



# Whatever Happened to Janie?

*Caroline B. Cooney*

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## **Whatever Happened to Janie?** Caroline B. Cooney

No one ever paid attention to the faces of missing children on milk cartons. But as Janie Johnson glanced at the face of the little girl who had been taken twelve years ago, she recognized that little girl--it was herself.

The mystery of the kidnapping is unraveled, but the nightmare is not over. The Spring family wants justice, but who is to blame? It's difficult to figure out what's best for everyone.

Janie Johnson or Janie Spring? There's enough love for everyone, but how can the two separate families live happily ever after?

## **Whatever Happened to Janie? Details**

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Author : Caroline B. Cooney

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# From Reader Review Whatever Happened to Janie? for online ebook

## Lindsay Nixon says

This book was good as the first. You can't wait to see what happens, you feel emotionally torn like Janie... it's a book series that explores difficult emotions and the reality that there is so much complexity to any issue. You have to do what's best for you, even if it's not best for the majority. There aren't awards for suffering and that suffering hurts the people you're trying to protect... that in any reality, there are Multiple considerations to consider...

Like book1, I'm desperate to immediately start the next.

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## Anna (Curiosity comes before Kay) says

Seeing this one through my adult eye-view, it's a little bit easier to empathize with Janie. As a kid, I thought she was such an ungrateful brat. And seriously, when they contacted her birth family in the last book, what did she think was going to happen? They were going to tell the Johnsons, whose daughter Hannah KIDNAPPED HER from them, "Yeah, we don't want her back. You can keep the daughter who was kidnapped from the shopping center at age 3. We have four other kids, we know you'll love and take care of her like you've done in the past, when we thought she was being tortured/raped/killed, etc. Might as well not even bother." YEAH RIGHT - didn't think so! But thinking about it from Janie's perspective, the Springs are asking a lot of a fifteen year old kid. They basically want her to turn on the people she spent almost her entire life with and *believed* were her parents, and want her to pretend the last twelve years never happened. Insta-Jennie coming right up, just forget that other family kiddo. As someone who has come to believe that who you end up turning into as an adult is something of nature AND nurture, it made me empathize with Janie. It's not like they spent 12 years torturing/abusing her -- they believed she was their granddaughter, the child of their lost-to-a-cult daughter. They treated her as a precious piece of something they thought was gone forever. I also better understand the anger on the part of both Stephen and Jodie Spring, who have seen firsthand the damage of not knowing what happened to their sister (and living with parents who were trying to prevent another worst case scenario). Overall, fairly realistic for a look at what might happen when a teen kidnap victim is returned to her biological family. Except for the ending, which would never happen in a million years.

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## rivka says

Even better than the first book.

The first one was about finding answers to mysteries. This one is about finding a different kind of answers. Answers to things like "what now?" and "how do we go on?"

Questions that never have simple answers.

And this book doesn't pretend the answers are easy, and presents real people, who are awful to each other

even when they are trying hard not to be.

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### **Bookhoarder says**

Where first book lacked in dynamics this one nailed it. From the first few chapters it was so emotional and intense I didn't believe it was written by the same person. I have a feeling that if this two were in one piece it would be so much more read than it is.

I will think of every person who meets Janie and her Connecticut family and doesn't die inside at the beginning of the book as a robot. A metal, cruel, programmed machine.

And I'm still dealing with the fact that I get more emotional over book than over real life.

How do you decide right from wrong? How do you intentionally hurt someone so you could please yourself or someone else? and why? Why do we put our selfish needs above everything and everyone? Why do we always think we deserve better?

A brilliant book indeed

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### **Shannon says**

I don't remember what happened to Janie, but knowing Caroline B. Cooney, it was something excessively dramatic.

