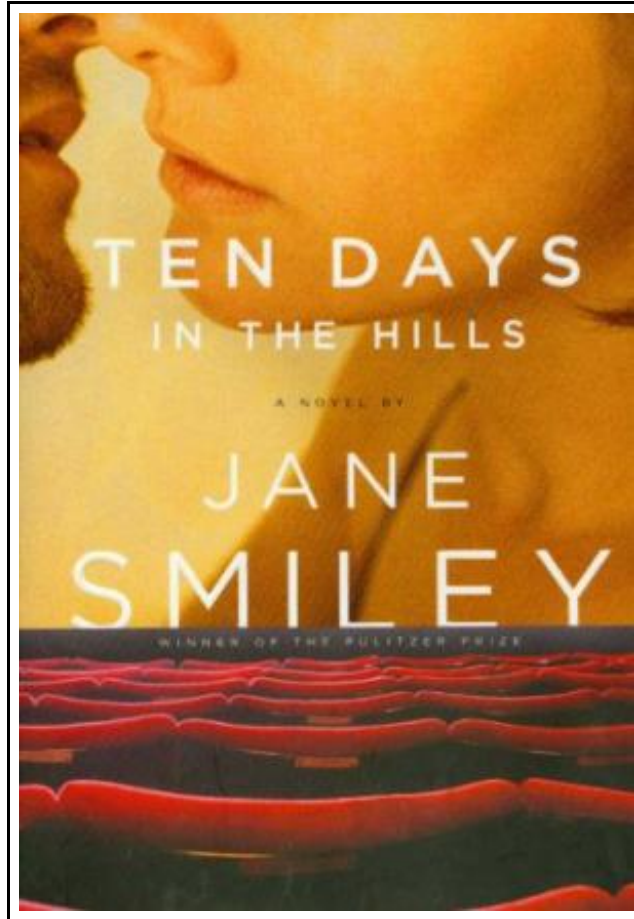


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Reviews

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(Breanna Kerluke)

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Knopf, 2007. Book Condition: New. Brand New, Unread Copy in Perfect Condition. A+ Customer Service! Summary: "The reigning master of social satire pens a wicked and heartfelt portrait of stars, semicelebrities, and sybarit[es] . . . The beauty of Smiley's garrulous new novel is that it sublimates polemics in a breezy narrative upon which she has liberally bestowed her trademark gifts: deft characterization, uncanny psychological naturalism, polymathic curiosity, and an astonishing ability to inhabit a given milieu as if it's been bred in her very bones (in this case, the Hollywood Hills). Smiley models her tale on Boccaccio's *Decameron* only instead of waiting out the bubonic plague at an Italian villa, her 10 storytellers gather during the opening days of the Iraq war . . . What ensues? Robust, Boccaccian sex. (Jane! Who knew?) Gourmet food. Jokes. Hollywood lore. Imaginary movies. Endless musings about theology, books, art, life. And a Fellini-esque denouement at a Russian robber baron's world-class estate nearby. Are the digressions and bedroom farces merely passing hallucinations, or are they, like iron filings, indiscernibly organizing themselves around some principle whose emergence we await with often euphoric anticipation? You find out: It's worth the trip." Ben Dickinson, *Elle* magazine, lead review "Smiley has a gift for entwining eroticism with humanism and sparkling wit to form deliciously complex and slyly satirical fiction. And what opulent realms she loots: academia, horse racing, real estate, and now Hollywood. Here Smiley crafts dialogue every bit as provocative as her detailed sex scenes, and, once again, makes ingenious use of a literary antecedent, this time using as a template Boccaccio's *Decameron*. While Boccaccio's group of 10 women and men hope to escape the Black Death by sequestering themselves for 10 days in a villa outside Florence, Smiley quarantines her characters in a mansion high in the hills of Hollywood...

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