



The Foretelling: A Novel

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New York Times Bestseller: A lyrical, suspenseful coming-of-age story based on Greek myths of a race of woman warriors living near the Black Sea.

Born out of sorrow in an ancient time of blood and war, Rain is a girl marked by destiny. Her mother, Alina, is the proud queen of a tribe of female warriors, yet she refuses to touch or even look at her only daughter. So Rain draws on the strength and knowledge of her Amazon sisters to learn the ways of her people: how to carve spoons out of bones, ride her white horse as fiercely as a demon, and shoot an arrow straight into the heart of an enemy.

Determined to win her mother's love and take her rightful place as the next queen, Rain becomes a brave and determined fighter. But the dream of a black horse clouds her future, portending death. As one devastating battle follows the next, Rain hopes for a different life for her tribe beyond never-ending bloodshed. Peace, mercy, and love, however, are forbidden words in her language—can Rain teach her sisters to speak in a new tongue before it's too late?

Inspired by Greek legends and recent archaeological discoveries in Russia and Ukraine, *The Foretelling* is a breathtaking achievement from the bestselling author of *The Dovekeepers*.

The Foretelling: A Novel Details

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Author : Alice Hoffman

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From Reader Review The Foretelling: A Novel for online ebook

Jessica (novelcravings) says

THOUGHTS:

This is a beautiful and powerful story of feminism.

The main character is Rain, and this story is her discovering who she is and what it means to be a leader of her Amazonian tribe.

She faces many trials in her lifetime. She yearns for a connection with her distant mother, strives to be the best warrior, and struggles to feel a part of the whole. She experiences loss, love and betrayal and each shapes and molds her into a strong, intelligent woman worthy of leading her people.

I don't want to go into a lot of detail about what happens because it is a short story and I worry anything I say will be spoilers. I really feel this is story each person must experience for themselves. I don't think it matters what your usual genre is either, everyone can enjoy this story if they like strong, independent women. I will say that the romance, if you can even call it that, is very small in this story and not the main theme.

I am so glad that I re-read this book and I plan to do the same in the future. If I was to describe it I would say that it was inspiring, moving, and raw, yet that doesn't quite capture it at all.

I highly recommend it and I look forward to reading more of Alice Hoffman's work.

Tara Chevestt says

Rain is an Amazon and the result of a 50 men pile up upon her mother so it is no great surprise that her mother, the queen, chooses to ignore her presence. That doesn't stop Rain from trying to be the best warrior, rider, and queen in training she can be tho.

She kills men, rides bears, experiences love and loss both while struggling to gain her mother's affections. By the time her mother shows her kindness tho, it may be too late. If her mother will not accept her as a queen, how can Rain expect the tribe of women warriors to accept and follow her? She has much to prove. Her ideas slightly defer from the other Amazons and this could cause some friction.

I enjoyed this story. It was a quick read and very thorough as far as showing the lives of the Amazons, their war methods, their missing breasts, their love of horses, and their festivals. I had one issue that prevents it from hitting the five star mark: no quotation marks. Granted, everything spoken was in italics, but the lack of real conversation was odd and I found myself disliking that aspect.

Still a good read tho and I do recommend it to those interested in the Amazons.

Marlowe says

I bought this book on a whim. I had never heard of it or of the author, but Chapters was selling it for pennies, so I figured it was worth the risk.

I'm glad I took the chance. It's a great book. It breaks several of the cardinal rules of writing (telling instead of showing, for an obvious example), but it does it well. The story is interesting and fast-paced, making it a quick read. It would have had to have been hundreds of pages long had Hoffman tried to cover the same amount of ground by "showing," and I do believe that she made the right choice.

This is obviously a Young Adult novel, but it deals with several mature themes such as sex (both consensual and non-) and war. However, Hoffman treats these subjects as "facts," without dwelling on them graphically as some authors do. These are just part of Rain's world. This is not to mention the tough concepts of love, responsibility, compassion, being one's self, feminism/patriarchy, etc. that are brought up. They are handled in a way that would be acceptable for a young teen or tween to read, while also serving the purpose of opening discourse on such subjects.

