

The View From Heaven to Earth

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold

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By Jackie

In teen years most people imagine what their life is going to turn out to be, who they are going to marry or how many kids they are going to have. But not Susie, she never thought that at the age 14 she would be in heaven looking down at the world she left behind. Alice Sebold's novel *The Lovely Bones* is about 14 year old, Susie Salmon, who holds dreams of growing up and being a wildlife photographer. She lived a normal life surrounded by her caring family and the one that she loved, Ray Singh. Just as Susie is getting what she wants in life, it is taken from her. On December 6, 1973, Mr. Harvey, a man in the neighborhood, leads her into a dark tunnel in the ground of the cornfield. Little does she know this is the end.

Susie has a hard time watching over her family, and most importantly her killer and watching him get away. The Salmon family has a difficult time coping with the thought that their daughter will never walk through the front door again. Watching her family so melancholy she deals with the regret that she should have never followed Mr. Harvey into the deep hole of the cornfield. As Susie watches her family grow older, she realizes that the best thing for them to do is leave her in their memories.

The "bones" that are referred to in the title represent the relations her loved ones make after her death. "These were the lovely bones that had grown around my

absence: the connections—sometimes tenuous, sometimes made at great cost, but often magnificent—that happened after I was gone.” While reading *The Lovely Bones* one does not understand what “lovely bones” really are until you read this quote. It shows all the relationships that grew after Susie’s death and leaves the reader with a whole new perspective of what all the events portraying Susie’s death truly indicate. It displays how important family sincerely is and how much of an impact they leave on your life.

Sebold wrote *The Lovely Bones* in a one of a kind way. She went back and forth between characters and their plot line which made her writing confusing. Even though she did this on purpose it felt like it just slowed down the book and left you wondering what happened in the previous scene.

Although Sebold’s writing was very slow paced, she did a superb job applying detail to the character’s feelings and how they handled Susie’s death. Susie and her father Jack had a special connection and shared the hobby of building toy boats; this scene in the novel portrays his emotions well: “Then there was the one that had burst into flames in the week before my death. He smashed that one first. My heart seized up. He turned and saw all the others all the years they marked and the hands that held them. His dead father’s, his dead child’s. I watched him as he smashed the rest.” Alice Sebold is striking the reader with Jack’s reaction to his daughter murder. Sebold’s use of imagery made *The Lovely Bones* easy to read and interesting to imagine what it was like as a father to live with your daughters murder.

Alice Sebold, is also the author of her memoir *Lucky* which is about her horrific

experience of being raped in a tunnel while walking back to her college dorm room.

Sebold has written three novels all having to do with the tragic topic of murder. In an interview with *Publishers Weekly* Sebold said, "I was motivated to write about violence because I believe it's not unusual. I see it as just a part of life, and I think we get in trouble when we separate people who've experienced it from those who haven't. Though it's a horrible experience, it's not as if violence hasn't affected many of us."

Sebold's novel *The Lovely Bones* was later developed into a movie. Sebold has continuously written about terror, and how it affects your own life and the people around you.

Romance, mystery, and grief are all major subjects in the novel. High school students will most likely find these topics very appealing because in high school, love is a major thing students may experience and how to deal with broken relationships. Like many other teenagers Susie is in love. By Susie dying it shows her how important family truly is. Many students do not appreciate the people around them, and this read may just teach them that.