

Whatever Happened to Janie? Study Guide

Whatever Happened to Janie? by Caroline B. Cooney

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Plot Summary

Whatever Happened To Janie by Caroline B. Cooney is the second in a series titled "The Janie Books," which centers on the events and consequences of the kidnapping of Jennie Spring. In this second book, Jennie has already discovered her three and a half year old face on the back of a milk carton. Twelve years have passed since she was taken, and she has grown up as Janie Johnson two states away from where she was kidnapped in New Jersey. This book picks up after Janie has told her boyfriend that she found her face on a carton, and following a great deal of indecision on her part, finally follows up on it to assure her real parents that she is alright. The court session that soon follows grants the Spring parents custody of the minor, Jennie, and she is sent home.

For everyone involved, this is a nightmare. The couple who raise Jennie as Janie do so unaware that she was kidnapped, believing her to be their granddaughter after their troubled daughter Hannah drops her off with them one day asking them to raise her. They do so, and almost thirteen years later, they are losing her just like they lost their only daughter Hannah and at close to the same age. The effects are devastating. The Spring family is in a state of chaos, waiting to welcome home the middle daughter who has three brothers and a sister waiting anxiously for her arrival. Janie doesn't want to go. She doesn't want to be Jennie. She doesn't want to be ripped out of the life she knows, and live with strangers. She's terrified, but she goes because the court gives her no choice. The Johnson parents are supportive and tell Janie that she has to try and want her to behave like the daughter they raised. Janie tries, but not hard. Her mind is at home with what she considers to be her real parents. She misses them so badly that she aches inside, crying herself to sleep most nights in the beginning. Jodie, who shares her bedroom with her long lost sister is devastated. She'd had dreams all her life of what it would be like to have a sister so close to her age at home with her. She wanted nights giggling under the covers, a sister she could share her deepest secrets with, and someone who would know her in a way no friend could. Jodie had a vision of what life would be like, but it isn't.

Janie ignores the family when they address her as Jennie, complains about the style of food that they all eat (including occasional junk foods like pizza), and uses every opportunity to let the Spring household know that they are not her family. Slowly, she begins to relax. They start to have some almost normal days together as a family. Jennie realizes that she actually likes the Spring family, but deep down somewhere inside, she feels like this is a betrayal to her 'real' parents at the same time. She knows that without her there, the Johnson parents have fallen apart emotionally. A visit from the police announcing that they intend to search for and charge Hannah Johnson pushes Jennie over the edge. The next morning she quietly tells the mother who waited thirteen years for news of her daughter and could hardly wait to wrap her arms around her again that she wants to go back to her real parents. She wants to go home.

The older Spring children, Stephen and Jodie, believe Jennie is a spoiled brat who is willfully devastating their parents, and they deeply resent her behavior at first, but the resentment is soon transferred to Hannah, the catalyst of the entire nightmare.



Determined to do something about it, Stephen and Jodie make their way to New York City where Hannah was last seen. They are convinced that by searching soup kitchens they will be able to pick up her trail. It is an eye opening day for both Spring children as they cope with the incredible press of people in the downtown core. After almost losing Jodie, they decide to finally head home. Stephen and Jodie realize on the train that they are no longer angry. In fact, they resolve to visit Janie in the summer at her home with the Johnson family and get to know their sister better.



Chapter 1 and 2

Chapter 1 and 2 Summary

Whatever Happened To Janie by Caroline B. Cooney is the second in a series titled 'The Janie Books,' which centers on the events and consequences of the kidnapping of Jennie Spring. In this second book, Jennie has already discovered her three and a half year old face on the back of a milk carton. Twelve years have passed since she was taken, and she has grown up as Janie Johnson two states away from where she was kidnapped in New Jersey. This book picks up after Janie has told her boyfriend that she found her face on a carton, and following a great deal of indecision on her part, finally follows up on it to assure her real parents that she is alright. The court session that soon follows grants the Spring parents custody of the minor, Jennie, and she is sent home.

Jodie and Stephen lived a different life after Jennie was kidnapped. It so altered their freedom and ability to have friends that Stephen came to hate Jennie for the way their lives were. When he finally vocalized that feeling, no one yelled. In fact, at dinner, Dad had everyone join hands at the table and he said a goodbye prayer for Jennie, giving her spirit to the Angels. The hardest part for Jodie to reconcile was the fact that her sister Jennie hadn't suffered at all. In fact, she'd had a great life with parents who loved her. It meant that the horrors had all been in their mind. Brian and Brendan were just babies and had no memory of Jennie, but Jodie had high expectations. She spent hours cleaning her room and filling it with details that left no doubt that Jennie was welcome. Jodie thought about how they would tell each other everything, and uses her own money to buy scented shelf liners. A hand mirror with Jennie on it was on the bureau and Jodie couldn't help but notice that her mother hadn't stopped shaking since she got the news, and begged her not to hyperventilate. Jennie was coming the next day and Jodie could hardly wait.

At her home in Connecticut, Janie is getting ready to meet her family. Mrs. Johnson is coming apart at the seams emotionally. Janie begs her not to be angry with her and tries to hug her but there is no return hug. When Mrs. Johnson tells her that she isn't her mother, Janie is devastated. Sarah-Charlotte, Janie's best friend, insist they have a party, but the mood is somber. It is more like a wake than a party, but after what feels like will be their last real hug, Janie lets go of her mother and goes downstairs with Reeve with as bright a smile on her face as she can muster.

Chapter 1 and 2 Analysis

Dad held Jodie and Stephen's hands as he took them to school each day after their sister was kidnapped. They were never permitted to take the bus and all the way to sixth grade they went from father to class to father again. In grade four, Stephen refused to hold anyone's hand and for the first time expressed a hatred for Jennie and how she had changed their lives forever. Finally their Father said a prayer and gave Jennie to the



angels. Then, as though a weight had been lifted, they began to behave in an almost normal manner. When Jennie came back into their lives, Stephen was resentful all over again, thinking that she should have suffered the way they had. Jodie, on the other hand, is as excited as her mother, and apprehensive also. She wants Jennie to be her sister in the worst way, but fears the unknown.

Jennie is trying to adjust, but is terrified. On one hand she has the only family she has ever known, her parents, who now are acting almost like strangers, and on the other hand she had her birth parents who terrify her for reasons she can't understand. Will they like her? Will she feel at home there? Will she get there and feel as though she belongs, or will they continue to be a house full of strangers. A big part of her is sorry she ever saw the milk carton with her face on it... sorry she ever said anything to anyone. She feels like she ruined everything. Upstairs, her mother joins her and holds her one last time. Janie begs her not to be mad, and she assures her she isn't. She admits that she is mad at Hannah, and almost adds that she is mad at the Springs too for taking her from them, but doesn't. Inside however, she is furious that the Springs want her back. No one had threatened, but they had said that if Jennie came home, they could see no reason to search for and prosecute Hannah. Janie knows the Johnsons aren't strong enough for that. She pastes on her cheeriest face and heads downstairs to attend to her guests.



Chapters 3 and 4

Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson are unable to drive the distance required to take Jennie back to the Springs, so one of the lawyers would do so instead. Reeve stood staring out the window, waiting for the car to arrive that would take away his girlfriend... the girl he loved. He thinks about how frightened she is and how withdrawn she has been lately. It seemed unfair of the Springs to insist that she have no contact with the Johnson's or him for at least three months. His mother did what she always did when faced with emotional crisis.... she baked. She tries to assure Reeve that the Springs are only thinking of her well being, but Reeve can't stop thinking about his final senior year without her. What about the prom? A black car pulls into the driveway and suddenly Reeve doesn't want to go outside and make this final. His mother hands him a casserole to take to the Johnson's and Reeve almost refuses, but when he turns around he sees that his mother is crying. His tears began to fall as well and he can't go out by himself. He asks her to come out with him, and together they go out to say goodbye. Janie hugs them one at a time, telling Reeve he looks great before hugging the Johnson's one more time, and getting into the car. Mrs. Shields takes the shell-shocked Johnsons into the house, leaving Reeve standing in the driveway with the cookies he was supposed to give to Janie.

Stephen can hardly wait to leave the cramped home they've lived in all his life. He was eternally restless and could hardly wait to be living somewhere that his parents were no longer able to keep such close tabs on him. He didn't blame his parents. He blamed Jennie, although that was unfair as well. She was only three when she was taken, after all. His parents had been afraid to move, afraid to change their phone number, even though that wasn't reasonable either. Three year old Jennie would not have remembered either. Still, they stayed in the house that grew increasingly smaller, and now they were going to bring in another person. Stephen couldn't count the number of times he wanted to tell his mother that she was dead, it was over. Then the phone rings one day and his mother picks it up. Her face turns white and for a moment Stephen thinks she might collapse. He thought someone had died and then she told him that they found her. Jennie had seen herself on a milk carton! He tells himself he will adjust, but he is not excited. Stephen is resentful.

Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

No one slept very well on that last night. Reeve argues with his mother about going over to say goodbye, knowing that the Johnson's would accept him like always and treat him like a member of the family. He stayed though, looking out the window while his mother busied herself baking and cooking for the Johnson's. He thinks about how withdrawn Janie has been, how she's hardly spoken more than a few words at a time. Finally, a big, black car pulls into their shared driveway, and Reeve discovers that he is unable to



go out there alone. He turns to his mother, and sees the tears on her face. It is enough to start his own, and he asks her to go outside with him, needing her support. They stand out there together as Janie makes the rounds, hugging Reeve and backing up again. For Reeve, the experience is totally unsatisfying as she gets into the car and it pulls out of the driveway. He stands there, still holding the meal his mother had baked to give to Janie and still trying to reconcile what life will be like without her.

