



Is This Tomorrow

Caroline Leavitt

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In 1956, when divorced, working-mom Ava Lark rents a house with her twelve-year-old son, Lewis, in a Boston suburb, the neighborhood is less than welcoming. Lewis yearns for his absent father, befriending the only other fatherless kids: Jimmy and Rose. One afternoon, Jimmy goes missing. The neighborhood in the era of the Cold War, bomb scares, and paranoia seizes the opportunity to further ostracize Ava and her son. Lewis never recovers from the disappearance of his childhood friend. By the time he reaches his twenties, he's living a directionless life, a failure in love, estranged from his mother. Rose is now a schoolteacher in another city, watching over children as she was never able to watch over her own brother. Ava is building a new life for herself in a new decade. When the mystery of Jimmy's disappearance is unexpectedly solved, all three must try to reclaim what they have lost.

Is This Tomorrow Details

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Author : Caroline Leavitt

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From Reader Review Is This Tomorrow for online ebook

Dem says

Is This Tomorrow by Caroline Leavitt is a captivating and beautiful written suspense novel and I really enjoyed every chapter of this book.

In 1956, Ava Lark rents a house with her twelve-year-old son, Lewis, in a desirable Boston suburb. Ava is beautiful, divorced, Jewish, and a working mom. She finds her neighbours stand offish and she settles into her neighbourhood the best way she can. Lewis yearns for his absent father and Ava struggles with Work and parenting. Lewis befriends the only other fatherless kids: Jimmy and Rose. One afternoon, Jimmy goes missing and the Ava and Lewis's life changes forever.

I loved the tone of this novel as it is a sad book and yet not depressing. The author really conveys the emotions of the characters. The loneliness of Ava the single mother is really well written. A woman who struggles to bring up her child alone and yet her own need for companionship and love which to everyone else seems to come across as a threat, something to be frowned upon and ashamed of. The characters are so realistic and believable and I wanted so much to befriend Ava and to have good things happen for her throughout the novel. This story has just the right amount of suspense in it and yet it is not over written and allows you to use your imagination. I enjoyed the pace of the novel and really feel the author got plot and characters just right.

A great suspenseful and emotional summer read and a lovely insight into 1950s America.

Jennifer Hummer says

There's past tense and future tense, and then there's Leavitt-tense. Leavitt-tense is when the main storyline so seamlessly intertwines with backstory that the reader can't remember how it is they have come to know these characters so deeply. All they know is that they have.

Is This Tomorrow is a mystery with suspense enough. A child goes missing and his community struggles to carry on with no answers as to why or how. Were this story to include only the linear plotline, it would be as gripping. But Leavitt isn't the kind of author who goes for suspense alone. Leavitt's real strength lies in the characters. Flawed, scared and sometimes deceitful, these characters are your brother, your parents, your children, and perhaps even you. This is why Leavitt's plots can never stop at suspenseful and always move on to haunting.

The 1950's setting is pitch-perfect. You can practically feel the uneven shaggy carpeting of Eve's house under your toes and taste the warming nutmeg in her pies. And you can smell the animosity that this Norman Rockwell-type community feels for a divorced Jewish mother who dares to date and has to work. *Is This Tomorrow* is a gem. And (hopefully) a future film.

Caroline Leavitt says

A New York Times bestseller

A USA Today bestseller

A May Indie Next Pick

WNBA 2013 Great Group Reads Selection

A Jewish Book Council Bookclub Pick

A San Francisco Chronicle Lit Pick, Editor's Choice

Working Mother Magazine "Must Read" for Summer

Top Summer Reads, Where Now Boston, Golocalpro.com, Shape Magazine

Reading Group Choices Top Discussible Books

Best Books for Summer, Hudson Booksellers

Winner of Audiofile Earphones Award (audiobook narrated by Xe Sands)

"Riveting-" Vanity Fair Hot Type

"Leavitt builds tremendous suspense while remaining as concerned with character as she is with plot. She's created an insightful parable about a complicated and uncertain era."

The Week

"An arresting portrait of bygone America. Leavitt does a masterful job of building suspense as the terrifying story of what happened to Jimmy is slowly and skillfully revealed. But this is more than a page-turner of a mystery. Leavitt is as concerned with character as she is with plot, and therefore this book is also a poignant and insightful examination of how the survivors of tragedy are often transformed, molded and defined by that which haunts them. Here, the disappearance of Jimmy serves almost as a metaphor for the Cold War angst and suspicion gripping the country. Perhaps the most magical aspect of Leavitt's wonderful novel is that her narrative works as almost a parable for that complicated and uncertain era, teaching and warning her readers even as she entertains them."

