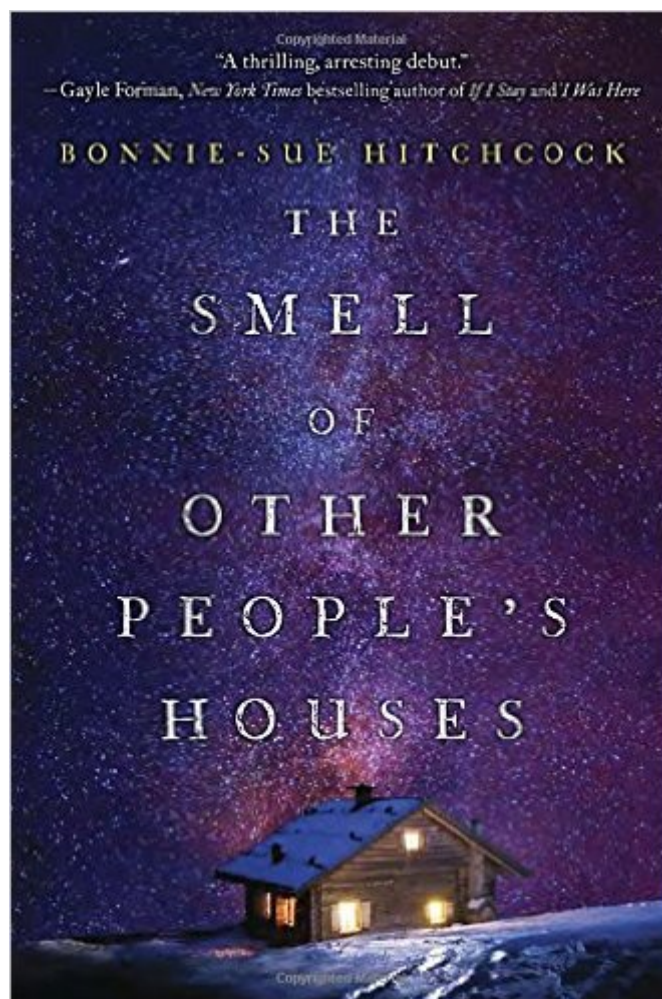


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The Smell Of Other People's Houses



Synopsis

• Bonnie-Sue Hitchcock's Alaska is beautiful and wholly unfamiliar. A thrilling, arresting debut. • Gayle Forman, New York Times bestselling author of *If I Stay* and *I Was Here* [A] singular debut. . . . [Hitchcock] weav[es] the alternating voices of four young people into a seamless and continually surprising story of risk, love, redemption, catastrophe, and sacrifice. • "The Wall Street Journal" This deeply moving and authentic debut set in 1970s Alaska is for fans of Rainbow Rowell, Louise Erdrich, Sherman Alexie, and Benjamin Alire Saenz. Intertwining stories of love, tragedy, wild luck, and salvation on the edge of America's Last Frontier introduce a writer of rare talent. Ruth has a secret that she can't hide forever. Dora wonders if she can ever truly escape where she comes from, even when good luck strikes. Alyce is trying to reconcile her desire to dance, with the life she's always known on her family's fishing boat. Hank and his brothers decide it's safer to run away than to stay home until one of them ends up in terrible danger. Four very different lives are about to become entangled. This unforgettable book is about people who try to save each other and how sometimes, when they least expect it, they succeed. • Hitchcock's debut resonates with the timeless quality of a classic. This is a fascinating character study—a poetic interweaving of rural isolation and coming-of-age. • John Corey Whaley, award-winning author of *Where Things Come Back* and *Highly Illogical Behavior* As an Alaskan herself, Bonnie Sue Hitchcock is able to bring alive this town, and this group of poor teens and their families that live there. • Bustle.com

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Growing up in the nineteen-seventies in Alaska isn't always easy. After Ruth's father passes away her mother can't take care of her and her sister any longer. They have to move in with their grandma. In her house everything is clean and organized, she's strict and for Ruth the house doesn't smell like a home. When Ruth makes a mistake she has to carry around a big secret all of a sudden, something that will change her life forever. Dora might have had some luck financially, but when it comes to family she isn't lucky at all. She prefers staying with her friend Dumppling who does have loving parents. When something happens to Dumppling and things escalate at home Dora has to stand up for herself like she's never done before. Alyce wants to dance professionally, but the auditions for further education are during the summer and that is when she works on her father's boat. She doesn't dare to tell him about her hopes for the future as she's afraid she will let him down. She rescues a boy from the water and he rewards her with something she could only have dreamed of before. Hank's home situation is awful and he decides that he and his two brothers will leave as soon as they can. They don't have any money, so they travel as stowaways on a boat. When Hank loses one of his brothers on the water he finds out he isn't as grownup as he thought he was and realizes he needs help. The main characters in *The Smell of Other People's Houses* are all connected. Their stories don't always overlap, but they do have things in common and it was interesting to find out what those things were or would be. I immediately loved all of the main characters. They're normal teenagers who are struggling with life like everyone else.

Ah, I have wanted to read this book since it was a title on Goodreads with not even a synopsis. Because the title. Sorry, but anything with that magnificent of a title has to be a win, right? Right. And then along came a cover and synopsis, and have you seen those? Also magical. I was intrigued from the start, because Alaska. Also, it wasn't present-day Alaska. It was Alaska in 1970, and I had no idea what that would be like. So, curiosity had me hooked, and then the book definitely delivered. The story is told through four young people who lived in this setting, and while at first it seems they have nothing in common, their lives begin to intersect. I learned quite a lot about Alaska and the time period in this book. First, Alaska is just a world unto itself. I suppose being so isolated and having a completely different climate than the rest of the country will do that. Plus, at the time

the book is set, theyâ™ve only been a state for eleven years- and not all the residents are happy about their statehood. Life is not easy in Alaska, especially for our characters. Some have it easier than others, but really no oneâ™s life is unicorns and rainbows. Thereâ™s rampant poverty, which leads to absent parents, ill-equipped parents, clueless parents, abusive parent, and yes, some really amazing parents. Thatâ™s one of the things I loved most about this book. Itâ™s not generalized, thereâ™s a clear indication that a personâ™s circumstances donâ™t have to define them. I loved the characters, too. Even though we donâ™t get to know them all in huge depth and detail, their development is clear. And as the story progresses, it becomes incredibly apparent that people are not always what they seem.

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