Stephen has a rage inside that he is afraid to face. The only time it seems to be under control is when he has managed to 'work it off'. He joined the swim team in his Sophomore year, and the exercise was just what he needed to dampen his rage that year, but he was also restless. He dreamed of living on the opposite coast, where he could have a life that wasn't under constant supervision. In the meantime, he trained himself not to show the rage he felt. He had many friends, but had never really bared his soul to anyone, or shared the hatred he felt for Jennie for putting them in the position they were in. Of course, that made little sense, and he knew it. Still, he resented how fearful his whole family had lived since that fateful day in the mall when Hannah had taken Jennie from the mall. A week before Christmas, his mother had received the call that had once again thrown a wrench into their lives. Jennie has seen herself on a milk carton.



Chapters Five and Six

Chapters Five and Six Summary

Janie has never shared a room before in her life, and moving in with Jodie is an experience for her. She cannot tell her twin brothers, Brian and Brendan apart, and they offer jokingly to wear name tags for her. Her oldest brother, Stephen, has darker red hair and Janie finds herself a little afraid of him. The worst of it all is that she feels no connection whatsoever to the couple she now knows are actually her mother and father, so she continues to call them Mr. and Mrs. Spring instead of Mom and Dad. Of course the whole family calls her Jennie, which never feels like her. The house even smells different. They eat food her other family doesn't and she is so homesick that she is actually ill and felt that way most of the time. Showers happen on timers because everyone shares a single bathroom and it seems as though there isn't room for anything. She is barely able to endure a hug from Mrs. Spring and despite their best efforts, can't imagine hugging her back. Finally Jodie suggests that she pretend it is summer camp. At first you are a little homesick, and before you know it you are having the best time of your life. When Mr. Spring tries to hug her, she backs away and his face falls. Finally, she apologizes, telling them that she is really trying, but has been taken from her family twice. That comment makes Jodie mad and she reminds Jennie that she called them and that no one took her from the Johnsons because she wanted to come. Janie corrects her miserably, telling her that she just wanted them to know she was okay. Mrs. Spring tells her she loves her, and her very touch is alien.

They attempt to make all of her classes the same, but she cannot stop thinking about what was going on in her school, with her friends. She has General Chorus instead of the Silversmithing course she was taking at home. Jodie can see the similarities between Jennie and her father. They have the same wild hair, and even stand the same, lifting their chins alike. Jodie's friends press her for information, but she has little to give. When she tells them how Jennie seems to take to her bed as though it is a refuge, her friends are sorry, but not for Jodie. They feel bad for Jennie, who just recently, they point out to Jodie, lost her mother and father. Jodie is angry and defensive when she points out that Jennie just got her mother and father back. Nicole and Caitlin do their best to be supportive and try to reign in their curiosity. In the midst of everything else, Jodie had almost forgotten about Hannah and the FBI and how much she hated this faceless woman who took her sister from her so many years ago.

Chapters Five and Six Analysis

For the first few days, Janie was physically afraid. Instead of being the intelligent, happy daughter of Frank and Miranda Johnson, she was turning into the three year old girl who went missing from Donna and Jonathan Spring. Her vocabulary dropped until she barely spoke at all and she had to keep reminding herself that this was her family. It was odd to be around so many people who looked like her - red haired, curly, pale skinned



just like she was. That's where she felt the similarities ended. Her sister Jodie thrashed and moaned in her sleep at night, leaving the radio on beside her all night long; her twin brothers look so much alike that she can't tell them apart; her brother Stephen looks at her as though he hates her, or resents her at the very least; and Mr. and Mrs. Spring, whom she can't bring herself to call Mom and Dad, are determined to hug, touch, and be close to her when she still sees them as perfect strangers. She misses her mother and father so bad that she can hardly breathe and the thought of Reeve makes her stomach ache with loneliness. All of this despite how happy this family tells her they are to have her 'home.'

The high school is generic and decorated with art projects. Janie tries to blend in and to be part of the crowd, but her mind keeps going back to Connecticut. She worries how her mother is doing and hopes that she is okay. Her first class is Chorus. Janie can't sing. She sticks it out however, even managing to smile a time or two in the process. Jodie thinks that she and Jennie would live like twins - sharing everything and talking into the small hours of the night. The reality however is entirely different. Jennie is distant and seems frightened of everything. Jodie watches as her mother and father do all that they can to make Jennie feel welcome, and yet in return they get called Mr. & Mrs. Spring, hear Jeannie telling them how perfect her life before them was and how much she loves her mom and dad. Jodie is trying, but a part of her is angry. Jennie didn't even seem to be trying. She called their parents Mr. and Mrs., and won't let them near her and the dreams that they all had about some grand reunion are simply not going to happen. Everyone keeps telling Jodie that it will take time, but unlike Jennie, Jodie has had years to think about what a reunion would be. She had hoped to be gaining a twin like sister that would laugh and giggle and share secrets with her, and instead she behaves as though she is a stranger. She can hardly bear watching her parents try so hard to get so little.



Chapters Seven and Eight

Chapters Seven and Eight Summary

Jennie can hardly believe the chaos that erupts on the weekends in the Spring household. Between Spring offspring and their friends, the house was a constant melee of people coming and going and often staying. On her second weekend, the twin's friends invaded and though they were sent to the family room downstairs, there was a constant coming and going for food, drinks, or just to throw Nerf balls at everyone. Stephen's friends show up to play Nintendo, and Nicole came over to get help with the outfit she planned to wear in a fashion contest she'd entered, hoping to win the five hundred dollar prize for most unusual outfit. She had a mini dress and was sewing Matchbox cars all over it. All Janie can think of is how pathetic it is. She is quickly lured into service, given a needle and thread and told to begin sewing as there were plenty to go around. The dress soon looks like armor and Janie laughs. Soon the dynamic changes again as Mr. Spring comes in to watch sports and dinner is started in the kitchen. Janie is again pressed into service, and wonders if she'll ever find any of this normal. Then, standing there, she realizes that for the most part, she already has. At one point, she even joins the conversation, telling them that she used to ride regularly and compete in shows. Stephen is angry and the rest are all staring at her, but she has no idea what she's said that was wrong. Brian pipes up that her parents must be rich. That comment makes Stephen even more angry as he insists that her parents were right there. Jennie quietly tells him that she didn't know that but Stephen isn't ready to let it go. He says what everyone was likely thinking. You were three, he insists, and old enough to speak sentences and why hadn't she told them that her name was Jennie and she wanted to go home? Jennie admits that she wonders that herself, and lives with the guilt of not remembering. When Brendan tries to defend her by blaming everything on the horrible Johnsons' who took her, Jennie leaps to their defense, insisting she loved her parents, they were wonderful people and she loved them. Most of all, they were her parents and she loved them.

Her first exam at school creates a conundrum for Jennie as she struggles to decide which name to use. She begins by putting a 'J', then Jennie, and finally, just before handing it in, she scratches out Jennie and defiantly puts Janie at the top instead. After school, the whole family attends the basketball game that the twins are playing in. Brendan is amazing on the court, scoring twenty one points, and Brian is left behind on the bench because his game is less than stellar. Janie is surprised to discover that Jodie is taking Japanese for the third year now, and when she says so, Stephen is ready with a quick barb, so Janie goes back to sit beside Mrs. Johnson, in front of whom Stephen would never talk that way to her. When the game is over, Jennie walks to the car, leaving the rest of the family behind. Mr. Spring walks after them, and Jodie watches from a distance praying that Jennie is nice to him. A celebratory pizza is planned, but again any ground gained by Jennie is lost when she tells the family that her mother didn't believe in junk food. That night she cries herself to sleep and waking not long afterward, the tears are back. She goes downstairs and asks to call her mother,



bursting into tears again. Her mother and father sound the same as always, and she aches with the phrases in her head like 'come and get me'. She tells them she loves them, and after they talk to Mr. Spring, Jennie is told she can call them whenever she wants to. She tells the Johnsons she loves them, forgetting for a moment that the Springs were right behind her. Then she turns to say thank you and goodnight, noting how hard they are trying to keep their composure. Again Jennie feels guilty for not trying harder, and she hurries back upstairs, this time afraid that she just didn't have enough love to go around.

Chapters Seven and Eight Analysis

Jennie makes it through a week of school and again has an example of just how different things are at the Spring house than they were with the Johnson's. Here, there was no symphony, no theater, no antique shopping, no museum visiting and no quiet. That was the hardest thing for her to get used to. The Spring house erupted into commotion each day, and the weekends were even busier. Just as Jennie is beginning to wonder if she'll ever get used to all the hubbub, she realizes with a start that she has already. A wave of guilt washes over her as she thinks about her mother and father at home, and feels like a traitor for liking this family that took her from them. Slowly though, she tries to fit in, and even tries to contribute to the conversation, but when she tells them just a bit about her home life, Stephen becomes angry. He can't understand why she never told the Johnson's just to take her home. Jennie is filled with guilt over that one as well, but nothing she can say or do now will change that. Brendan tries to be the peacemaker and get her off the hook. He puts the blame squarely on the Johnson's shoulders, blaming them for everything and insisting that they'd probably tortured her but that she'd likely blocked it out. Jennie is horrified, springing to their defense and insisting they were wonderful people that she loved very much.