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### **McKenzie Allyshia says**

I feel like I have invested myself enough into the series that I have to keep reading. Although, I did find myself enjoying the second book in this series much more than the first. There was still quite a bit of whiplash emotions, highs and lows, and quite a bit of them petty and ridiculous. I found myself wondering, *what would I have done in this crazy situation?* When I was fifteen, I felt like I was a grown up and should be able to make my own decisions. In fact, I moved out when I was fifteen. However, now that I am over ten years old than that I know that I knew very little of the world. In the end, I still would have reacted so differently than Janie. So incredibly differently. I am having a really hard time relating to any of the characters which I think may be my main hangup.

We will see what the third book brings.

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### **Aimee says**

Janie is now living with the Springs, her biological family. She didn't want to because she sees Frank and Miranda Johnson as her parents, even though their daughter kidnapped her and then left her with them. Janie was forced to move back into the Springs house because she is still a minor.

This would be a horrible situation to be in. In New Jersey is your biological family, whose lives were torn apart twice. Once when you were taken and a second time when you come back. But is your return everything they hoped for, everything they dreamed of?

While in Connecticut there's your parents. The ones that raised you. The only ones you know. The ones you love. They've already lost one daughter, can they live through the loss of another?

Either choice will hurt one family. But how can you choose?

I get that Janie is forced by the court to go back to the Springs because she's still a minor but she doesn't even try to get to know them. I understand her loyalty to her parents but I thought she was missing out on getting to know her biological family. They didn't seem like bad people to me.

I don't know if Janie made the right choice. Especially when she didn't really get to know the Springs. I also don't know if she went back for the right reasons. I get that she loves them but I also think that what Hannah did to them when she joined the cult weighed in on her decision.

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### **Brianna Tinsley says**

Three-year-old Jennie Spring was kidnapped by the daughter of the Javenson family. The Johnson family who was originally the Javenson's renamed Jennie to Janie Spring. Janie has been told she is allergic to milk so she never paid much attention to milk, but one day at school she takes her friend, Sarah-Charlotte, milk carton and discovers the missing little girl's face and believes that it could be her possibly. She doesn't believe it at first and thinks it might be a mistake but then she starts to think and slowly starts to put the pieces together. Now she knows it's her. She wants to meet her real parents in New Jersey, but she doesn't want to upset or leave her parents that she only knew or existed for twelve years. She wants to make everyone happy, but how will it feel to leave her old friends and boyfriend and move to a whole new, different environment with different people. How about a living with new parents and three other brothers and a sister. She doesn't know what to do. There are too many decisions to make. What will she do next? Who will she live with? Caroline B. Cooney does a great job with this book by putting lots of mysteries and twists in it. While she is unraveling the kidnapping mystery in the book she puts you in the book and makes you feel as if you are the character and makes you feel apart of this book. I enjoyed this book

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### **Gina says**

I thought it showed a pretty good understanding of how many of the characters would realistically feel, while leaving others undeveloped. Toward the end, with the FBI interrogation and the time in New York, that feels a little more oddly written and artificial, sometimes weird.

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### **Shally Clark says**

Summary: This is the sequel to The Face on the Milk Carton. It is what happens to Janie after she finds out everything she does about her parents, where she came from and where she feels like she belongs. It is a big test for Janie to see what she really wants as her life has been turned upside-down. She has to grow up fast as she faces the reality of what happens. It is a book about her reaction and she treats those that love her. She has to choose what she really wants while she has pressures from all sides.

My reaction: I liked it because I liked the first book so much. I don't feel like it was the best plot ever. In my

opinion it wouldn't stand really well on its own and because of that, I don't think it is as good. However, I like the emotion and points-of-view of all of the people involved. I like how the author was able to portray Janie's life and situation so well.

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Number of Pages: 199

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## **Nu says**

Eh, onto book 3.

3.5 stars.

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## **LdyGray says**

The Nineties were a special time, full of economic prosperity and invented fears - like being kidnapped by a member of Hare Krishna, I guess?

