



Ten Thousand Saints: A Novel

By Eleanor Henderson

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“Eleanor Henderson is in possession of an enormous talent which she has matched up with skill, ambition, and a fierce imagination. The resulting novel, *Ten Thousand Saints*, is the best thing I’ve read in a long time.”

—Ann Patchett, bestselling author of *Bel Canto* and *State of Wonder*

A sweeping, multigenerational drama, set against the backdrop of the raw, roaring New York City during the late 1980s, *Ten Thousand Saints* triumphantly heralds the arrival a remarkable new writer. Eleanor Henderson makes a truly stunning debut with a novel that is part coming of age, part coming to terms, immediately joining the ranks of *The Emperor’s Children* by Claire Messud and Jonathan Lethem’s *The Fortress of Solitude*. Adoption, teen pregnancy, drugs, hardcore punk rock, the unbridled optimism and reckless stupidity of the young—and old—are all major elements in this heart-aching tale of the son of diehard hippies and his strange odyssey through the extremes of late 20th century youth culture.

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Ten Thousand Saints: A Novel By Eleanor Henderson Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Amazon Best Books of the Month, June 2011: Mostly set in the Lower East Side of 1980s New York City, *Ten Thousand Saints* is that rare book that paints scenes so vividly you can imagine the movie in your head. I wanted to live inside its pages, where I could imagine not just the scenes themselves, but the cameras, the lights, the actors reading their lines off to the sides of the set. Main character Jude Keffy-Horn--named after a Beatles song by his adoptive hippy parents--spends his high school days in small town Vermont getting high with his best friend Teddy, waiting to turn 16, when he can legally drop out. When Teddy dies of an overdose on the last day of 1987, Jude is sent to live with his pot-dealer father in New York City. Jude soon falls in with a group of straight edge Hari Krishnas, where his commitment to abstinence in all forms--drugs, sex, meat--becomes an addiction itself. Jude struggles to create an identity amongst the extreme movements taking root downtown, while his parents struggle to understand their son's rejection of their free love culture. Author Eleanor Henderson's meticulous research into the straight edge movement in the late 1980s has opened a door to a piece of history handled with love, care, and incredibly unforgettable characters.

--Alexandra Foster

From Publishers Weekly

Henderson debuts with a coming-of-age story set in the 1980s that departs from the genre's familiar tropes to find a panoramic view of how the imperfect escape from our parents' mistakes makes (equally imperfect) adults of us. Jude Keffy-Horn and Teddy McNicholas are drug-addled adolescents stuck in suburban Vermont and dreaming of an escape to New York City. But after Teddy dies of an overdose, Jude makes good on their dream and forms a de facto family with Teddy's straight-edge brother, Johnny; Jude's estranged pot-farmer father, Lester; and the troubled Eliza Urbanski, who may be carrying Teddy's child. What results is an odyssey encompassing the age of CBGB, Hare Krishnas, zines, and the emergence of AIDS. Henderson is careful, amid all this youthful nostalgia, not to sideline the adults, who look upon the changing fashions with varying levels of engagement. Still, the narrative occasionally teeters into a didactic, researched tone that may put off readers to whom the milieu isn't new-but the commitment to its characters and jettisoning of hayseed-in-the-city cliché distinguish a nervy voice adept at etching the outlines of a generation, its prejudices and pandemics, and the idols killed along the way. (June)

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Review

"Henderson does not hold back once: she writes the hell out of every moment, every scene, every perspective, every fleeting impression, every impulse and desire.... She is never ironic or underwhelmed; her preferred mode is fierce, devoted and elegiac." (Stacy D'Erasmus, New York Times Book Review, Cover Review)

"One of the Book Review's 10 Best Books of 2011...[A] raucous first novel!" (New York Times Book Review, Paperback Row)

"Rarely has a coming-of-age novel captured a time and place--here the late 1980s on Manhattan's Lower East Side--with such perfect pitch. Grade: A" (Entertainment Weekly)

"[Henderson] has a perfect ear for conversation between siblings; the way a lazy spat can turn into a

grudging moment of closeness. And the euphoria of the straight edge movement that Jude and Johnny embrace suffuses the novel with a reckless, glib joy...a bittersweet, lovely book.” (NPR.org)

“The best and most lyrically written coming-of-age novel of the year.” (The Daily Beast/Newsweek Writers' Best Books of 2011)