Jennie feels as though she and Janie were two different people. When the first exam is given to her, she struggles with what name to put at the top. At first, she just puts a 'J', symbolic of both names but then remembers what she and her parents had discussed. To keep them safe, she had to become Jennie. Deliberately and with great care, she wrote her birth name for the first time. When she looks up, her teacher is staring at her with what appears to be great interest. The basketball game that the twins are playing in is attended by the whole family after school. Brendan is amazing on the court but Brian spends most of the time on the bench and the jealousy and frustration is evident. Stephen is inordinately nasty to her at times and a part of Janie understands that he is just trying to protect his parents, but the other half of her still hates him a little for his barbs and snide comments when his parents aren't around. She knows deep down that she has to talk to them, but even just the thought feels like a betrayal to Reeve, Mommy and Daddy. Jodie tentatively mentions that Brian must be struggling inside and Jennie agrees. Mr. Spring asks her if she plays basketball and without thinking she tells him that her Daddy coached soccer and he asks her nothing more. She knew she was being cruel but couldn't seem to help herself. Every time she took a step forward with them, she followed it with two steps backward, making up for the slip and reminding them all that she already has a family. A part of her almost blames the Springs, but deep down



she realizes it isn't their fault either. That night, she put her head into her pillow and cried. She woke up crying a short time later. She went downstairs and when they said hello, she begged them to let her call her mother. Mrs. Spring immediately told her it was okay and tries to tell her that she understands Jennie is frightened. When her mother answers the phone, Janie can do nothing but cry and Mrs. Johnson tries to calm her, telling her she knows how hard this all is. She tells Janie that they all have to make adjustments and accept some change, but Janie, stubbornly resists. All she can think of is them and how she hates that she can't go home. After telling them she loves them and hanging up, she turns to see the Springs trying hard to keep their composure and a part of her heart goes out to them in spite of everything.



Chapters Nine and Ten

Chapters Nine and Ten Summary

Jennie gets herself some books from the library and begins reading late into the night since Jodie sleeps with the light on. As days turn into weeks, what seems so strange at first becomes routine. She, Jodie and Mrs. Spring go to Scissors for haircuts, and Mrs. Spring admits that it has been months since her last cut. Jennie can hardly believe it. When Jennie suggests that the hairdresser cut her hair short like Jodie's, Jodie steps in and begs her not to. Later at home, Jodie introduces her to Super Mario for the first time. It takes her a while to learn how to manipulate the character, but even then she can't keep up to Stephen and Jodie. For a whole afternoon, she forgets how miserable and lonely she is, and has fun with her siblings. The reality of that slaps her, and she immediately reverts to her spoiled personae.

Reeve is excited. He has his first college acceptance in hand, and can't wait to share it with Janie. He was eager to see her face light up, and listen to her tell him how wonderful it is. Jodie talks to Caitlin on the phone, admitting her outburst and disappointment in herself. Caitlin suggests that she find a diplomatic solution - become Switzerland. She gets off the phone feeling the weight of depression. When the phone rings and Jennie discovers her mother calling, she is so thrilled, but that quickly evaporates when she tells Jennie that she and Frank (not she and Daddy) have had a long talk with Mr. and Mrs. Spring. They know that she isn't trying, and chastise her for not being more like the daughter they raised. They both cry, and Jennie asks what happens if she wants to come home, but the Johnsons are resolute. They remind her to keep her notebook up to date like always, writing down what she wants to accomplish, and to resolve to be a Spring from here on forward. Reeve parks the Jeep on the road, goes to the door and rings the doorbell. When Stephen answers it, Reeve sticks out his hand and introduces himself. Stephen lets him in, and he introduces himself to the Spring parents. He is immediately offered food and when he asks if Janie is home, he is gently corrected.... Jennie. She came into the room and he grabbed her up in his arms, throwing her in the air and catching her.

Chapters Nine and Ten Analysis

Every morning Jennie wakes up and reminds herself to be nice, but though she manages it on occasion, most of the time she is still deliberately mean. She picks up college brochures, interested for the first time in the idea of going somewhere that there was no parental competition. The days roll into weeks and Janie begins to get used to being Jennie. Sometimes, like when she, Jodie and Stephen wrapped themselves in video games one afternoon, she can even forget for a while that she misses her mother and father so much, but then the truth comes crashing in again.. Janie feels as though making friends with this family somehow is a betrayal and as soon as she makes any headway, she immediately sabotages it again. This time, she is so unspeakably rude



that Jodie snaps right back at her, apologizing that they aren't her other family. When Stephen tries to intervene, Jodie insists that Jennie isn't even trying, and Stephen reminds her that she had. For two whole hours, she'd been happy and polite. Perhaps it is all she is capable of at once, he tells Jodie. Jodie screams that she hates her, telling her that she's caused their family nothing but suffering since she was three. Then she admits all of the hopes that she'd had for them as sisters and yells that she is mean, spoiled, and bites off the rest as Mr. and Mrs. Spring return. Janie knows that she'd choreographed that fight all by herself, but says nothing. No one knew what to say.

Reeve had lived next door to Janie for as long as he could remember, and when he got near her, it was all he could do to remember to breathe. Now, with his first college acceptance in hand, he wants to share it with her so bad that he is ready to drive down to see her despite his, and both sets of her parents objections. He still didn't understand why Janie had to leave for good. Why couldn't visiting be established. Janie had written him twice from school without their knowledge, asking a girl at school to mail it for her. Though the Johnsons still spoke to him when they saw him, somehow the subject of Janie never comes up. He asks his mother about it and she tells him that their grief is still too raw. When he gets to the Spring house, he barely hesitates before walking right up and introducing himself to Stephen who opened the door. Next, he says hello to Mr. and Mrs. Spring, but the moment he was waiting for came when Jennie walked into the room. He grabs her and excited, throws her into the air and catches her again.



Chapters Eleven and Twelve

Chapters Eleven and Twelve Summary

Reeve asks for and gets permission to take Jennie out, provided he brings her back at their prearranged time. Jodie can't believe the change in Jennie. It's like she has just come to life after a long hibernation. Jodie can see that Jennie is in love, and has found what Jodie keeps hoping to find, but hasn't as yet. Jennie dances circles around him and Jodie realizes that this is the sister she was hoping for and that they hadn't seen before this. Mrs. Spring looks out the window and makes the same observation... she's in love. Jodie watches her mom and dad, tears in their eyes as they see her so happy. Jennie hadn't forgotten Reeve, but her love for him had been put on a back burner with everything else. She could hardly believe he'd driven five hours just to see her. They drive around talking for a little while before Reeve takes her back to the house early, surprising everyone, but Reeve has another agenda. After winning over the entire family with his charm and easy manner, he asks Mr. Spring if he can take Jennie to his prom. Mr. Spring grins as he okay's the date, despite the knowledge that Jennie would have to spend a night or two there, and Jodie explodes with excitement at the idea that she and her sister can shop for a prom dress. Reeve can hardly wait to tell the Johnson's the next day how well Jennie looks and what a great time they had and even how fantastic it was that Jennie had been given permission to the prom. He left their house with his head full of plans, never once realizing that after he left, Mrs. Johnson burst into tears thinking about the daughter who could be happy elsewhere.

Jennie is joyful, having seen Reeve and knowing they will be at the prom together makes everything better. Suddenly, she finds herself able to enjoy the family, although she can't quite get to calling them Mom and Dad yet. Jodie invites Jennie to join her and Stephen at the school dance, promising they would stick together and laughing when Jennie asks about their dates. Reeve had been sending Hallmark cards every day since his visit, and Jennie is on cloud nine. They get home on the bus and Stephen is the first to notice that there are several cars in the driveway, including Mr. Mollison's. The twins are eager to see the fireworks but Jodie preferred not to be the sister who told Jennie who Mr. Mollison was or what he planned to do.

Chapters Eleven and Twelve Analysis

Even Jodie has to admit that Reeve is one good-looking guy and finally understands why Jennie expresses no interest in anyone else. Reeve asks to take Jennie out and Mr. Spring, though reluctant, agrees, providing he gets her home at an hour civilized enough that he can still make it home by his curfew. Reeve happily agrees and Jodie realizes that if her father said no, Reeve would have complied. He asks her how things are and when she claims they aren't really a family, Reeve knows the truth and calls her on it. She finally has to admit that she's been so selfish since arriving. Reeve takes her back to the house, and after making everyone comfortable, he asks Mr. Spring if Jennie



can be his date at the prom. Mr. Spring's permission is an unexpected pleasure and Jennie is so elated that she bursts into tears. Reeve doesn't understand until Jodie explains that they are tears of joy. Reeve is thrilled and can hardly wait to share the bulk of his experiences with the Johnson family. He never realizes that he is breaking Mrs. Johnson's heart all over again, and that she cried when he left the house, happy and full of plans.

Jennie is on cloud nine for the next few days, and everything is right in her world. All she had to do was think about Reeve, and her smile would come back. She even considered going to the dance with Jodie and Stephen. Then they got home on the bus to find the driveway full of cars. Jodie, Stephen and even the twins already know what is coming, but Jennie has no idea. She asks them what all the commotion is about, and Jodie doesn't want to ruin how good things have been going, and didn't answer her questions.



