Julia Hanson:

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Irvin Ehlers:

Many people spending their time period by playing outside with friends, fun activity with family or just watching TV all day every day. You can have new activity to pay your whole day by examining a book. Ugh, you think reading a book can definitely hard because you have to accept the book everywhere? It fine you can have the e-book, delivering everywhere you want in your Cell phone. Like The Lovely Bones which is keeping the e-book version. So , why not try out this book? Let's notice.

Pilar Porter:

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