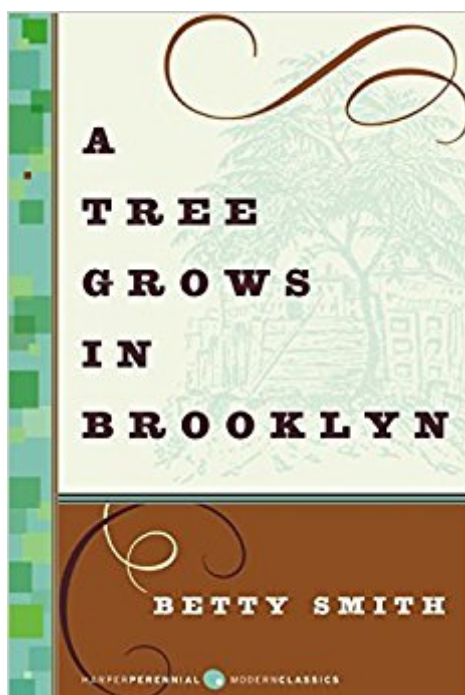


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A Tree Grows In Brooklyn (Modern Classics)



Synopsis

The American classic about a young girl's coming-of-age at the turn of the century. From the moment she entered the world, Francie needed to be made of stern stuff, for the often harsh life of Williamsburg demanded fortitude, precocity, and strength of spirit. Often scorned by neighbors for her family's erratic and eccentric behavior--such as her father Johnny's taste for alcohol and Aunt Sissy's habit of marrying serially without the formality of divorce--no one, least of all Francie, could say that the Nolans' life lacked drama. By turns overwhelming, sublime, heartbreaking, and uplifting, the Nolans' daily experiences are tenderly threaded with family connectedness and raw with honesty. Betty Smith has, in the pages of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, captured the joys of humble Williamsburg life--from "junk day" on Saturdays, when the children of Francie's neighborhood traded their weekly take for pennies, to the special excitement of holidays, bringing cause for celebration and revelry. Betty Smith has artfully caught this sense of exciting life in a novel of childhood, replete with incredibly rich moments of universal experiences--a truly remarkable achievement for any writer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Francie Nolan, avid reader, penny-candy connoisseur, and adroit observer of human nature, has much to ponder in colorful, turn-of-the-century Brooklyn. She grows up with a sweet, tragic father, a severely realistic mother, and an aunt who gives her love too freely--to men, and to a brother who will always be the favored child. Francie learns early the meaning of hunger and the value of a

penny. She is her father's child--romantic and hungry for beauty. But she is her mother's child, too--deeply practical and in constant need of truth. Like the Tree of Heaven that grows out of cement or through cellar gratings, resourceful Francie struggles against all odds to survive and thrive. Betty Smith's poignant, honest novel created a big stir when it was first published over 50 years ago. Her frank writing about life's squalor was alarming to some of the more genteel society, but the book's humor and pathos ensured its place in the realm of classics--and in the hearts of readers, young and old. (Ages 10 and older) --Emilie Coulter --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“A profoundly moving novel, and an honest and true one. It cuts right to the heart of life. . . . If you miss *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* you will deny yourself a rich experience.” (New York Times)
“One of the most dearly beloved and one of the finest books of our day.” (Orville Prescott)
“One of the books of the Century.” (New York Public Library)

I enjoyed this story because it portrays a family who struggles, overcomes obstacles and eventually starts a new life for themselves. Katie has two supportive sisters, a loving mother, a dramatic husband and 3 children she supports, and takes care of. Francis, Katie's daughter is bullied, criticized, mocked and heartbroken. Her family struggles with finances, economical issues, and death. Francie learns that either though she may struggle, there are still happy, fun and memorable moments which she experiences. Her mother and brother also learn the same thing.

Lyrical, moving, and honest portrayal of poor life. It ended better than I had hoped, and I will miss these characters.

This has been since its first publication an American classic. I have reread it with great enjoyment. This is a wonderful look at real life among the poor, as lived by mainly immigrant families in early 1900's Brooklyn. It doesn't need my recommendation; it has been known for decades to be a fascinating must-read for anyone who enjoys literature about social class and family life in the U. S. But at least I can add my praise for it here.

This is a wonderful book, I can't believe this was not required reading in high school. I'm so glad I picked this one up and read it. I've been reading an assortment of classics lately and this one should be read by all. The other reviews explain the book so I won't go into detail. Great read, well

worth the time, highly recommend. Betty Smith was quite the author.

One of my top-ten books in my whole life, this novel captures what it is to be a young woman living the American Dream. I gave this copy, as I have previous copies, to a girl graduating from high school, so that she can see how her hopes and aspirations connect her to earlier generations of girls.

I read this book as a teenager many years ago. I picked it up again after watching the movie on TCM. I wasn't disappointed. It was better the second reading and experiencing it as an adult. This a book that should be read by everyone.

This is my kind of gritty reality story...more story, less grit. I know life is rough, but I don't want to have my heart broken while reading. I don't need to steel myself before turning the page, for fear of something terrible. I need stories like this. Reality. Sad reality. But with an overlay of optimism and faith in the human spirit. With the sharp and bitey edges sanded down a little, so they're not so pointy. And of course, with a heroine who is spunky, optimistic, smart, and loves books. 5 stars...one for every hundred pages.

This was a wonderful book. I kept getting it recommended to me because on classics, as something I needed to read. I looked at it a couple of times, and finally decided to take the plunge. It was worth the read. It still is relevant today in many ways even though it happened at the turn of the century, early in the 1900's. Even though many things have changed over time, including the diseases that impact us (tuberculosis raged in urban tenements), and the technology which didn't exist back then...but so many other things still exist. The poor are always with us. Too often we don't understand what they did or do to get by. One big difference back in the early 1900's is there was no social security, and no welfare to catch people when they fell through the cracks. So when people were out of money, and couldn't find a job...they really went hungry. Sometimes, we need a reminder of what it used to be like to appreciate what we have. Betty Smith wrote from personal knowledge of that time period. Both of the people and the things that happened. This was a novel, but it was autobiographical at the same time. Smith wrote with so much description and insight that you rarely see in novels. Everything that Francie, her protagonist, goes through as she grows up in a family with a strong mother and a beloved father who drinks, is very tangible to the reader. The reader feels honored to be given a 'front seat' to Francie's life, to understand her feelings and her

dreams. Not everything is bleak, though Francie goes through a lot. She survives the death of her father whom she loved without judgement. She experiences the fear of being accosted by a pedophile, from whom her mother saves her. But she also shares the beauty of reading, of learning, of being in a family where she is loved, and many other important life experiences such as getting her first job and falling in love. This was an exquisite read...one that I think should be recommended on lists of books for highschool students.

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