

The Things I Know Best: A Novel



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Haunting memories, a love affair, and a tragic secret -- welcome to Pleasant Cross, North Carolina, home to generations of the Ivy family. Admittedly headstrong, each of the Ivy women is blessed -- and cursed -- with a gift of Knowing. Great-grandmother Lodie could call the evil spirits out of a person, while Big Lucille was known to associate with ghosts. Grandma Pinot interprets the sky, Mama Bertie helps out at Lynch's Mortuary with her portents of upcoming passings, and daughter Liddy can tell who folks will marry by looking at their hands. But it's Liddy's twin sister, Tessa, and her discovery of her own special gift that frames this extraordinary tale of women, strength, and family history. During the summer of the twins' eighteenth year, Aunt Doris's prediction comes to pass: out of all the Ivy women, Tessa's gift will be the most potent. One look in her own glass shows Tessa visions of Liddy with a suitcase, Mama and Reverend Lawson, and Old Man Jenkins's face sneering up through her tea eaves. When Reverend Moses Renfrow and his son, Sterling, roll into town in their pickup truck and silver Airstream trailer, the rains follow and Grandma's words hold true: "Storms and love always squeeze out the secrets." As the layers of the past unfold, a tragic story is revealed, teaching Tessa and the rest of the Ivens the meaning and power of faith, kinship, and love.

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目录:

[The Things I Know Best: A Novel 下载链接1](#)

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