Skip Horack, The San Francisco Chronicle

"Leavitt is known for her ability to plumb the depths of human emotions. Her real strength lies in her portrayal of grief's many manifestations in those most closely affected.. Leavitt demonstrates through Lewis

and Rose that without closure, the grief remains dormant yet retains its power. "
Publisher's Weekly

"A page-turning heartbreaker."
Kit Reed, The Miami Herald

"A clever plot renders Leavitt's novel so riveting during the reading and so haunting thereafter. Leavitt's deserves such accolades because of the sophisticated authority of the her singular voice and the creative complexity of her imaginative plot."
The Courier-Journal

"Opens with an effective, efficient setup guaranteed to tantalize this bestselling author's avid readership. Vividly drawn and emotionally engaging."
The Washington Post

"Leavitt's lyrical prose weaves backstory into present time seamlessly. The mystery of the missing child is resolved a decade later in a way that touches each of the damaged lives with startling consequences."
Audiofile Earphones Awards

"Leavitt brilliantly melds Cold War paranoia, religious persecution, and ostracism in a tale of tragedy and consequence that intricately weaves toward a resolution that is at once surprising and yet seemingly inevitable."
John Valeri, The Hartford Examiner

"This is a wise novel about the pain of loss. Leavitt's is a novel that pulls you in and makes you root for an ostracized mother and her son, feel the inconsolable grief of a mother whose child has vanished, and a sister who never ceases to look for her brother. An eminently satisfying read. Leavitt provides no easy answers about how we can compensate for loss, but she engages our heart."
Kathryn Lang, The Boston Globe

"Ava Lark, a divorced Jewish woman, and her 12-year-old son, Lewis, move into a WASPy 1950s Boston suburb only to be ostracized by their neighbors and sucked into a heart-wrenching ordeal. When Lewis's friend Jimmy goes missing, his disappearance has lifelong consequences for Ava, Lewis, and Rose, Jimmy's sister. By the time Lewis is in his twenties, he is estranged from his mother, while Rose has moved away and become a teacher. The truth of what happens to Jimmy comes out unexpectedly, forcing the three of them to confront truths they've long suppressed. Leavitt (Pictures of You) sets out to portray a repressive society and the way it stifles a sympathetic heroine who is oblivious to the social ramifications of her string of former boyfriends. This tale of domestic suspense builds to a shocking climax and will appeal to anyone immersed in suburban lore."
Library Journal, starred review

"More shocking than a conspiracy theory."
New Jersey Monthly

"Caroline Leavitt follows up her New York Times bestselling "Pictures of You") with "Is This Tomorrow," a novel about the lasting impact a 12 year-old boy's disappearance has on a suburban Boston neighborhood, particularly his sister Rose, his best friend Lewis and his best friend's mother Ava, a single mother who the missing boy had a desperate crush on. The story starts in 1956 and then picks up again with Lewis and Rose young adults, both still caught up in the mystery of what happened to Jimmy all those years ago. Giving the book an "enthusiastic thumbs up," Wally Lamb credits Leavitt with a "Mad Men-like examination of shifting

midcentury American values."

Mary Polis, MSN Entertainment Page Turner

"Leavitt's 10th novel is a triumph. The story at times brings to mind Dennis Lehane's masterful *Mystic River*. Though all of Leavitt's novels have been superb and highly acclaimed, it strikes me that *Is This Tomorrow* is her most accomplished work. There is a sharp nuance here, one that reverberates throughout. That and lovely, vivid characterizations and superb period detail contribute to making what may be Leavitt's best book yet."

Monica Stark, January Magazine

"It begs to be said out Loud: Leavitt is an American Author of great consequence who meticulously crafts stories about real people who find themselves at a crossroads."

Holy Cara Price, Pop Matters

"Leavitt is a lovely writer and here she tells an absorbing story."

Sherryl Connelly, The New York Daily News

Featured in People Magazine.

"Rich with characters. A literary mystery with a lot of depth as well as a social commentary on the mores of the 1950s."

