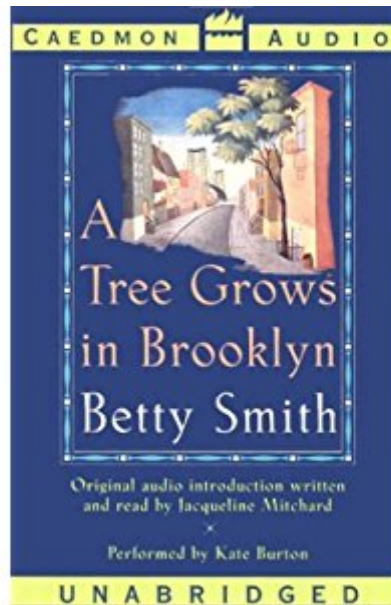


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# A Tree Grows In Brooklyn



## Synopsis

The Nolans lived in the Williamsburg slums of Brooklyn from 1902 until 1919. Their daughter Francie and their son Neely knew more than their fair share of the privations and suffering that were the lot of New York's poor. *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* is the story of Francie, an imaginative, alert, resourceful child, and of her family. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 14 hours and 55 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperAudio

Audible.com Release Date: August 12, 2005

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000AWGX7W

Best Sellers Rank: #64 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Classics #313 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Classics

## Customer Reviews

Francie Nolan is a character who will long be remembered by anyone who reads "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn." Bright but lonely, poor but resourceful, Francie Nolan is captured from ages 11 to 16 with poignancy and love. Francie is her daddy's "prima donna" and she treasures his love while fighting to win her mother's. Although she never achieves the place in her mother's heart that her brother holds, her strength and sheer perseverance guide her through difficult times. Like the sturdy tree that grows outside her window and survives all catastrophes, Francie Nolan survives poverty, lack of formal education, sexual assault, extreme loneliness, and lost love. The reader first meets Francie at age 11 when, as an inquisitive young girl, her favorite time of the day is on Saturday when she can go to the library then rush home with her treasure and read the afternoon away on the fire escape of her Brooklyn tenement. As a young girl, she feels "rich" when she receives bits of chalk and stubby pencils her mother and father bring home from their janitorial job at a local school. She finds simple pleasures in her life, like being allowed to sleep in the front room on Saturday night and watch the busy street below. You will ache to go back in time and be Francie's best friend as she

battles loneliness and rejection by her peers but learns to live a solitary life. But, like the tree, she is ready to burst into bloom and when she does it is beautiful to read about. This book is a wonderful description of life in turn-of-the-century Brooklyn and a strong statement on the hope offered to the immigrants who came to the United States.

In the first page of this book, Betty Smith writes very gently and calmly of Francie Nolan, a pre-teenager just beginning to step out on the edge of adulthood. And Smith ties the book up neatly at the end as if she's giving a present to the reader ... which she is. This is one of the sweetest, most eloquently written books I have ever had the pleasure of reading. Francie Nolan lives in Brooklyn with her brother Neely, mom Katie and dad Johnny. It is in the early 1900s where the book is set. The family is poor ~~ living almost on the edge of starvation. Francie has taken to reading like a duck takes to water ... once she discovered the joy of reading, she becomes a big bookworm. She is also a keen observer of life around her ~~ her thoughts are often witty and funny as she observes the strange behavior of her mother's sisters and their lives, the neighbors, her brother Neely, her mother and father's relationships with one another. Till Francie grows up to be this amazing woman set on the path of her destiny. Betty Smith takes you along for a wonderful story-filled walk in Brooklyn in the early 20th century. She introduces the smells of old Brooklyn, the noise, the joys and sorrows of being in a poverty-stricken family ~~ the hopes and dreams of the immigrants that left the old country because there was nothing there for them. The hopes and dreams of the parents for their children to have better lives than they did ... falling in love with one another ... the disappointments of being disappointed by life, the wonder of finding joy in anything new or rediscovering something old. Betty Smith has captured the nuances of life and shares a bit of her soul for us readers to find.

I am in total awe after reading this book. In the beginning I thought it was going to be a boring and long novel. But throughout my reading I became to grow more attached to the story. The main character Francie was an intriguing and delightful creation that anyone would want as their best friend, should she not be a fictional person. I enjoyed reading how the poor family made ends meet and continued surviving when it seemed they couldn't hang on much longer. It seems that you shouldn't find it entertaining to read of suffering, but the author writes it in such a ingenious way as to that you're really reading about the magnificence of life, living, and death. As the family encounters dilemma after dilemma you find yourself encased in the wonder of how they do it. Throughout all the sadness and suffering the Nolans are still kind and considerate, loving and

caring, fair and just; overall good people! Don't get me wrong, this is not a sad story, although some parts are on the sadder side. This is a marvelous writing about why people live and how. It shows a young girl growing up and changing into a woman. I was so in tune with the story I found myself laughing, crying, cheering, and feeling scared! The Nolans are resourceful and caring people, although they do have their faults. You learn about them from birth to middle aged and curiously watch them change, grow, and develop their ways. You see where each person gets their character traits from and why they do certain things. The setting is early twentieth century Brooklyn, NY. The Nolans live in a neighborhood of old flats. Electricity has not yet been invented and the value of the dollar is way higher than the present. Its interesting reading about how their insurance was twenty-five cents and that four people could eat on ten cents a day!

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