Chapter Thirteen

Chapter Thirteen Summary

The policemen tell her that there is nothing for her to be afraid of, but Jennie is almost sick with anxiety. They had already spoken with her Connecticut parents, and suggest that the family clear out of the room so that they can talk to her. Mr. Spring digs his heels in and tells them he is her father and won't leave. She tells the police that they can stay, and backs into a seat on the sofa. She grabs a pillow, clutching it to her like a bear as Mr. Mollison introduces himself and the other two policemen that had originally been assigned to her case. Jodie can't even look at her sister. Jennie looks like a trapped rabbit. Every sentence she utters comes out sounding younger and younger until finally it is as though they are interviewing three year old Jennie herself. Finally Mr. Mollison sits down beside Jennie and puts his arm around her. She talks only to him after that. He takes Jennie back to the day she first saw her photograph on the milk carton; and she tells him how she couldn't believe it was true. Jodie remembers the day her parents decided to use a milk carton with Jennie's picture. They recap the day that Mrs. Spring took the five kids shopping for shoes and Jennie disappeared. Then they all learn the story that no one in those days could have predicted.

Hannah is the daughter to Miranda and Frank Javensen, and she is the one who kidnapped Jennie twelve years ago. She had already put her parents through an emotional ringer by running away and joining a cult. They had rescued her and tried to have her deprogrammed but she soon ran back to the cult again. For a long time, there was no contact and then one day Hannah simply shows up on their doorstep with a young girl she tells them is hers. She tells them the girl is their granddaughter, Janie, who she hopes they will raise for her. Then Hannah leaves, leaving Janie with her parents. Knowing that the cult would come for the child if they could, so the Javensen's move and change their name to a more generic 'Johnson', raising her as their daughter. Perhaps the name Jennie is simply misunderstood by Hannah as Janie. Either way, Mrs. Spring can't help but ask if she was forced to go, and Jennie admits that she thinks she went willingly. She was having fun. Mrs. Spring is relieved, she tells Jennie. After so many years of imagining the worst, she could now relax a little knowing that her daughter had never been mistreated. Jennie sits on the couch, looking away from everyone.

Chapter Thirteen Analysis

Jennie wants to run before anyone even gets started, but the Springs are all behind her and the police are all in front of her. She couldn't seem to hear what anyone was saying to her, and Mrs. Spring tried to go and comfort her, but Jennie backs away from her. Mrs. Spring tries not to cry, unable to hold her daughter. Jennie regresses until it seems as though she is actually the three year old little girl who was kidnapped so many years ago. While Mrs. Spring can't reach her emotionally, she allows Mr. Mollison to sit with



his arm around her for comfort while she talks only to him. She answers his questions, telling him about the day she found herself on the carton, and what she did afterward. She listens then to the other side of the story, how Mrs. Spring had taken her five children out shopping for shoes and Jennie had behaved like a spoiled brat. When Mrs. Spring's side of the story is told, they all hear what none of them had known.

Hannah Javensen used to be a troubled youth who joined a cult at a young age, getting fully programmed and brainwashed by the leader. Her parents had stolen her back, and had her deprogrammed, but Hannah went back as soon as she could. They wrote to her, but she never answered. To ensure that Janie was safe from the cult, they moved, changed their names to Johnson, and taught Janie to call them Mommy and Daddy. When Mrs. Spring asks if she'd ever been forced, Janie admits she'd been having fun and went along willingly. Mrs. Spring admits that she is relieved, having thought all these years that Jennie had been manhandled and mistreated. Jodie watches, holding her mother's hand through her emotional admission. Every fiber in her willed Jennie to get up and hug her mother, breaking the last of the reserves down finally, but Jennie stays on the couch holding onto her pillow and looking anywhere but at her mother.



Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen

Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen Summary

Mr. Mollison tells them that despite what the media would have them believe, less than fifty children a year are abducted by a complete stranger and are usually sexually abused before a quick release. Often, the police learn about the abduction after the children are already home again. Most children taken by strangers are in their teens. Jennie realizes that at first, no one had a clue what had happened. No one panicked for a while, and even then, a dog was brought in and everyone was sure she'd be home in no time. They searched everywhere, in ditches, in abandoned cars. For the first time Jennie begins to appreciate what they went through. She told herself to get up, but didn't. Jennie sits there, looking at her hands while Mr. Mollison goes on to explain how they had a waitress who witnessed them leave. They had no way of knowing why she'd been taken. Finally, her thoughts came full circle, and she asks Mr. Mollison why he is there. They already knew everything. Mr. Mollison tells her in a soft voice that they are looking for Hannah and intend to prosecute her. Jennie can't believe it. She asks them why they won't honor the deal that everyone made, but Mr. Mollison tells her that once it became a police matter, their agreement no longer mattered.

Mr. Mollison goes on to inform them that Hannah had been arrested in New York City two years previously, but at that time, no one knew who she was or what her connection to the case was. Jennie thinks about how carefully both sets of parents have surrounded her with their love. She wonders about Hannah and Jodie interrupts her thoughts, asking her what Hannah looked like. Jennie tells them that she had long, white blond hair which was something Jennie had always wanted herself. The rest of the family is quick to place all of the blame on Hannah's shoulders, but Jennie defends her for reasons even she doesn't understand. She tries to tell them a bit about Hannah's psychology, but doesn't get too far as she really didn't understand her either. Stephen asks why Hannah was arrested, and when Jennie learns that it was prostitution, and that the police had already informed the Johnson's of these facts, she is angry. She hates Mr. Mollison at that moment, shouting at him that they should never have told them... it was unnecessary. Mr. and Mrs. Spring defend him, and when Jennie insists she is going to call her parents, Mr. Spring won't let her. Jennie is shocked, but he calmly explains that there is nothing that Jennie can say to them that would help. He reminds her that the Johnson's are suffering ten times as much as she is, and that they have to face the truth. Jennie's anger dissipates, and when Mr. Spring opens his arms to her, she steps in, becoming his daughter at last.

Chapters Fourteen and Fifteen Analysis

Janie remembers the day she first saw her picture and the events as they unfolded. Jennie notices a plaque on the wall, made by a child. It is a house with an address written in flowing script. Mr. Spring softly tells her that they never moved. If she wanted



to find them, or had opportunity to get to them, they had to make sure that she would be able to find them. Suddenly the depth of their sacrifice and pain became real to Jennie. Mrs. Spring laid a hand gently over hers and this time Jennie doesn't pull away. She turns her hand around and curls her fingers into her mothers. For the first time, she isn't sorry she found her face on that carton. Slowly, she starts putting together the entire conversation. If they know who Hannah is, and they seem to have all of the details, why are they in contact now? She asks Mr. Mollison, and he admits that they are looking for Hannah. Their intention is to arrest her. Jennie is mortified. She knows that the Johnson's can't take much more, and this goes against the agreement they all made. Mr. Mollison knows all of that of course, and informs Jennie gently that their agreement is of no consequence once the law is involved and that they have no choice but to continue to hunt her once the crime became a police matter.

Mr. Mollison informs them that Hannah had been arrested in New York City two years earlier. The impact of that statement is felt by everyone in the room, and for a moment, they are all lost in thought about where they were and what they were doing at that time. Jennie describes Hannah as looking somewhat like a 'used rag doll'. Jodie can envision that easily. She comments that people like Hannah are doomed, but her mother disagrees. She reminds them all that everyone makes their own choices. Jennie could hear the comforting tone and felt better even though she would have preferred it had come from her other mother. They talk about cults and how they prey on the most vulnerable of society, and Jennie's mind takes her back to that day. Stephen can see the emotions as they play over her face, and can almost see the kidnapping taking place behind her eyes. The more Jennie learns about the situation, the more upset she becomes until she finally insists on calling the Johnson's. Mr. Spring does something neither of the Spring parents had done so far. He says no to Jennie, and means it. He calmly explains his reasoning, and Jennie's anger deflates. He can see that her anger is leaving and he opens his arms to her. After only a brief hesitation, she steps into his embrace, finally accepting him as her father.



Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen

Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen Summary

Jennie is doing homework in the kitchen when the phone rings, and she discovers Sarah-Charlotte on the other end. She is bubbling over with excitement at the prospect that she will be seeing Janie soon. She tells Janie how much she misses her and announces that Janie will never guess who asked her to the prom. She tells her that Devon asked her out, but Janie can't bring Devon to mind. Playing it safe, Janie asks Sarah-Charlotte about him, and lets her babble on for a few minutes, but a subject change is inevitable, and soon Sarah-Charlotte is talking about talk shows and how it would be great to have a panel of people in her position. Suddenly Jennie can't get off the phone fast enough. She tells Sarah-Charlotte that Jodie has to use the phone, and promises to talk to her soon. After she hangs up, Jodie asks for an explanation and she and Jennie manage to share a sister moment. Mr. Spring comes in and suggests they all go roller skating. One by one they try to get out of joining until Janie tells him that she will come. Suddenly, the rest of the house is enthused as well, and they all go out together.

Jennie lies in bed that night thinking about the next day. May 10th is the day that the Johnson's decided they would celebrate Janie's birthday, not knowing when the real day was. According to this birthday, she would be turning sixteen, and that's how she felt, even if it wasn't right or true. She thinks about the birthdays that they'd celebrated together. At the Johnson household, presents weren't given on birthdays. Birthdays were for trips and each one was another adventure. The night time hours pass as Jennie remembers. Finally, she prays that Hannah just stays lost and saves her family from this final humiliation. At four in the morning, Jennie makes a decision, and after crying she feels slightly better, and finally sleeps. Three hours later, she gets up and goes down to the kitchen where Mrs. Spring is getting oatmeal ready for breakfast. Jennie takes a deep breath and plunges in. Calling her Mom, Jennie tries to explain that after having given it an effort, though not always an honest one, she wants to go home. She believes that the Johnsons need her more than they do and it's time for her to go home. The look on Mrs. Spring's face almost breaks her resolve. She tells her mother that she sees now who her real family is, and wants to return to them as soon as the school year is over in six weeks.