Carol Fitzgerald, The Bookreporter Bets On, at Bookreporter.com

"This is a book for those who appreciate fine writing, a compelling story and characters who will live long after in the heart and soul. There is much for book clubs to discuss."

The Shawnee News-Star

"I highly recommend this novel for those who enjoy a captivating, intriguing work of fiction that keeps readers on their toes."

Times Record News

"The writing is beautiful and captures the domestic life of the 50's and 60's perfectly, and brings these characters to vivid life."

Books on the Nightstand, Books We Can't Wait For You To read

"This is a book for those who appreciate fine writing, a compelling story, and characters who will live long after in the heart and soul. There's much for book clubs to discuss."

The Taunton Gazette Summer Pageturners

"Fans of heartfelt and emotionally rich fiction have been devouring the works of Leavitt since her impassioned debut, *Meeting Rozzy Halfway*. Ever since then Leavitt has delivered slice-of-life tales of American families at an impressive pace, constantly upping her game along the way. *Is This Tomorrow* is a taut and resonant mystery of a missing child, which has already garnered critical acclaim and a devoted readership's praise."

The Barnes and Noble Review

"I didn't want to put this book down. Full of twists and turns that keep you reading to the end."

Faye Daysen, the Southern Pines Pilot

"Leavitt renders her characters with deep understanding and gives them complex back-stories and characteristics. By the time the second part of the novel begins, Ava, Rose and Lewis are multidimensional characters whom readers understand completely. As the book closes, readers will feel that the lives of the characters will open up to entirely new chapters. Fans of Leavitt's work will want to see this latest offering, and new readers, drawn in by Leavitt's emotional portraits, may find a new author to love."

The ForeWord

"Surprising, unexpected plot twists, and dramatic."

Cheryl Knocker McKeon, Book Passage, San Francisco, for Shelf Awareness

"Leavitt has a way of crafting the loveliest novels out of tragedy. Like its predecessor, *Pictures of You* (2011), her latest work, set mainly in the 1950s, turns on a single fateful incident: the disappearance of 12-year-old Jimmy Reardon. Though Leavitt eventually reveals what happened to Jimmy, in a closure that provides little in the way of solace, it's her examination of loss, grief, and disappointment that will engross readers. Lewis, Jimmy's best friend, is already an angry loner, a child of divorce in a time and place where his mother, Ava, is viewed as a challenge to the natural order. Without Jimmy as a tether, he drifts aimlessly into adulthood. Rose, Jimmy's sister, is paralyzed by survivor's guilt: to move on without her brother feels tantamount to betrayal. The aching loneliness of these two is palpable. But Leavitt's most captivating creation is the mercurial Ava, an accidental trailblazer who refuses to deny her dreams. It is Ava, ultimately, who points the way forward, showing there's no shame in putting ghosts to rest."

Patty Wetli, Booklist

"Caroline Leavitt is an amazingly skilled writer as she showcases her ability to delve deeply into her characters' souls while still maintaining an atmosphere of suspense and historical accuracy. Themes of loneliness, the devastation of secrets, and the quest for love are interwoven throughout this beautifully rendered literary thriller."

Hillary Daninhirsch, Historical Novel Review

"Leavitt's compelling work explores how a tragedy casts a shadow—not only upon the days that immediately follow, but sometimes the rest of a life. Life isn't always what we expect, a fact that is thoughtfully explored in this beautifully rendered tale."

Carla Jean Whitley, Bookpage

"In the spirit of Richard Yates' novel *Revolutionary Road*, Caroline Leavitt peels back the neat façade of suburban life in the 1950s to uncover the ways in which the demands of conformity leave a trail of loneliness and pain for those who lie outside its bounds. Ava Lark, the divorced Jewish mother of twelve-year-old Lewis, struggles against the judgment of neighbors as she and her son befriend the only other fatherless children around, Jimmy and Rose. Jimmy's sudden, unexplained disappearance taps into every parent's worst nightmare. Blending taut suspense with deeply moving portrayals of fierce parental love, childhood friendships and first crushes, Leavitt has created a novel with haunting characters and much to say about how we move through tragedy."

Libby Cowles, Maria's Bookshop

"From the lockstep '50s into the do-your-own-thing '60s, Caroline Leavitt follows her cast of lonely characters as they grapple with the sorrowful mystery of a missing child. 'Are any of our children safe?' one asks, and of course the answer is no, no one is. Like *Mona Simpson's Off Keck Road*, *Is This Tomorrow* is an intimate meditation on time, loss and destiny."