“[A] rare debut that, with a flinty kind of nostalgia, invokes both the gods and demons of a generation.” (Vogue)

“An irresistibly rich and engrossing novel...poignant, complex...Henderson brilliantly evokes the gritty energy of New York City in the '80s, and the violent euphoria of the music scene. The hard-edged settings highlight the touching vulnerability of young characters.” (O magazine, Best Fiction 2011)

“Highbrow/Brilliant: All the all-star sentences in Eleanor Henderson's punk-rock-teen novel *Ten Thousand Saints*.” (New York Magazine Approval Matrix)

“*Ten Thousand Saints* is a whirling dervish of a first novel—a planet, a universe, a trip. As wild as that may sound, wonder of wonders, the book is also carefully and lovingly created... [Henderson] writes with great compassion but does not flinch” (Los Angeles Times)

“[The] reader smells the sweat, blood, urine, beer; hears the crowds screaming; feels herself at times flung into the mosh pit - Henderson shepherds her characters with blatant affection...raucous, wounded, sweet, spasmodically desperate, [*Saints*] comes to feel like a modern, drug-and-rock-riddled version of Peter Pan...” (San Francisco Chronicle)

“Henderson's debut novel bursts out of the gate with all of the drive and sensory assault of the punk music that infuses it.... It's an auspicious debut, and gives us reason to hope that Henderson will mature as satisfyingly as her subjects do.” (Boston Globe)

“[An] empathetic novel of wayward youth and their wayward parents...Henderson proves herself to be an expert ethnographer; her detail work is phenomenal...characterizations demonstrate Henderson's greatest skill. Even the ones who receive comparatively little stage time are always precisely defined... Henderson's affection for [the characters] is palpable.” (Washington Post)

“Absorbing...Tone is just one element Henderson balances well.... She also packs her coming-of-age story with grit and a generational wallop.... In this naturalistic and assured novel, Henderson crafts a satisfying structure...psychological astuteness is a key pleasure of *Ten Thousand Saints*.” (Cleveland Plain Dealer)

“In *Ten Thousand Saints*, Eleanor Henderson's debut novel, the ghosts of St. Marks are brought back to life...Henderson's book reads in part like an elegy: she follows her characters from 1987 to 2006, long enough to capture the end of the era and its strange aftermath.” (New Yorker Book Bench Blog)

“Proudly unsentimental...Henderson zeroes in on the essentially malleable nature of these teenagers without squashing them into an indistinguishable mass..., Henderson parcels out its history in tantalizing images and snatches of conversations, holding back where her protagonists might themselves miss the significance of their surroundings.” (The Onion AV Club)

“Henderson's novel recalls all the sweat and fury of coming of age. . . It's also a beautifully rendered study of devotion-to a cause, a religion, a scene, and one's own family-and all the conflict and sacrifice that

devotion entails.” (The Millions)

“I loved TEN THOUSAND SAINTS; again and again I was stopped cold by beautiful chapter-ending sentences. I remember this Manhattan, the Sunday matinees at CB’s, the rage over Yuppies colonizing the East Village. ” (Dean Wareham, lead singer of Galaxie 500 and Luna, author of BLACK POSTCARDS)

“Eleanor Henderson is in possession of an enormous talent which she has matched up with skill, ambition, and a fierce imagination. The resulting novel, TEN THOUSAND SAINTS, is the best thing I’ve read in a long time. “ (Ann Patchett, bestselling author of Bel Canto and State of Wonder)

“Countless coming-of-age novels have been written. When a truly exceptional story of this nature does come along, it’s a significant literary event... Ten Thousand Saints is memorable for its boldness and ambition, its empathetic prose, and the troubled souls who discover unlikely forms of redemption.” (Dallas Morning News)

“TEN THOUSAND SAINTS is funny, touching, artistic, surprising, lovely, eye-opening, and very, very wise.” (Arthur Phillips, author of PRAGUE and THE TRAGEDY OF ARTHUR)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Sandra Castillo:

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Carrie Mathis:

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Arthur Faust:

Ten Thousand Saints: A Novel can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. Most of us recommend that straight away because this book has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in vocab, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nevertheless delivering the information. The writer giving his/her effort to set every word into delight arrangement in writing Ten Thousand Saints: A Novel but doesn't forget the main place, giving the reader the hottest in addition to based confirm resource information that maybe you can be certainly one of it. This great information can certainly drawn you into brand-new

stage of crucial imagining.

Peter Landon:

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