



Forgive me, Father: for I have sinned

Louise S. Appell

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This is a story about four generations of French-Canadians living in Northampton, Massachusetts in 1937. The country is still in the throes of the Great Depression. Living together, sharing chores, following old traditions, they are facing a major change as the elderly matriarch of the family is slowly dying. The turmoil that often accompanies inheritance issues grips them. Tensions between the oldest son and the youngest son about the disposition of property after Maman's death erupt in violence and tragedy. The younger daughter, a widow, lives at home, works in a hosiery factory and enjoys amorous adventures with traveling salesmen. One of those relationships brings an unexpected twist to the story. The tale is enriched by details of French-Canadian culture, Catholic Church rituals and the atmosphere of the period just before World War II. Although many people struggled to find jobs during that period, the majority carried on, adjusted their living accommodations, shared their resources and lived their lives in the same way people before them met adversity. They endured. These are complex characters, full of contradiction, passionate in their commitments, poignant in their grief. Readers will recognize them in their own families and remember Charlie, Oscar, Tillie and Clara long after they turn the last page.



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