Stewart O'Nan, author of *Emily*, *Alone* and *The Odds*

"When someone disappears, what happens to the people who are left behind? This is the central, heartbreak question in Caroline Leavitt's exquisite new book. With characters so real they feel technicolor, a plot that beats like a racing pulse, and prose so lovely that sometimes I found myself repeating

the words out loud, *Is This Tomorrow* is the novel you need to read today."

Jodi Picoult, New York Times bestselling author of *The Storyteller* and *Lone Wolf*

"A beautiful free-spirited divorcee is shunned by her neighbors. A boy from that neighborhood goes missing. This is the engine that drives Leavitt's latest story, a page turner from first to last. I loved the way Leavitt's Mad Men-like examination of shifting American values dovetails with her vivid tale of heartbreak and hope. An enthusiastic thumbs-up from this grateful reader."

Wally Lamb, author of *The Hour I First Believed*, *I Know This Much is True*, *She's Come Undone*

"Leavitt's first historical novel is a grand slam. Her attention to detail and dialogue are remarkable. The ratcheting tension as an Eisenhower era neighborhood searches for a missing boy—gripping. The resolution of the mystery years later, both heartbreak and hopeful. I so admire Leavitt's ability to pull you into the story, tie you up, and leave you guessing, until she masterfully guides you through the twists and turns towards, home."

Lesley Kagan, author of *Good Graces*

"Leavitt asks the big, equivocal questions: What does it mean to be a mother, a family? What is the nature of identity? The answers will provoke you, frustrate you, rearrange your heart."

Jacquelyn Mitchard, author of *The Deep End of the Ocean* and *What We Saw At Night*

"An expertly rendered novel that poignantly chronicles the aftermath of a family's worst nightmare and its far-reaching devastation. At once haunting and elegant, *Is This Tomorrow* will leave the reader shattered and hopeful right up to the shocking end."

Heather Gudenkauf, author of *The Weight of Silence*

"*Is This Tomorrow* is the gripping tale of a boy gone missing in 1950s suburbs and of those whose lives are enveloped, tangled and changed by the mystery: the missing boy's sister, his best friend, and the divorced working mom who can't fit into the neighborhood. With wit and a perfect eye into the human heart, Leavitt has given us a truly unique story of love, loyalty, loss, betrayal, secrets, healing—and a resolution you'll never see coming. It's everything you want in a novel."

Sue Monk Kidd, author of *The Secret Life of Bees*

"In her dynamic follow-up to *Pictures of You*, Leavitt has given us that rare and irresistible combination of tenderly crafted, richly layered and utterly believable characters I found myself caring about by page ten-- and a crackling suspense story that just about explodes off the page. Call it a literary thriller: *Is This Tomorrow* reveals a world you will want to linger in, and secrets you'll stay up late to untangle. Reading this story is a memorable and moving journey and one that (for those who don't already love her work) reveals Leavitt to be a brave and humane writer who also understands what keeps us turning the pages."

Joyce Maynard, author of *The Good Daughters* and *Labor Day*

"When a 12-year-old boy disappears from his suburban Boston neighborhood, ripples spread far and wide. It's the rigid 1950's and a tight knit community comes undone. The mystery is set up early in the novel, so there is plenty of time to get involved and invested in characters you care about, or are distrustful of, or ones whose motives you question. The overwhelming arc of the story is for these characters you come to feel protective of to get beyond the tragedy. How can you get to tomorrow when time is forever stuck on one tragic day? You want them to find their tomorrows. And thanks to great writing, I was pulling for them all the way."

Candace Purdom, Anderson's Bookshop

"Ah, the 1950's, bouffants and poodle skirts, long lazy days with friends, and above all, strictly defined

gender roles that seem to encompass everything from who mows the lawn to who bakes the pies. This is the world that we are sent to in this novel. Ava is a divorcee in an era where divorced women were considered "fallen" and most certainly fair game. To make matters worse, she has her son Lewis with her. When Lewis' s best friend disappears one hot April day never to be seen again, it is not just his family that feels the loss. Lewis and Ava are as profoundly affected and the neighbourhood seems to shrink into itself with fear. Add to all that the rampant misogyny that Ava faces on a daily basis at work, the snarky comments from her neighbours about what kind of woman she is and the struggle of simply living on after the loss and you have this novel. There is a special kind of loneliness that surrounds the survivors of a major loss and this is the loneliness that Caroline Leavitt writes and weaves like poetry into the lives of this book."