Chapters Sixteen and Seventeen Analysis

Jennie wonders what the trial will be like, knowing it won't be the same as it is represented on television. She considers the fact that both sets of parents will be there and imagines having to testify. All Jennie wants now is to sit alone and think things through, but that simply isn't possible in the Spring household. When Sarah-Charlotte calls, Jennie can't get the privacy necessary to say what she wants to, and Sarah-Charlotte is oblivious to that fact. She prattles on about prom dates, and talk shows,



telling Janie that she could be famous with her history. Janie had always fantasized about being famous, but never like this. Finally, Jennie has to escape. She lies to Sarah-Charlotte, telling her that Jodie needs to use the phone, and says goodbye. Jodie asks for an explanation, and she and Jennie manage to share a real sister moment together. The family is unified a bit further when Jennie agrees to go skating with Mr. Spring and the rest of the family can't help but join in as well. It is the first time that Jennie has volunteered to do anything with them, and it does not go unnoticed.

In Jennie's old life, the next day of May 10 is the day that the Johnson's chose as Janie's birthday. At home, she would be celebrating her sixteenth birthday. She lies in bed, remembering all of the birthdays gone by, thinking of each surprise, and how much she enjoyed them. The Johnson's believed in birthday trips instead of presents and each year they had another surprise for her that she now revisits in her mind. The hours pass, and still Jennie doesn't sleep. Now, all she can do is hope that Hannah stays lost forever. The time ticks on, and at four in the morning, she finally come to a decision. It makes her cry a little, but it is the right choice, she is sure. She sleeps for just a short three hours before getting up again. Then she went down to tell Mrs. Spring what she'd decided. Jennie addresses her as Mom, making her smile as she turns around, but the smile doesn't stay long. When Jennie announces that she wants to go home in six weeks when the school year is over, Mrs. Spring is devastated. A single word... 'no'... escapes her and her face reveals the depth of her disappointment and sorrow. Jennie almost falters, but she tells her that the Johnson's simply need her more and she sees now who her real family is - the Johnsons. Watching her mother's face, Jennie has a brief insight into how heartless what she is doing to her mother really is, but it doesn't change a thing.



Chapter Eighteen

Chapter Eighteen Summary

After sending Jennie to Uncle Paul's, the Spring family discusses the bombshell Jennie dropped. Jodie makes it clear that she doesn't even want Jennie in the same room with her. Mr. Spring is infinitely sad when he tells them that no matter what, Jennie his daughter and their sister. He expects them to help him ensure that Jennie leaves with nothing but good memories where their home and family is concerned. He took his spoon and to the surprise of everyone at the table, bent it into a perfect circle. He does Brian's as well before admitting that it is what he would like to do to Hannah's neck. He banter the subject back and forth with the kids, all needing somewhere to put their feelings. Then Mr. Spring tells his children that he never wants to talk about Hannah ever again. Mrs. Spring stand there, tears falling silently. At least now she doesn't have to worry that Jennie is cold, or hurting, or afraid. Now, she says sadly, all she has to think about is the fact that her own daughter doesn't want her and would rather grow up somewhere else. Jodie burned. Back in their bedroom, Jodie can't keep her promise to her father and tells Jennie how she feels. She tells her she is scum and when Jennie agrees, saying she's tired of pretending, Jodie is frustrated. They weren't pretending, she tells her. Whether Jennie liked it or not, they were her family. Jodie is her sister, and the parents downstairs are her real mother and father. She can't deny that she is part of them and they of her. Jodie asks her why. Were they not good enough for her? Jennie says it is her, not them. Jodie tells her she was spoiled as a child and is now a spoiled teenager. Jennie's voice is small when she says she hopes that isn't the case and Jodie goes to her, lying down on the bed beside her. She asks her if she was acting, and when Jennie doesn't answer, she tells her that they weren't acting. They are instead happy that she is finally home.

Chapter Eighteen Analysis

The Spring family sends Jennie to Uncle Paul's so that they can talk freely about the newest development. Stephen and Jodie are shocked. Jodie immediately blames herself, thinking she pushed Jennie too hard. All her dreams about having a sister turned out to be little more than a Hollywood movie reel. Reality was a whole different ball game. Jodie is so hurt that she is angry. Angry with Jennie for being so insensitive and angry with Hannah for ruining their lives, Jodie is like a caged lion. She can't stand to see her parents hurting the way they are. Her mother stands with tears streaming silently down her face, and her father looking like all of the life has been sucked out of him. When her mother talks about losing Jennie for a second time, again voluntarily, Jodie wants to strangle her sister. She settles for telling Jennie how she feels, despite her father's request that the family not give Jennie any bad memories to take away with her. She waits until Jennie is in bed and as she is getting ready herself in the dark, she tells Jennie she is scum - a spoiled rotten child. She berates her for a little while longer, and then lays down beside her and asks her if she was faking it all. Before Jennie

answers, Jodie, with her heart aching, tells her that they are happy to have her home and they are not faking it.



Chapter Nineteen

Chapter Nineteen Summary

Jodie watches as Jennie packs her things. She can't help but make Jennie think about how she is impacting them. Jennie can't meet her eyes. The Johnson's had started by telling her that they had to be fair, but then her mother had whispered that she should forget fair and come home. Though she hadn't made much of an impact in the twins' lives, her goodbye earlier to Mr. Spring was emotional. Jennie cried, and he held her, telling her they love her. Jodie's feelings are raw, and her disappointment is deep. Every hope and dream she'd concocted about having a sister were gone. They all stand in the driveway to say goodbye - Stephen shaking her hand and telling her that he and Jodie will come and visit in a month, but then his control slips and he adds because they have manners unlike Johnson family members like Hannah who take children that aren't theirs and Janie who doesn't think twice about ruining a family. Mrs. Spring had only to say his name to have him stop. Jodie touches her, and Janie resists the urge to hug her and tell her she is wonderful. Instead, she gives her a half smile and gets into the car. Mrs. Spring drives her home to Connecticut. She and Jodie would not shop for prom dresses with her, and her life would go back to Sarah-Charlotte and Reeve. She can hardly look at her mother on the way back. They stop so Mrs. Spring can get a coffee, and Janie tells her that she's sorry she ever went with Hannah. It was all her fault. Mrs. Spring tells her she is wrong. As she was the middle child, with two ahead and two behind her, she did not get the attention that she needed. She tells Janie how sorry she is. When she touches Janie's face, Janie can't help but throw herself into her mother's arms. She holds her mother tight, both of them crying, and hears her mother whisper goodbye and say, "I love you."

Chapter Nineteen Analysis

Jennie packs her things, getting ready to resume her life as Janie. Jodie sits on the bed, watching her pack and making her think about how they feel and how she is affecting them. Jennie can't find a way to be fair to everyone. She keeps hearing her mother's voice on the phone telling her to come home. Drawing strength from that, she tells Jodie that she is doing the best that she can but Jodie argues that as well. Jennie knows she's right. She didn't do her best there. She takes all of the anger and disappointment from Jodie and Stephen without saying anything, partially because they are right and partially because she feels such tremendous guilt. Janie knows she didn't really make an effort to return to being Jennie. She behaved like a spoiled brat and didn't even give them a chance. The thought of going home is all that keeps her from breaking. Her goodbyes to Stephen and Jodie are painful and hurtful. Janie is eager to see the signs that welcome her to Connecticut. Mrs. Spring drives her home and on the way they stop for drinks, giving them an opportunity to face each other. Janie begins, apologizing to her mother for leaving with Hannah, but Mrs. Spring has an apology of her own. She carries the guilt of not giving Jennie the attention she needed

at such a young age because of the twins' demands. They hug, tears joining together. Mrs. Spring tells Janie she loves her.



Chapter Twenty

Chapter Twenty Summary

Jodie and Stephen take the spare bed out of Jodie's room, taking it apart and hauling it up to the attic. Jodie notices that her sister had left behind all of the items they'd bought her with 'Jennie' on it. Jodie can't think of much other than their mother driving all the way to Connecticut with Jennie, and then all the way home alone. They'd tried to talk her out of it, but it was something their mother felt she had to do. Mrs. Spring has already begun calling her Janie, recognizing that she became Janie at the age of three and a half. Stephen is still bitter, his anger directed at Hannah for what she had done to both of their families. Jodie wants to hunt Hannah down, convinced that the police had stopped looking for her long ago. Stephen agrees, but knows it is unlikely they will be permitted to go to New York City to look for her. The opportunity presents itself when Stephen discovers that their parents are going away for two weeks and they will be staying with their Uncle Paul and Aunt Luellen. They talk about how they would go about searching for Hannah in such a large city. Jodie believes that Hannah will likely be using soup kitchens for food and that will be how they will find her. Making a list of soup kitchens in New York City, they plan to search from morning until dinner and then get back to Uncle Paul's before dark. Jodie is sure that won't be a problem. She figures that the soup kitchens likely serve dinner early. The plan seems solid to Stephen, so he agrees. They'll go and find her and make sure that she pays for what she has done.

