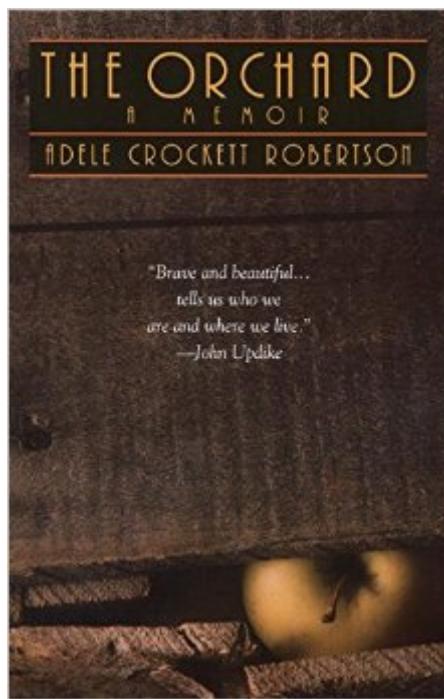


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The Orchard: A Memoir



Synopsis

The Orchard is an exquisitely beautiful and poignant memoir of a young woman's single-handed struggle to save her New England farm in the depths of the Great Depression. Recently discovered by the author's daughter, it tells the story of Adele "Kitty" Robertson, young and energetic, but unprepared by her Radcliffe education for the rigors of apple farming in those bitter times. Alone at the end of a country road, with only a Great Dane for company, plagued by debts, broken machinery, and killing frosts, Kitty revives the old orchard after years of neglect. Every day is a struggle, but every day she is also rewarded by the beauty of the world and the unexpected kindness of neighbors and hired workers. Animated by quiet courage and simple goodness, The Orchard stands as a deeply moving celebration of decency and beauty in the midst of grim prospects and crushing poverty.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this extraordinary memoir from 1932-1934, Kitty Crockett Robertson describes her life on the North Shore of Massachusetts during the Depression, a time when she, a Harvard graduate, became a hard-working apple farmer to save the family farm in Ipswich. Her physician father had died, and Kitty, wanting to keep the farm from being sold for development, which her Boston-based brothers favored, decided to give up her job working at the Harvard Library to try to make the orchard profitable enough to save the land. Working almost single-handedly, she spent the next two years doing all the dirty work, learning in the process that "The Depression was that time of leveling when she and her neighbors kept going on the strength they learned from each other." From her

earliest days on the farm, she personally pruned trees, cleared land, repaired sprayers and tractors, gathered swarming bees into hives, hired five workers at twice the going rate (because they, too, needed to make ends meet), dealt with an arrogant banker anxious to foreclose, protected her apples at gunpoint when necessary, and then fought the weather, storms, and a December temperature drop to twenty degrees below zero in her efforts to bring the crop to market. In the process she earned the love of her workers (who had regarded her, at first, as an idle "North Shore millionaire"), gave up everything in her personal life to devote herself completely to her task, worked up to 16 hours a day for two years during the apple and peach seasons, and gained new appreciation for the values she saw every day among her workers, the wholesaler who bought her drops and cider apples, and the purchasing agent of Harvard, who helped her make commercial connections to sell her crop.

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