



## Jacquelyn

*Jeffie Ross Gordon*

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**How can she think only of herself in these hard times?**

Living in Chicago in the 1930s, during the Great Depression, Jacquelyn Penelope Carleton sees poverty and suffering everywhere. But as the daughter of one of the richest families in the city, she never expects to experience it herself. Then her father loses his fortune in the crash and suffers a debilitating stroke. Suddenly Jacky must support her entire family, and she has never worked a day in her life!

Kind, handsome Stefan offers her marriage as an escape from her problems, and David opens her eyes to the dazzling, turbulent world of show business. She must choose between the two men, but doing so will tear her heart in two. Should she choose the comfort of safety or risk everything for excitement?

## Jacquelyn Details

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## From Reader Review Jacquelyn for online ebook

### Abby says

Waxing Nostalgic- Jacquelyn has to learn to give up her wealthy life and work hard for her family in the depression. She does learn to work and care for others and she learns to love.

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### Cindy says

I originally read this series back in the 80s, checking them out from my elementary school library. Having re-read them as an adult I think they stand the test of time and are still relevant as far as historical fiction is concerned.

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### Edallia says

The title doesn't indicate that this is part of the Sunfire series, but it's actually Sunfire #12.

I subjected myself to a Sunfire re-reading project (yes, I have re-purchased the entire series, save for five I already owned), because I loved these books so much as a kid. They were already out of print when I started reading them the first time, therefore they were hard to find and I never got to read some of them, including *Jacquelyn*.

This book was just such a pleasant little thing to read. The plot is pretty simple: Jacquelyn Carleton lives in the ritzy part of Chicago with her wealthy parents in 1931. Jacky's never had to work or worry about much, and her rich boyfriend, Broderick, has just proposed. Soon enough, it all crumbles when she finds out that the Carleton's financial empire has fallen victim to the Depression, stressed-out Daddy suffers a debilitating stroke and Mother promptly departs reality and doesn't return.

Jacky does her best to hold it all together, with the help of long-lost Aunt Penny, who returns to the family. The mansion is sold, and Jacky must look for a job. Jacky has trouble keeping steady employment, Broderick appears to be ditching her for her cousin who's still rich, and most worrying of all, she suspects that her brother Baxter is mixed up in criminal dealings.

It feels like so much happens in this book, yet the storyline never feels rushed or overfull. Everything develops at a very natural pace. This is made a little easier by the fact that this novel covers nearly two years, a much longer time span than a typical Sunfire. (By the end, Jacky is the oldest Sunfire heroine at almost 19.)

The details of the time period are nicely integrated, and the descriptive details of the setting are well-chosen and do a wonderful job of evoking the scenery. The novel provides a glimpse into the highest and lowest of society in Depression-era Chicago, and everything in between. I feel like I got a real picture of a time and a place. In addition, the dialogue is \*fantastic\* and sparkling and witty, and there were times when I actually laughed out loud.

The romantic plot is fantastic, besides. The story takes its time, and although Jacky's ultimate choice isn't a

surprise, the road to true love is less predictable. Jacky develops an attraction to Stefan Ericsson, who does propose, but her feelings for him seem to stem mainly from Jacky's warm attachment to his large, loving family, and it is made very clear that she'll lose her best friend, Stefan's sister Heidi, if she rejects him. The painful choice quite believably keeps Jacky from breaking with Stefan so quickly.

This novel is so much more clearly about Jacky growing up than about her romance- we don't even meet her ultimate match, David Burns, until halfway through the book. David, a professional dancer, helps Jacky get a job at a local theater, and it's really only then that Jacky begins to assert herself, to find her vocation, and to figure out what she wants out of life. I enjoyed Jacky's romance with David. They banter adorably, seem genuinely, giddily in love, and we are actually given quite a few scenes in which they get to interact and allow their relationship to develop. It's very satisfying given the prevalence of "instant love! Just add water!" in this series.

The only gripe I have (and it isn't quite big enough to subtract a star) is the re-introduction of Aunt Penny into the Carleton's lives. Penny was disowned long ago for marrying a poor man, and Jacky and Baxter have always been told that she was dead. She's a necessary part of the story, but did her backstory have to be so melodramatic and cliched? Especially since the rest of the story was relatively free from it? I did appreciate one thing about that storyline, though: Penny vehemently disapproves of David and pushes Jacky towards Stefan and stability. But Penny defied her family for a poor guy! Yeah, and it wasn't always parties and kittens, either. Being poor sucks! That Penny would admit this is refreshing after reading a bunch of "love conquers all" plotlines, and it made me laugh out loud.