Amal Chaaban, RagMag Magazine

Jordan says

I think this is my favorite of Caroline's books so far. She does a skillful job of setting up that 50s era paranoia of anything "different" be it Communists, or a single, attractive Jewish mother trying to make ends meet. I found all the characters sympathetic and the mystery of what happened to Jimmy deftly revealed over the course of the story.

Linda says

I read this book in two sittings. Set in the 1950s and 1960s. The author did her homework and sprinkled her manuscript with small details that jolted me back to those times (what gal didn't wear a circle pin?). What starts as what could be considered as a typical broken home story (dad leaves mom and son then disappears from son's life) develops into a mystery of what happened to the son's best friend. We are guided through the son's lonely life, his tormenting by classmates, his mother's dates, and his discovery of himself.

Temeca Curry says

This book was amazing, a page turner that I couldn't put down but when I had to I couldn't wait to pick it up again. With each page I was swept back into a time that as an independent, opinionated woman couldn't imagine living in especially like Ava, a single parent with no support. I felt for her, rooted for her and sometimes hated her but when I closed the book I realized she will be put on "the shelf" as one of my literary heroes.

The story of Jimmy, Rose and Lewis took me back to my childhood and made me wonder how different my life may have been if my besties hadn't moved away and we ended up growing up together. I felt their emptiness, their loss and their yearning to see each other again; to know what happened to Jimmy. With each turn of the page I was hoping that Rose and Lewis would get that closure and when they did it was a complete shock and so sad that it makes the reader wonder maybe it would have been better if they didn't know. I think Caroline Leavitt did an excellent job keeping the reader wanting more with each page and delivering with every turn. A future Bestseller!

Sandra says

Is This Tomorrow was a novel I eagerly returned to each night, and ultimately lost sleep over because I was involved with the characters and wanted to see how things would turn out. As with her other novel, Pictures of You (which I also enjoyed very much), this is a story of a tragedy, and how the emotional ripples of that one event resonate over time through many people.

Caroline Leavitt has a gentle way of portraying people and relationships realistically. Her style is straightforward: it's all about the story.

She's a wonderful writer, very assured. There's not a sentence out of place. Supremely honest. I don't know how she does it!

If you enjoy this novel, you will also enjoy Pictures of You.

Laura says

I'm still not sure how to rate this! It's a book I sank into very quickly, and it just led me from one chapter to the next. I'd sit down, and before I knew it, I'd been reading for over an hour, totally immersed. I thought it would be more of a thriller than it actually was, but still it kept me reading late into the night.

Nothing about it will likely bowl you over, but it could be a great beach read, or something to get sucked into if you need a mind break. The audio performance was not stellar, but not bad either. The characters are the highlight here. We saw some nice growth in a few of the main characters, and it does become a bit of a page-turner as the reader slowly learns what happened to Jimmy. I enjoyed it.

?Laura says

Ratings (1 to 5)

Writing: 2

Plot: 3

Characters: 3

Emotional impact: 2

Overall rating: 2.5

Notes

Elizabeth of Silver's Reviews says

Is This Tomorrow At one time happy families, at one time a happy circle of friends, but then a missing child, a heartache for life, and a secret.

This secret, had it been revealed, most likely would have made the lives of Rose, Lewis, Ava, and Dot totally different.

After Jimmy disappeared nothing was the same for any of the main characters. The disappearance was the focus of their lives and consumed every minute of their day as they tried to move on or moved away.

The book at first appeared as if it were going to be a love story, but what a surprise. It turned into a mystery with such remarkable storytelling and such an incredible plot that it was difficult to figure out. You thought you knew who was responsible, and then another incident arose as another character told where they were on that fateful day creating a twist to throw you off. As you hear these stories, you will want to turn back the clock, and you will want to shake the characters into telling their true feelings to each other for comfort and hope.

The tragedy and the mystery made the book refreshingly different just like the characters. *IS THIS TOMORROW* was very well written with wonderful descriptions of the scenes and of the characters. All of the characters were a bit gloomy but most were quite loveable and endearing. Rose was my favorite. She was sweet, unassuming, innocent, yet very thoughtful. Lewis was brilliant but had issues that kept him from achieving his full potential. Ava finally found something that would make use of her talents and that made her happy, but she still remained alone. Dot was forever sad about losing her son.