This isn't to say that the book was perfect. There are times when I would have liked certain areas to be explored more deeply. The ending, for example, tells of several important and life-altering events taking place without, I felt, giving them due consideration. The book works, but I feel that it might have been improved a little by slowing down the narrative pace at certain moments and describing certain events in more detail. I also would have liked a context: as the novel is written in the first person, it would have been nice to know who Rain is telling her story to.

Still, these are very minor complaints to a book that, overall, was a very enjoyable rainy-afternoon read with an uplifting message.

Sandra says

AMAZING!!!

Women warriors.

Girl Power.

Feminism.

The Amazon tribe.

Horses.

Bears.

Tradition.

Killing.

War.

Sorrow.

Adulthood.

Jo says

Beautiful language, and I loved the narrator, Rain. The whole book is about her quest to find herself and become who she is meant to be. Her struggle with the rituals of her tribe added to the sense that a new era would dawn under her leadership. There wasn't much of a plot, but it was a nice glimpse into what a nomadic life in ancient times might be like.

Jaemi says

Rain is born to her mother out of sorrow. Rather than a joyous event, her birth marks the permanence of the attack her mother suffered caught alone out on the fields. The Priestesses tell Rain she has the strength of all 50 men, but the consolation means little to her, as her mother the Queen will not speak to her.

As queen-to-be of a fierce Amazon tribe, Rain seeks to know all, and excel. She rides her horse until they become one. She rescues a bear cub, and learns to ride it as well. But in seeking to be something she is not, and letting the bear believe it is something it is not, she brings only sorrow upon herself.

As Rain enters her teens her mother takes up with a woman rescued from a battle. She is surprised to find that her mother can love. The captured woman's daughter, Io, takes to following Rain about. No matter how cruel Rain is to her, Io is only kind in return, loving her as a sister. Soon Rain comes to know that she is a sister, and regrets all the harsh words she spoke.

As Rain continues to grow, she becomes more and more defiant. Breaking rules, searching for herself, trying to find her way, fearing what is to come. Before she has found her answers, her mother is lost in battle. As her most recent child was a boy, not a girl, the Queenship falls to Rain. Some of the tribe do not believe her capable. Seeking to kill her in her sleep, the traitors murder Io instead, as Rain had left already on her journey to bring her brother to his own people.

An interesting look at what life might have been amongst this people. No fathers, no boys, fierce spirits and traditions, but also an understand that eventually change must come.

Patricia says

Este libro breve es una cosa rarísima. Una narración hermosa, hipnótica y lírica, con el tono y el ritmo que uno se imagina propio de las leyendas antiguas. De las leyendas BIEN antiguas, esas que se contaban alrededor de una hoguera y que fueron sentando las bases de lo que hoy somos.

Es difícil de explicar, porque en el libro pasan o se insinúan un montón de cosas terribles pero, aun así, sigue siendo hermoso. En mi percepción, esta es una historia que le habla a uno —quizás más todavía si se trata de “una”— a un nivel al que ya no estamos tan acostumbrados: un nivel que está más allá de las palabras, más cerca del instinto. Allá donde se acepta que son las pérdidas y las penas las que nos construyen. Donde lo efímero es lo eterno, y lo mítico y lo simbólico son parte de lo cotidiano. Un susurro cariñoso a esa parte que queda de lo que hace miles de años fuimos y, por lo visto, todavía sobrevive, debajo de toda la supuesta civilización que tratamos de arrojarle encima y que, irónicamente, nos tiene bastante perdidos.

Admito que las sensaciones que me despertó esta novela fueron muy inesperadas: en *The Foretelling*, para mí, todo fue como debía ser y me resultó perfecta en su sencillez, capaz de arrastrarme como lectora a algo que se sentía casi como un trance. Algo bien complejo de poner en palabras, pero definitivamente maravilloso.

