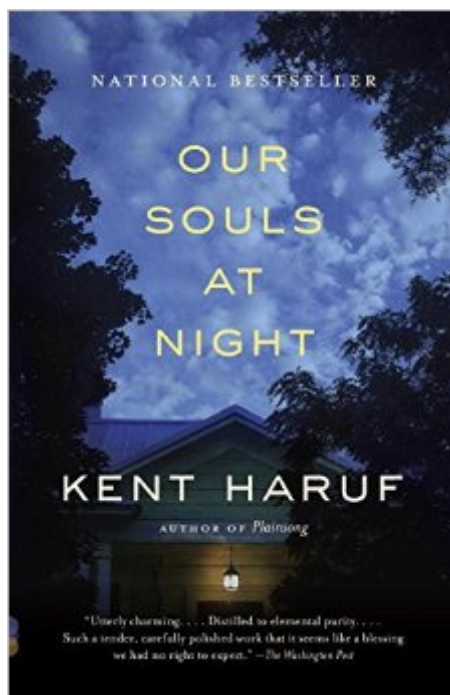


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Our Souls At Night (Vintage Contemporaries)



Synopsis

A Best Book of the YearÂ The Boston Globe, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, and The Denver PostIn the familiar setting of Holt, Colorado, home to all of Kent Haruf's inimitable fiction, Addie Moore pays an unexpected visit to a neighbor, Louis Waters. Her husband died years ago, as did his wife, and in such a small town they naturally have known of each other for decades; in fact, Addie was quite fond of Louis's wife. His daughter lives hours away, her son even farther, and Addie and Louis have long been living alone in empty houses, the nights so terribly lonely, especially with no one to talk with. But maybe that could change? As Addie and Louis come to know each other better--their pleasures and their difficulties--a beautiful story of second chances unfolds, making *Our Souls at Night* the perfect final installment to this beloved writer's enduring contribution to American literature.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (1,666 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

About eight years ago I read "Plainsong" and I was thunderstruck. It was so good I immediately turned to "Eventide", which was almost as powerful and affecting. I eagerly went on to one of Haruf's earlier novels, "Where You Once Belonged", but it was merely average and I figured that I had reached the end of the road with Kent Haruf. But from beyond the grave (he died last November) Haruf reaches out with *OUR SOULS AT NIGHT*. This valedictory novel is on the same elevated plane as "Plainsong" and "Eventide". Three exceptional novels is quite a legacy. As with his earlier novels, *OUR SOULS AT NIGHT* is set on the plains of eastern Colorado, in the town of Holt. The model for Holt probably is Yuma, Colorado, but in truth it is a town like many others on the High

Plains. Small and rather insular, rural, everyone knows everyone else's business, conservative in politics and religion, a populace that outsiders and especially liberal urbanites might dismiss as small-minded, but with many hard-working folk, a handful of misfits, and a surprising number of basically decent, wise, but unprepossessing souls. Addie Moore and Louis Waters fall into that last category. Addie is seventy and has lived in Holt for forty-four years; she has been a widow for some time. Louis, about the same age and a widower, grew up in Holt, went away to college and to start a career, and then came back forty-six years ago. Their houses are only a block apart, but they had not known each other well. One evening Addie shows up at Louis's door and asks to talk to him. I wonder if you would consider coming to my house sometimes to sleep with me. What? How do you mean? I mean we're both alone. We've been by ourselves for too long. For years. I'm lonely.

Addie Moore's husband died years ago. So did Louis Waters's wife. They live in the same town, not far from each other, in the houses they shared with their spouses for decades. They know of each other but were never friends, just neighbors who acted friendly toward each other in passing. Then one evening, just before dark, Addie shows up on Louis's porch. He invites her in and she makes a proposal to him: it's one of the oddest he's ever heard but he understands it. She wants him to come over to her house some night and sleep with her. Not for sex. For talk. Comfort. To sleep with someone else for a night, maybe more nights, but not to live with him. He's lonely too, though he's never admitted it to himself. He does it. Their relationship blossoms. They find they have a lot to talk about: their dead mates, their children, how their marriages worked out (mixed good and not as good), how neither of them wound up making of their lives what they wanted from them. Addie's son drops his son Jamie off with grandma while he goes through a rough patch: his wife has left him, his business is folding, and he may go bankrupt. Louis and Addie adjust to Jamie, help him grow. By then the neighborhood knows of their relationship: some approve, some don't. Addie and Louis have learned one of the advantages of growing old. They don't have to care any more what other people think of their behavior. The only opinions that count are their own. That's liberating after a life of living so other people don't condemn you. Late in the book, Addie asks Louis what he thinks of their arrangement. I've gotten so I can stand it, he said. It feels normal now. Just normal? I'm trying to have some fun with you. I know you are. Tell me the truth.

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