Chapter Twenty Analysis

Jodie enlists Stephen's help to take the extra bed out of her room. She can't stand to look at the constant reminder of what she had so hoped for and what the reality had actually been. They take it apart and haul it up to the attic while their mother is driving Janie home. She'd even begun calling her daughter Janie, recognizing that she'd become Janie many years before. Stephen and Jodie are still filled with rage and disappointment. They keep thinking about the sister they lost, the anguish their parents suffered before they knew what became of Janie, and Janie's own inability to simply return to them now that she knows where she belongs. Sadly, they know that isn't the case, and they also recognize that the Johnson's are not to blame. The blame lies squarely on Hannah who was responsible for the whole mess. Jodie can't just let it go. She knows the police are doing little or nothing to find Hannah, and announces her intentions to go to New York City to find her and bring her to justice for what she has done. They hadn't been allowed to go to the city on their own before, and Jodie doesn't know how they'll manage it, but Stephen tells her that their parents are going away for two weeks and the opportunity will present itself while they are staying with Uncle Paul and Aunt Luellen. They begin making plans, all the while knowing that the odds are stacked against them. Finding Hannah will be like finding a needle in a haystack, but at least they'll be doing something constructive. The truth was that they had been so

happy to have Jennie home. They couldn't blame the Johnson's if Janie felt like she had to return to them. All of it was Hannah's fault and they resolved to go get her.



Chapter Twenty-One

Chapter Twenty-One Summary

Janie and Reeve pick up right where they left off, as though she'd never been gone at all. She has gone home, hoping to find life there would return to normal too, but she couldn't be further from it. While it seems easy to go back to her routine with Reeve, her parents are another story. She would never have dreamed that they could change so much in such a short time. Now, they need her. Still, she is determined to repair everything - to make it all okay again. She talks to them about happy times they've shared, reminding them of good times. She even convinces her mother to get up and bake a cake like she used to, taking her into the kitchen and hauling out ingredients. Janie lies in bed that night, in the room she missed so much, and discovers to her surprise that she misses Jodie's presence. She knows that Jodie would understand what she is going through, and can see how the whole conversation would play out in her mind.

Meanwhile, her mother in New Jersey is writing a letter to Janie. She cries as she writes, her tears falling onto the page, and Stephen observes that once Hannah had dropped Jennie with her parents, they had stopped trying to contact her. They'd moved, changed their name, and taking Jennie on as their own. Stephen asks her not to write to Janie, but his mother is determined. She can't just let Jennie go. Stephen thinks of the trip they are planning to New York City and again resolves to find Hannah and see to it that she pays for what she has done. Janie reads the letter from her mother, filled with pain and sorrow, a part of her still wishing things could have been different. Quietly, she prays that Hannah stays lost and brings no more pain to either of her parents.

Chapter Twenty-One Analysis

While Janie is able to pick up almost right where she and Reeve left off, the story with her parents is different. It is hard to believe how much they'd changed. Her mother no longer carried herself with the elegance and grace she remembered and her father has aged, his courage faded. Now they looked old to her. Now they were afraid. She had expected to come home to be held and reassured, but instead had discovered that she was the one who would have to do the reassuring and coddling. This was the choice she had made, and she was determined to make it work. The irony of the situation doesn't escape her. Had she tried even half as hard at the Spring home to make things work, she'd still be there. Instead, she reminds her parents, the ones she'd chosen, about happier times. Encouraging them all the way, she suggests they make a sheet cake, and begins assembling the items to do so. As she does, she is reminded of someone else, and it occurs to her after a moment that she is behaving just like Mrs. Spring. The reality of it takes her breath away for a minute. It is the first time that she realizes she really is part of the Spring family, but something in her balks, recognizing that she can only be either Janie or Jennie, but not both.



Mrs. Spring writes the first letter to Janie, telling her about the family, updating her and letting her know that she is welcome anytime. She cries throughout it all, and again Jodie quietly resolves to make Hannah pay for what she has done. She also hopes that the letter makes Janie cry too. Stephen tries to talk her out of writing it entirely, but she says she won't let it go. Her letter contains news from the family and their assurances that she is missed, loved, and welcome anytime. Janie reads it and cries, consumed with pain for the mother that she knows is suffering still, suffering again. She says a quiet prayer that Hannah stays lost forever.



Chapter Twenty-Two

Chapter Twenty-Two Summary

Penn Station is surprisingly clean and tourists fill the streets in New York City, mingling with people who worked in the offices nearby. Many of them came out to eat their lunches on the cement steps in the sunshine, and looking around, it is not at all what Jodie expected. They stood outside for several minutes, just taking in the vast numbers of people before walking around the station to get their bearings. Jodie has a list of soup kitchens in her purse, and is just beginning to understand how difficult Hannah will be to find if she has access to any cash at all. Thousands of people walk the sidewalks. They head up town to the first place on Jodie's list and decide to take a side street to get out of the press of people on the main street. It seems like a good idea until Stephen realizes his mistake. A group of young men leans against an abandoned store front watching as a car across the street is being liberated of its wheels. Jodie seems oblivious as she walks down the street ahead of him, leaving him no choice but to follow. She chooses the moment that they begin paying attention to them to pull out the laminated map from her pocket, bringing smirks to the faces of the young men. It occurs to Stephen that Reeve would know if there was a threat or not. The first place they go into is more representative of the New York Jodie expects to see. Filled with the dregs of the city, urine smells filling her nostrils, they go inside. Jodie is losing her nerve, but Stephen is resolute. They join the line, taking a bowl of soup and sitting at a table. Stephen takes out Hannah's photo and begins asking those around him if she's been around. When he is greeted with suspicion, he tells them she is his sister. A woman beside Jodie who appears to be in her senior years tells them that she is only thirty-six. That knowledge changes the criteria that they assigned to Hannah. The woman tells Jodie that she is likely gone a long time already, either a junkie or worse. Stephen and Jodie take their bowls back up to the front untouched, and empty the thick soup into the garbage, earning them dirty looks from the attendant at the front. They check through three other soup kitchens and learn nothing. Finally, Stephen loses heart. He tells Jodie to check the schedule for the next train home, and when she doesn't answer, he turns around to find she is gone. He looks through the crowds of people, but Jodie is nowhere to be seen.

Chapter Twenty-Two Analysis

Jodie is surprised by how clean and normal everything looks when they get off the subway at Penn Station. There are no homeless people begging for change, no gangs ready to jump them at any turn, and there are tourists and workers enjoying the sunshine. Even the police appear to be friendly and walk among the crowds in a relaxed manner. Taking in the thousands of people who are outside and on the streets, Jodie and Stephen both try hard not to be discouraged before they even begin. They begin with the soup kitchen closest to them and as they leave, Stephen is angry. He feels young and foolish, believing they had any hope of finding her. Jodie is close to tears by



the time they've reached the fourth place on her list. It is too early for the dinner crowd and so they sit on the cement stairs in front of the library and eat an ice cream cone. A voice in the back of Stephen's mind urges him to give up. He thinks about the sheer number of people in the city and the likelihood that they will actually find one troubled woman. Then he remembers that Janie saw herself on a milk carton, two states away from them, and despite being lactose intolerant. The odds against it were staggering, and yet it had happened. One thing is certain. If they give up, they will never find her. At least if they are looking, the odds are slim, but they exist. Finally, after trudging through crowds of people for too long to consider, he tells Jodie to check the train schedule for the next one home. When there is no answer, he turns around and Jodie is nowhere to be seen. He looks through the crowd - panic finding a place in his heart and his stomach. Jodie is nowhere in sight.



Chapter Twenty-Three

Chapter Twenty-Three Summary

Stephen looks for Jodie up and down the street. Panic is preventing him from thinking clearly as he runs from one street corner to another and back again, until a hand grabs him by the arm. He almost shakes it off but then turns and sees the policewoman attached to it. She asks him if something is wrong, and all he can say is 'my sister'. He manages to tell them he's lost her, and another police officer asks if she has red hair like his. When Stephen nods yes, he points across the street, amusement in his eyes. Instantly humiliated, and relieved at the same time, Stephen sees Jodie talking to yet another police officer across the street. The policewoman tells him the walk light is on, and gives him a gentle shove in her direction. The police next to him are laughing, and Stephen is beyond embarrassed. Jodie is talking to a large black policeman about soup kitchens and Stephen is close enough to hear him telling his sister that the idea is stupid and the soup kitchen neighborhoods are not safe. Jodie tries to explain that her sister was kidnapped, showing the officer the flattened milk carton she had brought with her. The policeman looks at the picture and Stephen realizes in that moment that no one in New York is looking for Hannah, and they had no idea who Jennie Spring even is. He asks Jodie if she is looking for Jennie, but Jodie explains that Jennie is back with her other parents. It is Hannah they are seeking. Stephen finds himself even more embarrassed than before, and says little while Jodie tells the officer the whole story. When she finishes, he tells her that he still thinks they should get on a train and go home. Jodie tells him that they can't. They have to find Hannah and make her pay. Jodie asks him if they are even looking for Hannah, and the officer softly says 'That's Hannah,' pointing to a pathetic figure. It was pushing a loaded cart with a broken wheel, filled with plastic bags, an old doll, a bowling bag and other junk collected along the way. Stephen can see no resemblance. Jodie is staring and insists that the policeman arrest her, but then Stephen begins to see the truth. The officer smiles, and tells Stephen he's right. He has no idea who the person he pointed to is. The truth is that the pathetic figure he pointed to is representative of who Hannah is now. They may never find her in time to punish her, he adds, but life has already done that. His partner arrives to pull him away to another call. Jodie asks if Mr. and Mrs. Johnson know the truth, and the policeman assures her they do. Stephen suddenly feels so bad for the Johnson's. Close to tears, Jodie hugs the officer after he tells her that everyone sounds happy and they shouldn't worry about Hannah. They have a family that loves them, and so does Jennie. The rest doesn't matter. The train is already on the platform when they get there. They get on and Stephen tells Jodie that he's glad they went, and found Hannah. At least they'd found out enough now to let it go. As the train gets closer to home, Stephen realizes that his anger is gone, and in its place, he feels at peace. He thinks about visiting the Johnson's that summer, and getting to know Reeve better. They have families who love them. What else matters?



