

# SALEM FALLS 1ST EDITION Read Free



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ISBN: 9780743418713

There he finds She received a degree in creative writing from Princeton University in and a master's degree in education from Harvard University. She published two short stories in Seventeen magazine while still in college. Immediately after graduation, she landed a variety of jobs, ranging from editing textbooks to teaching eighth-grade English. Her first book, *Songs of the Humpback Whale*, was published in *My Sister's Keeper* was made into a movie starring Cameron Diaz. Gilly could not get Jack out of her mind.

She relived the moment outside the diner a hundred times, playing different scenarios like a slide show— things she should have said and done instead, images of Jack grabbing her and kissing her so hard her lips bled. Now she was drowning her sorrows in the emotional angst of Sarah

McLachlan and painting her fingernails blood—red, when the phone rang. Gillian sighed. Her coven had made plans to meet in the woods behind the cemetery, at the base of the flowering dogwood tree. Meg was bringing Georgia fatwood to light a bonfire; Whit had been given the task of sewing herb sachets to hang on the tree as gifts to the God and Goddess, and Chelsea was going to figure out some kind of maypole. They attacked him from behind.

Jack had no sooner stepped out of the small halo of light cast by the lantern hanging beside the door than he was grabbed, his arms pinned behind him while fists slammed into his ribs, his belly, his face. Blood ran down his throat, tinny; he spat it back at them. He struggled to find their faces, to mark them in his mind, but they were wearing stocking caps pulled low and scarves tugged high; all Jack could see was an ocean of black, a series of hands, and wave after wave of their anger. Addie brushed out her hair, then sprayed perfume onto her wrists and knees and navel. Jack had been gone a while, which was strange; even stranger, she could hear an occasional crash.

She stepped to the bedroom window and pulled back the Swiss organdy curtain. Then a foot appeared in the yellow periphery cast by the porch light. An elbow. Finally, the entire body of a man, dressed in black, his hands bright with blood. She had used it once in twenty years—to shoot a rabid coon that had wandered into the yard where Chloe was playing. She loaded it on the run, hurrying downstairs, and threw open the front door to fire once into the night sky. Five faces turned, then ran off in disparate directions into the woods behind her house, tracks spreading like the spokes of a wheel. He coughed, his lips pulling back to show teeth shiny with blood. But his voice rose, until it was an umbrella over Salem Falls, until people on the far side of town had to close their windows to the sweet night air just to block off the sound of his pain.

Jack woke to find Addie curled beside him, her hand clutching a washcloth that was spreading a water stain over the comforter in the shape of a bell. He came up on one elbow, wincing at the ache of his ribs, and touched the side of her face. Thanks to Addie, Jack no longer spent time reviewing his mistakes. He had put them into a box, and shut the lid tight. Addie, though... she sorted through the box daily, holding up each memory to the light like an heirloom, even though it made her bleed inside. Within minutes, he had stripped the bed of its sheets and covers, removed the posters from the walls.

Do that you think I have to look at a... a hair clip to remember the person I love the most in the world? She turned her face to his. He watched her fold herself into the pool of linens, her spine rounding. Of Chloe. Her hands made fists in the fabric. Once, on a Girl Scout campout, Gillian had built a fire. She had been mesmerized by its greed, by the way it devoured everything in its path. I have one of these inside of me. She stood holding hands with the others around it. But they were no longer Gillian, Chelsea, Whitney, and Meg. Goddesses all, they were a coven. And she was their High Priestess. It was her only covering; her clothes lay in a pile by the dogwood. But Whitney had whipped off her shirt.

Chelsea shivered in her bra and panties. Only Meg, self—conscious, was fully dressed. Gilly met the eyes of each of the others. Did they feel it? Never had her body buzzed like this. She tilted her head back, casting her voice into the night sky. The words wrote themselves, drawn from her heart like a ribbon. Bring us imagination; teach us to dance. Blessed be. Whitney turned, her face glowing. Share your heat with us, make us burn inside. Blessed be! Let your mystery flow over us. Finally, Meg spoke. Bury us deep in your soil, give us the power of earth and stone. Gillian knelt before the altar and touched the incense burner, the water, the earth, and then sliced her hand through the flames of the bonfire. As I will it, so mote it be.

She walked to the tree beside the dogwood, a pillar of a pine. God knows how, but Chelsea had managed to affix long streamers of ribbon from a branch nine feet off the ground. Gilly picked up a silver ribbon, and smoothed it between her breasts, over her belly and thigh. She arched her back, and the other girls were transfixed—channeling a spirit was one thing, but here Gilly was shifting shape, turning into a siren as if she had done this a hundred times before. Jack wiped the back of his mouth with his hand, but it took him three tries before he could connect. The Empty House Rosamunde Pilcher. Please email webmaster fantasticfiction. Now, at the center of a modern-day witch hunt, Jack is forced once again to proclaim his innocence: to a town searching for answers, to a justice system where truth becomes a slippery concept written in shades of gray, and to the woman who has come to love him.

He bought some at a grocer's shop, And out he came, hop, hop, hop! Then up Jack got and off did trot, As fast as he could caper, To old Dame Dob, who patched his nob With vinegar and brown paper. I mean, gosh, you arrested a man joyriding on a lawn mower. Surely they'll give you a Purple Heart or something for going to such extremes to ensure public safety. I was ensuring safety.

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