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## **Carly says**

"What normal decent person swaps families as easily as a pair of ice skates?" says fifteen year old Janie Johnson, or should I say Jennie Springs. In the first book, *The Face On the Milk Carton*, Janie recognizes her face on a milk carton as a three year old girl who was taken from a mall in New Jersey twelve years ago. She finds out that her parents are really her adoptive parents and Janie Johnson was kidnapped before she even met the Johnson's. So who's to blame? It's Hannah. Hannah Javensen, the Johnson's daughter. She came home one day from the cult with a little girl who she claimed was hers and left her to the Johnsons to raise and take care of as their "granddaughter". But the Johnsons were totally unaware that they weren't actually related. Janie was not Hannah Javensen's daughter. With the mystery of this kidnapping now unraveled, Janie's story continues in the sequel *Whatever Happened to Janie?*. She goes to live with her biological parents, the Springs, and their four children as they discover more information about the women responsible for the separation of their family. Caroline B. Cooney's gripping novel *Whatever Happened to Janie* is just as engaging as the first one because of how the author gets the reader to connect and feel for Janie and her family.

Shallow is one word not to use to describe Janie. For example, when Janie meets her real parents for the first time in twelve years, she reacts how any other average fifteen year old girl would. The Springs are complete strangers to her and she is not just going to go by Jennie, call them mom and dad and say "I love you" in a day.

In addition, this book has an extremely engaging plot and really hooks you to want to read more all throughout the novel. *The Face on the Milk Carton* ends in a cliff hanger so the reader wants to go on to the sequel to find out what happens next. You just can't turn away from the book because you want to know if they ever find Hannah, if Janie ever starts to enjoy her real family in New Jersey, what happens to her boyfriend Reeve, and does she ever see the Johnson's again?

Another good element of the book is how much the reader will connect with the characters. For example, I felt bad for Mr. and Mrs. Springs when Janie wasn't trying her hardest to fit in with the family. She just made

her decision that she wanted to be Janie Johnson and not Jennie Springs and they were devastated. The author does a good job making the reader feel like they are there going through all of this with Janie. You can feel the pull on both sides. The Springs have had one less daughter for twelve years and were beyond excited to have her back. But the Johnsons, on the other hand, know Janie as their only child and now are losing her like Hannah and have no idea what they did wrong. The Johnsons were full of desperation, which they showed when Janie said her last goodbyes. "Janie hugged her father one last time, her father said nothing, just kissed his beloved daughter. A single tear came down his cheek, taking its time, finding every wrinkle and crack." But after a shocking decision made by Janie, the feelings reverse. With its original characters, gripping plot, and satisfying ending, *Whatever Happened to Janie* is a great read for anyone who enjoys some mystery.

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### **Nancy Chaffin says**

Overview: The book begins with an account of the anguish and fear the Spring family suffered as they dealt with the kidnapping of their daughter. The police were unable to find any trace of the little girl and the entire family suffered and grieved for twelve years.

In another part of the country, Janie Johnson discovered a picture of a missing girl on the cover of a milk carton and realized it was her face. She wrestled with the knowledge and finally revealed the truth to her boyfriend. After consulting with his lawyer sister, the Johnson family determined that their daughter Hannah had kidnapped the little girl and justice demanded that Janie should be returned to her biological family.

Janie is overwhelmed, frightened, and angry at the idea of leaving her family, her friends, and her home to go to a family she knows nothing about. The Springs are thrilled and overwhelmed that their daughter is coming "home." Cooney effectively illustrates the heartwrenching challenge for everyone as she portrays the homesickness, conflicting feelings, and anger present in Janie and her siblings. Janie loved the family that raised her and felt that she was betraying them by transferring her love to the Springs. The Springs were confused and heartbroken that Janie could not embrace and enjoy her family. In the end, she chose to return to the family that raised her and both families are rocked to their core from the experience. Her brother and sister travel to New York to seek revenge on the Johnson's daughter, Hannah, who was the source of all their pain. When a policeman points out the tragic life of the homeless, they realize she has suffered more sorrow and pain than any of them as a result of her choices.

This book draws the reader in from the beginning and effectively portrays the complications that exist in familial relationships. Young adults of split families could well relate to the difficulty of loving one family while feeling disloyal to another. They could also relate to the intense emotions the young people felt as they dealt with these painful relationships.