Chapter Twenty-Three Analysis

Stephen doesn't want to panic, but all the years that their parent's suffered after Jennie's kidnapping come flooding back to him. He crosses back and forth, trying to catch a glimpse of Jodie in the press of people headed home from work. Becoming more frantic with each passing moment, he draws the attention of a nearby police officer who comes to his assistance. He explains that he's lost his sister, almost unable to speak he is so consumed with fear. The officer's partner joins them, and asks if Jodie has the same red hair as he does. When he admits that is the case, the officers can hardly contain their mirth. Jodie is across the street from them, talking to another officer. Stephen is embarrassed beyond words. His face is burning as one of the officers sends him across the street with a gentle shove at the walk sign. Burning with shame and angry with himself, he crosses to Jodie. She is in the middle of explaining their search to another officer. He is patient with her as she shows him her list of soup kitchens, but when she finishes with her explanations, he suggests that they go home. He warns them that some of the places are their list simply aren't safe. Jodie is insistent. She goes back further with her story, explaining the kidnapping. At first the officer thinks she is searching for Jennie, but Jodie explains that they want Hannah to pay for ripping apart not one, but two families. She is so adamant that the officer has to come up with a new plan of attack. He looks over her shoulder and announces there's Hannah. Jodie doesn't catch on right away, but Stephen can see that the poor decrepit figure he is pointing to can not possibly be Hannah. Jodie, meanwhile is insisting on arresting her now. Finally, the officer explains that after this length of time, and the disbanding of her cult, chances are good that life has already punished her worse than any court ever could. He continues to tell them that they should be grateful. Both families are loving. Both are places that are safe and have parents who care. What more is there? Stephen and Jodie finally get it. They realize that there is no point to finding Hannah so that they can see her punished. She already is. They get on the train to go home, and Stephen feels a kind of peace that he hadn't before. He no longer needs to find Hannah. In his mind, he already has. He explains his feelings to Jodie, who agrees. Stephen decides that he will go and visit with the Johnsons that summer. Perhaps he can get to know Reeve better too. Everything looks better now.



Characters

Jane (Janie) Elizabeth Johnson (aka Jennie Spring)

Janie Johnson, born Jennie Spring, is a fair-skinned, freckle-faced young lady with wild, long, red, curly hair. Janie's life is turned upside down when the court rules that she should return to her birth family until she turns of age. She returns but neither she nor the Johnson parents who raised her, are very happy about the whole thing.

Jennie lived most of her life as Janie Johnson. She was born as Jennie, but kidnapped at the age of three and a half by Hannah Javensen, the only child of Frank and Miranda Javensen. Hannah drops Jennie off with her parents, telling them her name is Janie and she is their granddaughter. Janie lives a good life with them. She is raised as Janie Johnson (daughter to Miranda and Frank Johnson) however, as the Javensen's didn't want to risk their daughter's cult coming to reclaim her. She leads a wonderful life with them. Her room is a testament to years of horseback riding, flute instruction, pompoms and cheerleading trophies. Her boyfriend Reeve lives right next door, and spends a great deal of time at the Johnson house as well. Janie is a well adjusted, intelligent, and beautiful young lady. Then her life comes apart at the seams. There are many times in the next few weeks that Jennie will wish she had never seen herself on the milk carton, and started the process that would rip her out of the only home she remembers. She has trouble adjusting to her new school, missing the classes at her former school that are not offered now. Silversmithing is replaced by Chorus - a subject Janie would never have chosen for herself. She does not consider herself to be artistic and can not sing.

Her time with the Spring family is short and uncomfortable for the most part. Janie has no desire to be Jennie and makes no secret of it. She ignores them when they address her as Jennie, she participates in little or nothing, she flinches and pulls away from any displays of affection, and wants only to return to the couple she insists are her parents - the Johnsons. It takes some time, but Jennie actually begins to settle in. She even discovers similarities between herself and this family of almost strangers. She starts to loosen up a little bit, all the while ashamed that she is being disloyal to the Johnson's by doing so. She is almost settling in when they come home from school one day to find several cars in the driveway. Stephen and Jodie know what is going on, but the police are a surprise to Jennie. Even more surprising is their intention to hunt down Hannah and make her pay, despite the agreement reached between the two families that they would not pursue the issue. It is enough of a blow to send Jennie tumbling back into Janie, and the next morning she asks to go home to her real parents. The request devastates her mother, but they acquiesce. Her mother drives her back to the Johnson's.



Jodie Spring

Jodie, like all the others in her family, is a red head. Unlike Jennie, Jodie's hair is very short and she has large brown eyes like the twins have. It is a head of silky, fine curls that she never brushes. She is pretty, in the way that a pixie is pretty, and makes a great deal of noise in her sleep, thrashing and moaning throughout the night. She often flings off her covers, and always listens to the radio at night which plays a rock station all night long.

Jodie is in her third year of Japanese language studies in her school - one of only eleven students who have made it that far.

Jodie is Jennie's older sister. After Jennie's kidnapping, life changed for everyone in the Spring family. Her father held her hand and walked her to school each morning, bringing her home the same way each afternoon, just as he does with Stephen. She is never allowed to ride the school bus. For Jodie, this was perfectly normal. Jodie is only nine when Stephen loses his composure and announces that he hates Jennie for what she had done to their family. She cries when the family holds hands and says goodbye to Jennie, not in sorrow for her sister who was still missing, but out of relief that they were finally going to let her go. When they first got the news that Jennie was alive, and coming home, Jodie assigned herself as the buffer between Jennie and Stephen. She was so sure that everything would be okay. This was her sister with the matching 'J' name. They were almost twins, and she wanted that kind of relationship with her sister in the worst way. She saw them as exchanging secrets, sharing sister type things that no one else would understand. She cleaned her room until it was spotless, moving in another bed, and arranging closet and drawer space for her sister. While they waited for that magic day to arrive, they bought Jennie dozens of things with her name on it, from hair brushes to embroidered pillow cases, school books to pencils, all with Jennie emblazoned on them. Jodie is twenty months older than Jennie. She carries a large portion of guilt around that she had never admitted to anyone. Had she been holding Jennie's hand like she was supposed to, none of this would have happened.

All of Jodie's hopes and dreams of sisterhood are broken when Jennie arrives.

Stephen Spring

Stephen Spring is seventeen years old now. He is tall and slender, with hair that is a darker red than the rest of the family, and lays smoothly on his head. He combs it frequently to ensure it stays that way. Stephen has huge feet, slightly out of proportion to the rest of him at this time, but he secretly hopes he'll grow into them.

It takes until fourth grade before he reveals how he feels about Jennie, exclaiming that he hates her for ruining their lives. He hates that she has never been found, and the questions have never been answered. When his parents hear this outburst, they know it is time. Holding hands at the dinner table, they say goodbye to their daughter, Jennie. No one yells at Stephen.



Despite his age, and being the eldest in the house, Stephen finds it difficult to set an example where Jennie is concerned. He resents her in a vengeful kind of way, disliking her immensely although he hasn't even met her yet.

Hannah Javensen

Hannah, daughter to Frank and Miranda Javensen, is the girl who originally kidnaps Jennie Spring. She is eighteen at the time, and well entrenched in a cult that has her completely brainwashed. When the cult moves to California, she moves with them. When her parents are unable to coax her to come home again, they hire someone to steal her back and un-brainwash her. It doesn't work, and at the first opportunity, she returns to the cult she now sees as her family. She acquires a mate, chosen by the leader of the cult, and along with hundreds of other couples is married in a mass ceremony. One day, much later, and without warning, she arrives on her parents' doorstep holding Jennie's hand. She introduces her as Janie, telling her parents that she is their granddaughter, and asking them to raise her. She left shortly afterward and isn't heard from again for many years. One arrest for prostitution follows two years before Jennie is returned to the Spring family, and nothing else is heard from Hannah.

Mrs. Miranda Javensen (aka Mrs. Miranda Johnson)

Miranda Johnson is an elegant woman. Both she and Janie both have collections of Swatch watches so that they can select one that matches their clothing and jewelry each day. She loves clothes and enjoys shopping for them and their accessories with Jennie. Miranda works as a volunteer at the hospital and has an entire wardrobe dedicated to making the ugly salmon jacket she has to wear look less repulsive.

Miranda is a woman who has had motherhood destroyed for her not once, but twice. Her natural daughter, Hannah, had ruined their lives not once, but twice. Miranda is faced with a situation no mother should go through. Having lost her first daughter, Hannah, to a cult, she now faces the loss of the second daughter. Janie had been dropped off by Hannah when Janie was just three and a half years old. Hannah told her parents that Janie was hers, but that she couldn't raise her. Instead, she left her with them, going back to the cult that had such a hold over her. Fearful that the cult would come for the girl, the Javensen's change their name to Johnson, and move. They spend the next twelve years or better raising Janie as their own daughter. When the courts rule that Janie must return to the Spring family, Miranda is determined to do the right thing. She tells her second daughter that she is not her mother, and that she belongs with the Springs. She holds her composure until her daughter is gone, and then the life seeps out of her. All of her elegance, poise and confidence is gone in that moment. For Miranda, life will never be the same. Devastated, she obeys the wishes of the Springs and does not contact her daughter by phone or mail, but the bond goes beyond mere genetics. What Miranda doesn't know is that soon Janie will be home again.