Sé que este no es el tipo de reseñas que acostumbro hacer pero preferí quedarme con las sensaciones. Porque es allí donde se percibe la experiencia única que es este libro. Una experiencia muy recomendable, en especial para el lector perceptivo y humilde de espíritu. Ese que acerca a las historias con el corazón abierto a las más extrañas formas de poesía.

Danielle Palmer says

A tale about fierce women warriors, who kept only their female children and tattooed themselves blue, who could ride a horse before they could walk and were as lethal in battle as any man. A quick read, well written, with many themes that seem beyond the realm of young adult fiction (children conceived of rape, forced prostitution, disfigurement, self mutilation). I was drawn into the story quickly and fully, but am a bit surprised it was listed as a young adult book.

Sarah says

Carol brought this to me along with another Alice Hoffman book, as she is prone to doing from time to time, bless her. I've never read Hoffman but gather that she tells a good love story, so I decided to start with the short, lyrical, young adult book about Amazon warriors who only keep their male captives around when they feel like procreating. The writing was skillful and evocative, and I'm grateful that it didn't devolve into a love story about the warrior heiress who ends up finding her softer side with a man. It is far more a real love story among women, their familial and cultural loyalties, and I wish there were more portrayals of that kind of female relationship in the collective or literary conscience.

Maryanne says

I loved this book, loved the writing, the characters and the imagery.

A bit different to my usual fare: although this is a story about Amazon women - and they certainly are immensely strong in physical prowess, will power and determination - it is a story about seeking peace, redemption, love and balance.

This book does have implied and recollected scenes of significant horror - gang rapes and sexual slavery - which were just bearable for this wussy reviewer, but more importantly, may be themes too strong for younger readers.

The writing, the world, the characters and images are so unusual and so beautiful, this book plunges us into an indelible experience. The sense of space, of landscape and long ago, of the importance and intimacy of a few other people, and the struggle to investigate and embrace newness and change, are rendered with truth and insight.

Beautiful.

Weng says

4.5/5.0 stars

I love the looks of this book, so handsome; the color, the layout, the texture and dimension. Oh look, it's got Alice Hoffman's name on it too - I'm sold!

What if a girl could transform a culture of violence into one of peace?

Rain is a girl with a certain destiny, living in an ancient time of blood, raised on mares' milk, nurtured with the strength of a thousand Amazon sisters. A girl of power, stronger than fifty men, she rides her white horse as fierce as a demon.

But then there is the foretelling. The black horse.

The Foretelling is one of Hoffman's bestselling novels from her *young adult* selection. The only YA under her belt that I've read so far, come to think of it (she mostly write adult genres). The verdict? I liked it but I don't think it conforms with the commercial taste.

I was born out of sorrow, so my mother named me Rain.

Hoffman favors dark, *magic-realism* and in this story she opts to tell a tale of a promising, young Amazon set to succeed her estranged mother for the leadership of their all-women warrior tribe, except, Rain feels a reluctance to take up the mantle because she's haunted by her prophetic dreams of a black horse, a bad omen signifying the angel of death, and a vision of her people turning against her. And Rain is a game-changer,

would her people still be willing to follow her if they knew of her radical hopes?

To conclude, this book have an awesome plot and tone down pat, but fairly lacking a solid beginning. You may find yourself getting impatient of recurrent points but, I was lenient as soon as the story took off and the repetitiveness ceased - and *WOW*. Savage, uncommon and written in Hoffman's signature lyrical style, this is both beautiful and forceful in its own right. ***If you're taking a break from the usual and is looking for an interesting read, I recommend this book!***

Sometimes we find our destiny served to us in a silver platter, we can take it lying down if we choose to, or we can take it apart and make it our own.

