

A Thousand Acres: A Novel

By Jane Smiley

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This powerful twentieth-century reimagining of Shakespeare's *King Lear* centers on a wealthy Iowa farmer who decides to divide his farm between his three daughters. When the youngest objects, she is cut out of his will. This sets off a chain of events that brings dark truths to light and explodes long-suppressed emotions. Ambitiously conceived and stunningly written, *A Thousand Acres* takes on themes of truth, justice, love, and pride—and reveals the beautiful yet treacherous topography of humanity.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review
Aging Larry Cook announces his intention to turn over his 1,000-acre farm--one of the largest in Zebulon County, Iowa--to his three daughters, Caroline, Ginny and Rose. A man of harsh sensibilities, he carves Caroline out of the deal because she has the nerve to be less than enthusiastic about her father's generosity. While Larry Cook deteriorates into a pathetic drunk, his daughters are left to cope with the often grim realities of life on a family farm--from battering husbands to cutthroat lenders. In this winner of the 1991 National Book Critics Circle Award for Fiction, Smiley captures the essence of such a life with stark, painful detail.

From Publishers Weekly
Winner of the Pulitzer Prize and the NBCC Award for fiction, a BOMC dual main selection and a five-week PW bestseller in cloth, Smiley's novel of family life on an insular Iowa farm raises profound questions about human conduct and moral responsibility.
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From Library Journal
This important new novel by the author of Ordinary Love and Good Will (LJ 9/15/89) and The Greenlanders (LJ 4/15/88) is, first of all, a farm novel. Smiley lovingly creates an idyllic world of family farm life in Iowa in 1979: the neat yard, freshly painted house, clean clothes on the line, and fertile, well-tended fields. The owner of these well-managed acres is Larry Cook, who abruptly decides to turn the farm over to his two eldest daughters and their husbands. Ginny and Ty are hard-working farmers who try to placate her ornery father, while sister Rose and hard-drinking Pete try to stand up to him. Dark secrets surface after the property transfer, and the family's careful world unravels with a grim inevitability reminiscent of Smiley's splendid novella Good Will . Not to be missed. BOMC main selection.
- Ann H. Fisher, Radford P.L., Va.
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