If you want a book that you can't wait to get back to, *IS THIS TOMORROW* is the ticket. It was a bit slow at first, but with all the twists and turns and the terrific plot, you will find yourself devouring the pages looking for answers just as the characters did.

I hope you enjoy this book and its interesting plot as much as I did. 5/5

This book was given to me free of charge and without compensation by the publisher in return for an honest review.

Gail - Slitty says

*****Caution---This review may contain a spoiler.

I purchased this book because it was a highly rated mystery on Amazon; holy cow, by the time this story ended, I wanted to trade places with the missing kid. First of all, there is no suspense or mystery, that's just a ploy to keep the reader from giving up while reading chapter after chapter of uninteresting and unlikeable people. All the main characters are social outcasts and loners before the child goes missing, and guess what, they are still social outcasts and loners years later. Why is the reader subjected to the mind-numbing banter between Ava and her boss and co-workers; the same discussions and situations are still being rehashed years later, and none are relevant to the missing child? Then the two remaining children who were miserable and sad outcasts before, grow up having the same mindset as adults. None of the characters have a friend in the beginning or in the end, and there is little to no connection among themselves. Everyone resents each other. OMG, Jimmy was the luckiest bastard of us all, not only did he miss watching these uninteresting people continue their miserable lives, but he also didn't read this book.

Mandi says

The story was beautiful in the same way a terribly sad song is: you can admire the beauty of the sadness, even feel enveloped in it, but are so grateful to be on the outside and not experiencing the tragedy yourself. I fell in love with all of the characters and wanted for them to be able to move on with their lives and find peace. And- Jimmy, oh how I wanted them to find sweet Jimmy safe and sound, even though I knew from

the book synopsis that this would likely not happen.

Read full review at:

<http://theinsomniacbibliophile.blogspot.com/2013/07/is-this-tomorrow-caroline-leavitt.html>...

Jaime Boler says

Fear of communism and nuclear war permeated the psyches of millions of Americans in the 1950s. Public and private concerns were heightened by Senator Joseph McCarthy when he proclaimed that hundreds of Communists had infiltrated the United States government. Many writers and entertainers were accused of sympathizing with Communists and thus were blacklisted. His accusations were later disproved, but that did not stop his fervor from spreading.

In her tenth and best novel, *Is This Tomorrow*, expert storyteller Caroline Leavitt capitalizes on these anxieties. “You can’t trust these Communists,” one of Leavitt’s minor characters maintains. “They couldn’t tell the truth if they wanted to.... You kids think it’s funny, but any second a missile could come down on us,” he insists. “And we wouldn’t even see it or be prepared. One minute we’re here talking in this nice neighborhood, and two seconds later, boom, we’re ash.” In his eyes, the Russians “hide explosives” and could be anywhere, even in his own neighborhood, “and we wouldn’t even know it.”

The era in which Leavitt sets her story is perfect for her setting. *Father Knows Best* gently reminds American kids who is boss in the household. Echoes of “just wait until your father gets home” are heard all across the United States as the mother keeps house and raises the children and the father brings home the bacon. Doors are left unlocked. Sunday is the Lord’s day. The post-war economy is booming, and so is the birthrate. Everything seems idyllic, but appearances often deceive, as we all know.

The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union is at its frostiest with no signs of thaw. Nuclear annihilation is a real and daily threat as school kids are taught to duck and cover and worried fathers build bomb shelters. New phrases such as Red Scare and Yellow Menace become part of the everyday lexicon. Americans view those who are different, who do not conform, who look different, who sound different, and who worship differently with contempt. Anyone deemed not like everyone else was considered deviant.

Life seems peachy for Americans, but ugliness and fear lurk just under the surface. This juxtaposition is at the heart of Leavitt’s taut, atmospheric, and humane tale. Blending a coming-of-age saga with history and mystery, Leavitt creates a tense and suspenseful atmosphere when a neighborhood boy goes missing.

Is This Tomorrow is told from three different and varied perspectives: Ava, divorcee, working mother, and the head of the only Jewish family on the block; Lewis, her son; and Rose, her son’s best friend and sister to Jimmy, the youth who vanishes. Although Jimmy is not a narrator, his disappearance looms over the novel; his presence and his absence are powerfully palpable.