Linda says

Women who war against men, slice off a breast so they may become better archers, like black widow spiders, carry on the population with drug induced orgies that often end in the death of their mates, is hard to accept. But, when one considers the fact that women are routinely raped, beaten and mutilated in third world countries and even here in the U.S. it does seem fitting that women should take on the face of the warrior. The heroine Rain, a child of rape, is born into sorrow. In this richly imagined coming of age story she achieves self-actualization, female empowerment and acceptance of self—life lessons we all must learn, male or female.

www.LindaBallouAuthor.com

AlexM says

I like Alice Hoffman and really loved some of her works but I found that this one was really bad. I got this on the thought it would be similar to Green Angel but I was wrong. The story starts out really well, this amazon warrior girl Rain belongs to a tribe of amazons and they are at constant war with men and Rain is the daughter of the female chief. If you read the description and the first few chapters you think it is really good but then it starts to go haywire. First since there are no men in their tribe Rain's mother starts a relationship with the female priest. I did not think there was a need to have this in the story and I don't think it was good for the story. Second, I think that Rain is almost a copy of Green from Alice Hoffman's Green Angel. I just think that yes, Rain is an amazon and Green was totally different but those two characters almost share the same thoughts and feelings. Rain was different but they were similar. Third, it was rated on amazon.com as a children's book and it certainly was NOT a children's book. It has too much mature content and if it was a movie you would have to rate it R. I would say it is for 16 to 18 years-old and up. The story did have a lot of potential but was sidetracked and got ruined. I really think that Alice Hoffman could have done a good job but she didn't think it through and actually try to develop it. I would say if you want to read some of her greatest works read Aquamarine and Green Angel.

Jennifer Wardrip says

Reviewed by Me for TeensReadToo.com

In this intense yet complicated fantasy story, Rain attempts to gain her mother's notice and acceptance by being the best of warriors in their Amazonian tribe. The product of a rape when her mother, Alina, wasn't much more than a child herself, it is hard to gain the Queen's approval. Although Rain knows that she's been raised by Deborah, the wise priestess, to one day be Queen herself, she also pays attention to Deborah's promises of a much grander destiny.

Rain doesn't totally understand the Queen's desire to so thoroughly destroy her enemies, even though her own cousins, Astella and Asteria, are two of the fiercest warriors in the tribe. When Alina takes Penthe as her companion, and Penthe's daughter Io seeks to be Rain's sister, matters become even more complicated. Rain wants nothing more than to ride her horse, Sky, to garner her mother's approval, to earn the place as rightful Queen that will someday come upon her.

On her first journey alone, Rain comes upon a bear cub, which she takes back to camp. She names him Usha, and together with Io the two girls raise the cub as if he were a horse. Although Rain and Io soon discover the mistake of doing so, it's too late--Usha is killed in battle, and Rain still doesn't have the love and acceptance of her mother.

THE FORETELLING is a coming-of-age story set in a fantastical land of the Amazons. Rain is a compelling character who, although she tries so hard to be vicious and fierce like her fellow tribe-members, always leans more towards peace for all men and compassion towards her enemies.

Not to be missed by lovers of fantasy stories!

Peggy says

I approached this novel reluctantly, since the opening pages seemed to cover ground I've recently read about in Jane Yolen's *Sister Light, Sister Dark*, as well as the 2017 *Wonder Woman* movie. We are introduced to a prehistoric Amazonian society near the Black Sea. The narrator, Rain, is the Queen's daughter, but exists outside the scope of her love and attention. We learn the cultural ways of this horse-based society and the magic that explains their success. So far, ho-hum, though lyrically told. Then Rain goes on a journey and the plot falls into place. Her transformation as a character surprised and interested me, to the extent that I recollected Hesse's *Siddhartha* in its unfolding. The novel is too short to approach its material with more than a broad brush, but I found it more satisfying than I initially expected.

Donna says

A pleasure to read! The setting of this brief novel is in an ancient pre-historical period among a fictitious tribe of warrior women, possibly [it is hinted] those that gave birth to the legends of the Amazons. Narrated by its heroine, Rain, it is a "coming of age" story and is remarkable for the authenticity of her voice. Told simply in a stark prose that is powerfully evocative of a barely remembered past, though short you will not easily forget her story.

Kasey Jane says

This is a beautifully-written retelling of the Amazon myths. It's interesting for the subject matter alone--I've never come across a straight (pardon the pun) take on a female warrior society in a nonmagical setting.

