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# A Lantern In Her Hand (Puffin Classics)



## Synopsis

The classic story of Abbie and Will Deal—pioneers who left everything behind for a new life on America's frontier. Abbie Mackenzie dreamed of becoming a fine lady like her aristocratic grandmother, devoting herself to music and art. But at eighteen Abbie found a different dream, turning away from the promise of a comfortable life as a doctor's wife to marry handsome, quiet Will Deal. Together, they eagerly accepted the challenge of homesteading in Nebraska territory, where the prairies stretched as far as the eye could see, and only the strongest survived for long. For nearly 90 years, readers have cherished Abbie's story—an inspiring story of struggle against unexpected perils, of love and laughter, of the land she helped conquer and the family she raised.

## Book Information

Series: Puffin Classics

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (April 1, 1997)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140384286

ISBN-13: 978-0140384284

Product Dimensions: 4.4 x 0.7 x 7.1 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 146 customer reviews

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## Customer Reviews

“Piercingly beautiful. . . . Aldrich's pioneer woman was based on her mother, and the integrity of her depiction of life in a sod house in the late nineteenth-century Nebraska speaks to her readers. . . . In her own introduction Aldrich writes of wanting to tell her mother's story after her mother's death: “Other writers had depicted the Midwest's early days, but so often they had pictured their women as gaunt, browbeaten creatures, despairing women whom life seemed to defeat. That was not my mother. Not with her courage, her humor, her nature that would cause her to say at the end of her life: “We had the best time in the world.”“  
•Belles Lettres “The language is good and sturdy and

dotted with imaginative metaphors and similes (‘‘Silence, so deep, that it roared in its vast vacuum’’). If the book tries to crowd too much life into 300 pages, well, there was a lot of life: ‘‘We old pioneers,’’ Abbie says at the end, ‘‘we dreamed dreams into the country.’’ •Milwaukee Journal

When *A Lantern in Her Hand* came out in 1928, critics took little notice, but people everywhere soon discovered it. By the end of 1919, even as the Great Depression set in, Bess Streeter Aldrich’s novel was in its twenty-first printing. Now translated into over twenty languages, *A Lantern in Her Hand* has outlasted literary fashions to touch generations of readers. It is the classic story of a pioneer woman. Bess Streeter Aldrich knew what she was writing about. Her protagonist, a strong-minded pioneer woman named Abbie Deal, was modeled on her own mother, who in 1854 had traveled by covered wagon to the Midwest. In *A Lantern in Her Hand*, Abbie accompanies her family to the soon-to-be state of Nebraska. There, in 1865, she marries and settles into a sod house of her own. The novel describes Abbie’s years of child-raising, of making a frontier home able to withstand every adversity. A disciplined writer knowledgeable about true stories of pioneer days in Nebraska, Bess Streeter Aldrich conveys the strength of everyday things, the surprise of familiar faces, and the look of the unspoiled landscape during different seasons. Refusing to be broken by hard experience, Abbie sets a joyful example for her family - and for her readers. This Bison Book edition includes Bess Streeter Aldrich’s own story of how she came to write *A Lantern in Her Hand*. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I have read this book many times. Other reviewers have stated the plot but I just wanted to say how this book makes me feel after reading it. I feel like it validates my simple life. Even though the character’s story takes place well over 100 years ago, the themes and topics are timeless. By the end of it I’m usually crying because it makes me happy. She makes decisions and has to live with the consequences. I think it points out very well however that the consequences of our choices help us to grow into amazing people if we simply work hard at life and at being a good person. I loved how it showed that sometimes she would regret her choices but only for a moment and then she would move on. This book actually keeps me very grounded. It is a must read if you are a mother, a wife, a daughter or just a nice human being.

I read this book fifty years ago and it was my favorite book from my childhood. The author’s description of the events of Abbie’s life is rich and vivid. The hardship of prairie life, her deep love

for her husband and his dreams that led her there in the first place, the empty sorrow of losing a child and lying in bed and hearing the wagon take his little body away, giving up her dreams to be a singer in the city and then the joy and abandon with which she later sings on the prairie, her large family and the detailed differences and nuances of each child... All is told with attention to authentic detail. I remember this book very well. I never knew there was a sequel until I found it recently in an antique store. I bought it and will begin it tonight. *A Lantern in her Hand* made such an indelible impression that I do not even need to read it again to refresh my memory. It was half a century ago and I still remember it well.

This is a wonderful sensitive story about a lovely person named Abbie Deal. The author takes you from Abbie's tender age of 12 to the final years of her life. If you want a glimpse into the past of at least a century or more ago to see the guts, determination and resolve for this plucky woman to help her devoted husband carve a home in the untamed land of Nebraska, this is the book to read. Follow Abbie and her husband, Will, as they leave Illinois by schooner for Nebraska and silently watch as they turn the first spade of earth to begin their lives together to the last spade that is used to turn the earth to bury Abbie. Ms. Aldrich, the author, vividly describes the grit it took for a pioneer couple to battle the elements - sand storms, too much rain-too little rain, grasshoppers swarming and destroying crops, blizzards with drifts of snow as high as the eaves and killing their livestock (a source of income) to raising a family and injecting the sense to achieve in her children and to pass along a foundation of values. This story touched me personally as my own parents homesteaded in eastern Colorado at the beginning of the last century. I also experienced some of the same wretched conditions as Abbie and her husband, Will, that of the dust storms of the 30s, year after year of no rain, as well as the plague of grasshoppers destroying everything in sight. Though this story may be fictional, I will long remember Abbie Deal with empathy for what she endured, because I know there were many people who actually blazed those trails to settle this country with blood, sweat and tears. .

Bess Streeter Aldrich has given us a delightful Pioneer story about the life of Abbie Deal. Her storyline is filled with the trials and joys of a woman that would rather do something for her family then fulfill her own dreams of singing, painting, or writing. Her 80 years were filled with both hardships and happiness as she was a part of the development of her adopted state of Nebraska. You that are not familiar with the Pioneers that came to Nebraska early on will enjoy and be amazed at all they went through during those early years. I especially liked the tenderness shown by the

author as Abbie aged, and how the youngest grandchild seemed to understand her the best. Even though this book was published in 1928 I'm certain that you will find it to be a rewarding experience. Read and enjoy!

I first read this book as a young girl over 50 years ago, and was so excited to find it again! It did not disappoint. I still felt the same kindred soul connection to Abbie Deal as I did the first time I read it. Even more so, now that I am an old woman looking back over my life; realizing, as Abby does, that there is never enough time to do all the things you thought you'd do because life has a habit of getting in the way. If you like reading about the pioneers who built our country, you'll probably love this book as much as I do!

Told by a woman who was willing to follow her husband from the comfort of civilization to the unknown and isolated life in the Great Plains of Nebraska in the 1800s. This book was for me a spiritual journey of heartache and hope. It is a telling of the lives of my ancestors who moved from Pennsylvania to Nebraska hoping for a new life and prosperity. Young moderns, and not so young, would benefit knowing how this great land was settled. The book is a testament to the American spirit and faith.

This book is an old favorite of mine and I was thrilled to see it on Kindle. Unfortunately, the formatting puts only a few words on each line which makes it hard to read smoothly and leads to a lot of page turning! I would recommend the book to anyone interested in the settling of the Midwest though!

This is another title I read as a kid. My 5th or 6th grade teacher recommended it for summer reading. I must have read it a dozen times. I still have my old copy, but it's so fragile, I was afraid it would fall apart if I tried reading it again, so when I saw it was available on , I ordered it right away. I still liked it as much as I did when I was a kid. My teacher was right.

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