Because Ava is different from the other neighborhood parents, she is suspect. Ava locks her doors when all the other doors are unlocked; she works when the rest of the mothers do not have jobs outside the home. She does not dress like the other mothers and she has had a string of boyfriends. The neighbors see her as a

floozy. These things do not necessarily damn her, though. Other parents believe she may have had an inappropriate relationship with her son's best friend. Ava denies it but admits she knew Jimmy had a crush on her. He was at Ava's the day he went missing.

Jimmy's disappearance profoundly changes the lives of all of Leavitt's main characters. Jimmy's departure leaves Ava, Lewis, and Rose stuck and unable to go forward. The calendar turns and they grow older, but they are still stuck in the moment Jimmy faded away forever. They have too many loose ends in their lives, and the burning desire to know what happened drives them.

Rose, Jimmy's sister, becomes a teacher but never forgets her family tragedy as she desperately pleads with the principal to put a fence around the playground so school kids will not wander off. Lewis withdraws from his mother and searches for his father, who once wanted custody of Lewis but has since vanished himself. Ava feels alone and bakes pies that she sells to a local restaurant but has never forgotten Jimmy and the day he seemed to evaporate into thin air.

Leavitt hooks you in the first chapter when young Jimmy goes missing and does not let you go until the very last page. I was riveted. Leavitt provides readers with timely and weighty issues such as missing children, difference, and paranoia.

With expert pacing, the author takes her time revealing secrets. This master storyteller is meticulous and wise as she teases out every detail but still keeps you guessing. *Is This Tomorrow* is atmospheric and taut and has everything you could ever want in a book: compelling, fully realized characters; an intense, dramatic, and compelling plot; and the perfect, evocative setting. Everything comes together superbly in Leavitt's skilled hands.

The title is taken from a propaganda comic book that came out in 1947 and warned of the dangers of a Communist takeover. An estimated four million Americans purchased the educational comic, no doubt contributing to the fear and paranoia of the 1950s. In *Is This Tomorrow*, Leavitt brings this era to life and illustrates how fear of the unknown and fear of difference transformed a country, a community, and a people. Although her book is set primarily in a time very different from our own age, *Is This Tomorrow* is a cautionary tale for us in the Twenty-First Century.

Diane S ? says

The nineteen fifties was always portrayed as an innocent time, a time when family was cherished. It was also a time when there was very little divorce, when single women were looked upon as suspicious by the other women, as if divorce was catching and as prey by some of the married men. There was the cold war, spies, a possible nuclear war and many went through this time period fearful. In this novel Leavitt does an amazing job portraying all these scenarios. Ave is a divorced, single mother who does not fit into her neighborhood

because she dresses differently and is alone. Dot, the only other single woman in the neighborhood, is a widow but still seen as a threat by the other woman. They become each others only friend, and their three children also become close friends. Early teenage years and the things that happen often leave an indelible mark upon the person. So when Dot's son goes missing and is not found everything changes. These changes affect all the characters far into the future.

This is a very well written novel about the many changes one goes through in their lives, the things they experience and how these things change who they become. Right away I felt the loneliness and helplessness of Ava and she became my favorite character. I am so glad that the ending is a little open to interpretation, we do find out most of what happened but a few of the main characters arrive at a crossroads. I very much enjoyed this book, found it both poignant and inspiring.

?Karen says

I won this book in exchange for an honest review. Honestly, this book could have been better for me. A tragedy happens in a Boston suburb in the 50's, a young neighbor boy and best friend of Lewis just one day disappears after Lewis was late getting home to meet him. Lewis and the sister of the missing boy both blame themselves then and for a very long time afterwards, thinking had they been home in time, this would not have happened. I had no idea at all where the boy could have gone. This was the first thing that bothered me, as I like to at least try to figure out any underlying mystery in a book, even though I'm usually wrong. After that, I thought the book slow in parts and the writing lacking in others. These flaws improved as the book progressed, however. The character most central to the story was Ava, Lewis' divorcee mother, and was very well developed, although I had mixed feelings about her also – a series of boyfriends was hinted at, and she's a little selfish; but she also was a very cool mom that the kids wanted as their own, struggling to make ends meet and be a good provider given what was available for women back then. Overall a worthwhile and nostalgic read.