Despite her intended audience, Hoffman doesn't flinch away from hard truths. I loved that sort of thing when I was young--dark, gritty books that secretly bothered me for months--and this short novel will appeal to a certain type of girl. The book's true virtue is its ability blend pain and sorrow into a kind of poetry.

The Foretelling is not without its faults, however. Perhaps it's because I am used to a certain pattern in young adult literature, but I expected Rain break the mold she'd been cast into rather than bend it a bit. Also, at a certain point I just had trouble coping with the harshness of her world. It just felt like too much.

Mara says

Before starting this book, I had two thoughts: Either this book is going to be surprisingly good, or I'm going to really dislike it. Well, I didn't end up really disliking it, but I certainly didn't love it, either. Or even really like it. Stories of sisterhood kind of nauseate me to begin with because they are more often than not lectures against men, and all of the female characters have major chips on their shoulders and the "I-can-beat-anyone" attitude. I'll give the Author this: her women were believable. They seemed like tough Germanic women - the type that the Romans wrote about as being fiercer fighters than the male warriors. The type of women which the Romans absolutely did not want to fight. So, thumbs up to the Author for getting that right.

But. That's where my praise pretty much ends. I didn't care about any of the characters, least of all Rain. She didn't irritate me, but I didn't care what happened to her. In trying to make her story span several years without making it as thick as The Bible, the Author failed to really acquaint her Readers with any of the characters. Oh, you get the sense that Rain questions her tribe's ways and her own doubt, and you get the sense that Rain's mother is a bitter woman, but that element which makes Readers attach to a character simply wasn't there. I didn't feel Rain's grief, joy, anger, frustration, determination, or confusion at any point in the story.

The Author also pumped her story with more content than was certainly necessary. While she does not detail any of the sexual occurrences, she takes every opportunity she can to mention what women do with the men they take in battle. For one thing, the Reader could come to this conclusion through their own assumptions without the Author even having to ever mention it. And for another, the Author did not need to mention the ritual every bloody time a battle was finished. We got it the first time! And then, of course, there's the fact that some women in Rain's tribe are not beyond sharing each other's beds. The Author does not spend as much time in mentioning this as I at first thought she might, but even so it got more than a little tiring every time Rain brought up how her mother had "taken a lover."

Writing style was partially okay and partially irritating. Normally I like stories with very little dialogue and scant descriptions. But here is a story that could have used more detail and a lot more dialogue. The Author also did something that really annoyed me: whenever one of the characters talked, there were no quotation

marks. Instead, the dialogue was all in Italics. That's usually reserved for when a character is thinking, last time I checked. Call it a minor pet peeve, but it just got on my nerves. I started thinking that the characters were all telepathic!

The book ends where it seems that the actual story should have begun: Rain begun the change the way of her tribe, while those who do not want to follow her new ways have separated. Seems to me that these events would have made a more interesting story than Rain's coming-of-age litany.

Molly says

The *Fortelling* had an unusual atmosphere, tone, and mood that really depicted the setting and lifestyle of the main character. A young Amazonian girl, learning to be queen and her life up to that point. The writing style was completely unique from any other I've come across, when reading. It was almost like the book had really been written by an Amazonian Queen instead of a 21st century author.

Really a good read and exceptional story.

Aeslis says

The Foretelling has a wonderful premise with much mysticism and wonderfully strong women. But the narrative I found strange. While things are at times wonderfully described, I often felt like the story was being summarized for me.

I found each character intriguing, but was eventually disappointed as there seemed to be no growth in anyone but for the main character, Rain. I wanted to know more about Melek and his people, more about Deborah. There were tantalizing tidbits, but no actual depth or dimensionality, and very little background for anyone.

Essentially, I wanted to go deeper into this story, but it stopped short of taking me there.

One thing I must commend this story for is the female/female relationship. I noticed someone else saying that it was unnecessary, but I disagree. In a women-only culture, where men are objects to use and throw away, why should the women not understand love? I think it was a natural product of their society, and was happy with the way it was represented.

All in all I'm glad I read it, and it didn't bore me. It was a nice, quick little read.