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### **Jen says**

In some ways, this is actually better than the first book, *The Face on the Milk Carton*. Janie's been told she

has to go live with her birth family, and this opens up the delightfully awful complexity of what family really is. Being a person who staunchly opposes the idea that "family" only means the people who share your DNA, I really like that Cooney took the time to examine this. Your blood family will always be a part of who are you, even if you haven't known them most of your life, but they aren't it. Sometimes, you're needed elsewhere, by other people, and that may hurt everyone involved, but it can hurt marginally less if there is a reason to be part of another family, a family of different definitions.

I also give absolute props to Cooney for the last five or so pages detailing the journey to New York for Hannah, who has done so much to ruin their lives. Although the storyline on how they got there is a bit weak, the things that are said about humanity and life and choices are just fabulous; true gems in a YA novel can be hard to come by, but this is one of them. A marvelous sequel, and one I'm very glad was written with such lack of fear of Very Big Topics.

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### **Andrew Holm says**

This book is not what I expected. I expected a story about someone getting kidnapped, but instead, it was about a girl coming back home from fake parents. It kinda lacked action because it was just a storyline about people's feelings for Janie. I would not recommend this book.

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### **Emily McConnell says**

Well, this book was about what I expected. Again the mystery was good and I enjoyed how realistic Janie/Jennie's reactions were. The family interactions were spot on, I could really feel for all the characters. I'd say as far as mystery goes this book wasn't as intriguing, but still a good read and a good sequel.

It had by far less sexual innuendos and references compared to the first book, but enough I wouldn't advise this for anyone who considers that against their moral beliefs. To be honest, for myself, I won't be reading the rest of the books because I suspect that will only get worse as Janie gets older.

The quality of the writing is really, really good, though. Quite inspiring and well done, I was very impressed by that. Overall I'd say morally this book was better than the first but intrigue-wise a little less suspenseful.

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### **sh(e)reader says**

As I finished book one, I did feel compelled to continue on. As the title states, I the reader DID wonder "whatever happened to Janie". It was an interesting, and sad, read. Just a happy/sad situation, imaginary as it was.

I think I liked this book better than the first. There wasn't as much random thoughts from Janie (which rubbed me wrong in the first book). There was much more closure to this book, than book one as well. I might have been happy calling it quits here, but a short portion of the next book was included ... and I think I'll go ahead and continue reading about Janie's journey (once it comes in at the library).

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## **Jeanie says**

Whatever Happened to Janie is the continuation of a young girl finding out that she was kidnapped at 3 years old. You go thru her emotions of leaving the only family she ever knew to coming back to the family that missed and thought the worst of what happened to Janie. I liked the second one so much better. It shows the struggles of all families that we may never think about. It was a story that resonated with me in that my parents divorced at a young age and I went to live with my dad. I did however, move in with my mother when I was the same age as Janie and I resonated well with all those emotions. It was a very surreal time and the story showed the pain of both families. It also showed the love of letting go. Love is never forced. Love is most revealed when there is freedom and I am looking forward to the next book to see how that love flourishes for both families.

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## **Georgia K says**

I gave four stars to the first one, this one managed to blow me away.

After contacting her real parents, Janie is sent to live with them without contacting home for at least three months. Once there, she is nothing like they expected. Everyone expected her to be happy to be back, instead she acts depressed and wants her old parents back. Her real parents, the Springs, try to compromise, but the problem is the little things like apple juice instead of orange juice in the morning and being expected to respond to Jennie instead of Janie.

The best part about this book was that there was no way it was going to work out, and you knew that from the start. So in the end when Janie decided what to do, you know that it was what she really would do. And you could tell that the author was doing her best to get into Janie's shoes. And Janie's relationships with those around her seemed real, there was great character development.

I literally couldn't put this book down, and therefore almost killed myself on the street while not paying attention. A quick, one day read, but very complex and it makes you want more. I can't wait to read the next one!

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