Y'all, these books are starting to melt my brain. Someone help me! Also, the resolution of Baxter's storyline falls a wee tad flat, and I was disappointed, but I can live with it. Gordon kept a tight focus on Jacky, as she should have, since it is ultimately her story. Why couldn't she have written more than two Sunfires? She rules!

Verdict: I just loved it. In retrospect, it's not perfect, but it was such sweet, fluffy fun, and I loved the relationship between Jacky and David, and the fun, crackling dialogue. Definitely one for collectors.

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### **Karla says**

I loved this book, mainly because it was a STORY and not just about one girl's tough decision about whom to date.

Gordon (actually a 2 woman writing team) brought the Depression era to life, as much as YA literature goes into the nitty-gritty, anyway. The heroine finds her inner strength when her cushy lifestyle is stripped away from her in the aftermath of the Crash and discovers just how shallow that life was, and how useless her upper-class girls' school "education" really is in the desperate, clawing world of unemployment and shattered bank accounts. Fine embroidery is useless working a candy box factory machine, and Jacky suffers one humiliation after another as she tries to scrape money together for her family. She's one of the more admirable Sunfire heroines because of her perseverance and her lack of "speshulness." Throughout the story, she is very real and likable in her drive to do something useful, her failure in job after job very realistic, given her lack of skills.

The weakness in this one (hence the dock of 1 star) was Jacky's mother, who because of the downturn in their lifestyle, mentally reverts to being a child. It was absurd - not saying it couldn't happen in real life - but

it seemed to be a bit too much. Sunfires suffer sometimes from making the adults worthless in order to make the heroine seem more mature and responsible, and in this respect "Jacquelyn" was typical.

Another weakness was Jacquelyn's Swedish immigrant suitor, Stefan. He was so overbearingly "traditional" (marry me, stay home and make babies) that I knew he was destined to exit the story sometime. It was a bit out of the Sunfire ordinary, however, because usually the "down home" guy gets the girl, while Mr. Brash-and-Flashy-Pants is arrogant and never scores. Not so here. Said Mr. Brash-and-Flash-Pants, David Burns, is a showbiz hoofer with all the decency that the Sunfire farmboys usually have and he had lots of good dialogue. Most of the easygoing, adaptable people did, in this book - the traditional people were stuffy. I have no idea if the toff on the cover is supposed to be Burns. My guess is he is Jacky's money- and society-conscious, and short-lived, fiance Broderick Stokes III. But if he's supposed to be David Burns, I had a mental image of him being like James Cagney (a hoofer himself) rather than some guy with hooded eyes in a poofy blouse and cravat. In about 40 years, that guy looks like he's going to wind up on Gilligan's Island.

The third weakness was Jacky's brother Baxter. It was obvious that what he was up to wasn't what it seemed. The dragging out of the "omg, he's a gangster!" story was a bit weak, but he was a snappy character, so all is forgiven.

Overall, a great read and a fun return to the Sunfire label after being burned out on a spate of Vivian Schurfranz' atrocities. This one is an automatic keeper if you're a pragmatic collector. (However, I want the PBS credit, so out it goes!)

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### **Reading with Cats says**

I liked this one, but have to admit that I found Aunt Penny to be really annoying. She gets all judgmental that Jacky is dancing in a chorus line, but doesn't seem to do anything to help put food on the table. Bitch, please, when you're mooching off your teenage niece you have no room to look down on anyone else.

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### **Jessica says**

Probably one of my favorite Sunfires yet. Jacky is a pampered princess when the Depression turns her world upside down. She must learn many things and quickly. She must learn how to take care of a recently bed-ridden father, a mother who is not really there, and must deal with the finances of her family. Her brother, Bax, sends money, but he's always away with his mysterious friends. How is he getting so much money? Why isn't her fiancee, Broderick, calling on her? Where can she find a job? All these problems and more our quirky and independent heroine must struggle to overcome.

And of course, figure out who her true love is. That's a given in any Sunfire. If it were me, I would've made Broderick a bigger character as well as the cousin, but since I can't...

The heros Jacky chooses from are Stefan and David, both of whom don't appear until about a hundred pages in. That's something else I would change, but it wouldn't have made sense for a Swedish immigrant or a struggling dancer to show up in high society, would it?

Anyway, what really made me like this book was Jacky. Even though everything is going against her, she

maintains a smile and remains optimistic of brighter days. She tries so hard to be independent, cause she is sick of relying on men. Another character trait she has that is so different from other Sunfire girls is that she doesn't want to love anyone again, and she has to let someone in. Can she learn to love again? Read it and find out. Really, if you're trying to start a Sunfire collection, get this one.

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