Mr. Frank Javensen (Mr. Frank Johnson)

Frank Johnson is a man of principle and honor. He is devastated by the news that Janie is actually Jennie Spring, and the thought of losing her is almost more than he can bear. Once again, Hannah has managed to completely unravel their lives. Frank does what he can to maintain his composure, but when Janie is gone, like Miranda, he comes apart at the seams inside. Frank couldn't bear the thought of driving his daughter to her home with the Spring family, so a lawyer was engaged to take her there. On the day that Janie leaves them, Frank shaves, and dresses in his good clothes, as does Miranda. They stand, elegant and composed, until the car pulls away. Then Miranda sags, begging Frank and Reeve to take her inside where Janie won't see.

Mrs. Donna Spring

Mrs. Spring is not at all like Mrs. Johnson. She is not as concerned with appearances or clothing, likely spending the money they have between their six children instead. She is a little on the larger side, aptly described as chunky, and beginning to go gray. Unlike Jennie and Mrs. Johnson, she pulls on a shirt and sweater that don't necessarily match perfectly, straps on her utilitarian watch and is ready for the day.

Mrs. Spring is a talkative woman. She enjoys telling and hearing the stories that make up the family's day. She is interested in every ball game, book report or exam that any of her children are taking and laughs and teases them about it all. She always seems to be going at high speed, getting through her own day, and then organizing and attending the after school activities of her children. She always seems to be slightly out of breath.

Mr. Jonathan Spring

Mr. Spring is a big bear of a man who enjoy physical rough housing with his children. He still likes to pick them up as though they are just toddlers and often wrestles with the boys that he bear hugs, throws pillows at, and races to see who will control the remote. He has a red beard that marks him as one of the Spring family, and enjoys telling jokes. He likes to attend the many games his children are involved in, cheering them on and taking videos of each event.

Brendan Spring

Brendan Spring is in the sixth grade when Jennie comes home. He has red hair with gold highlights like his brother, Brian, but they are not identical twins. Brendan and Brian both play basketball but Brendan excels in the sport. In the game that Jennie watches, Brendan manages over twenty points, taking the team to victory. Brendan is sports-oriented. He enjoys the physical contact and the challenges of competition.



Brian Spring

Brian, like Brendan is in the sixth grade. He and his twin have hair that is so red with golden highlights that it appears to glitter. Though they are not identical twins, Jennie often mistakes Brian for Brendan and the other way around. Brian and his brother have been inseparable since birth, but they are beginning to understand that they have interests that don't involve each other. For them it is a first. Brian is not as involved in sports as his brother is. Instead, Brian's interests lie more in the academic realm.

Reeve Shields

Reeve is good-looking. He has broad shoulders, a dark complexion, and a buzz cut that looks vaguely military. His bones are long, making him tall and his muscles are strong. He has a face that is lean and a grin that is immense along with long eyelashes that Jennie loves. He is polite and confident. Reeve is about to graduate from high school and has just received his first college acceptance letter to Hills College in Boston. The only one he cares about sharing that information with is his girlfriend, Jennie.

Mr. Mollison

Mr. Mollison is the FBI officer who had originally been assigned to the case when Jennie went missing twelve years earlier.

Mr. Fabrioli

This is the state police officer who worked on Jennie's disappearance and returned to help with the search for Hannah in order to facilitate her prosecution.

Mr. Saychek

This is the local policeman who worked on the disappearance of Jennie and now returns to help with the hunt for Hannah.

Mrs. P

This is the teacher in Jennie's new school who teaches Chorus.

Mr. Clarke

This is the student teacher who is in Jennie's Chorus class on her first day of attendance.



Sarah-Charlotte

This is Janie's somewhat shallow best friend in Connecticut.

Caitlin and Nicole

These are Jodie's best friends.



Objects/Places

FBI

The Federal Bureau of Investigations that was involved in Jennie Spring's disappearance and then are involved again when the search for Hannah resumes.

New Jersey

This is where Mr. and Mrs. Spring live with their remaining six children.

Milk Carton

This is where Janie first sees herself and realizes that her parents are not the Johnsons.

Connecticut

This is where Jennie has lived as Janie with the Johnson's for over eleven years.

Swatches

This is the name of the watches that both Janie and Miranda have collections of.

Silversmithing

This is the only artistic side that Janie has found in herself, and a class she takes in Connecticut.

Senior Prom

This is the event of the year that Reeve asks permission to take Jennie to.

Three months

This is the length of time that Janie is supposed to go without contacting anyone in her Connecticut life.



Assembly

This is held at Jennie's new school, all seven hundred students are informed, and Jennie is discussed before she has her first day at school.

114 Highview Avenue

This is the street that the Spring family lives on.

Basketball

This is the sport that Brendan excels at.

Japanese

This is the language that Jodie is learning, and has made it to the third year in, along with only eleven other students.

Super Mario Brothers

This is the first and only game that Jennie plays with Stephen and Jodie.

Jeep

This is what Reeve drives down to see Janie in.

Hallmark

This is the kind of cards that Reeve begins sending Janie daily after paying her a visit at the Spring's home.

Family Resolutions

This is the list of promises that Janie writes down and makes to herself regarding her birth family.

Cult

This is the group that Hannah becomes involved in.



New York City

This is where Hannah is last seen and where Jodie and Stephen go to try to find her.

Used Rag Doll

This is the way Janie describes Hannah.

Prostitution

This is what Hannah was arrested for in New York City.



Themes

Overcoming Fear

In "Whatever Happened to Janie?" Janie is forced to face her fears on several levels. In order to put the events in motion, Janie had to face her first fear, confronting the information she found on the milk carton. It takes several weeks, but Janie faces the fact that her parents are not her parents, which doesn't change how she feels about them. Originally, Janie had just thought that she could send a message to her birth parents, letting them know that she is okay. She didn't count on the court system telling her that she had to go home with them. Then she had to face the fear of the unknown, in every aspect of life. Her parents were unknown to her, the future was uncertain, her siblings are strangers, she has to attend a school where she knows no one, and she is about to move into a house full of strangers. It is so much change that its almost intolerable.

Janie goes to New Jersey and tries to assume her life as Jennie, but her heart isn't in it. She doesn't like being called Jennie. Her room is small and cramped. Her birth parents tell her that they love her, but she is trying so hard not to be unfaithful to the Johnson's that she won't allow the Springs to get close to her at all. She is just beginning to loosen up with the Spring family when the police show up and inform them that they plan to pursue Hannah until they find her, and charge her. Jennie reverts to Janie in that instance, understanding only how much pain it will cause the couple who raised her. Again she overcomes her fear and tells her birth mother that she wants to go home.

The Value of Family

Janie is faced with family values on two fronts in this story. She begins this part of the series by packing her things in the home she has grown up in. Her birth parents have won the right in court to have her come home. Though they acknowledge that the Johnson's are not culpable in her kidnapping, and they appreciate the fact that Jennie has been so well looked after, they still are adamant that their daughter comes home now. The Johnson's, while devastated, have no choice but to agree, both legally and morally. They understand that the Spring family has been in pain and uncertainty for many years. In fact, they've been exposed to the short version of their pain with their own daughter, Hannah. Janie is devastated. She doesn't want to go, even though the mother she has known for most of her life is telling her that she has to go and it is the right thing.

When Janie arrives at the Spring household, she has an appreciation for the Johnson family in ways she never had before. She sees the sacrifices they made for her and the love they invested in her and she knows that without her at home, they will not do well. She can easily imagine her 'mother' with little desire to keep going each day, and the tears on her 'father's' face as he kissed her goodbye are like a stone in her stomach.



She knows that by leaving them, she is causing them as much pain (if not more) as Hannah caused them. This knowledge makes bonding with the Spring family very difficult. Each time she finds herself getting close to any of her birth family, she feels almost instant guilt, thinking about how the Johnson's would feel if they saw her being happy. In the end, the desperation of the Johnson's and the fact that they are alone is what makes Janie decide that she wants to go back. She can't leave them to face the possible trial of Hannah alone. The ride home, given to her by her birth mother, is quiet and sorrowful. When they stop for drinks, they apologize to each other and are both filled with guilt and remorse from the past. In an instant, Jennie is in her arms and knows that this is her mother and once again she is causing her immeasurable pain.

Actions and Consequences

The series of Janie books written by Caroline Cooney are essentially a series of actions and consequences. In the beginning, Jennie disappears. Her mother is shopping with five children in tow, and as the middle child, she was left out. The twins were young and a handful, demanding their mother's attention while her brother Stephen and sister Jodie were also paired up and amusing themselves. Bored and a little bit spoiled, Jennie wanders out of the store and is picked up by Hannah. As a consequence of her mother's lack of eyes in the back of her head, Jennie vanishes. As a consequence of Hannah finding her, she is lost to the Spring family for the next twelve years. Then one day Janie finds her photograph on a milk carton. Instead of keeping it to herself, she tells her boyfriend Reeve. The consequence of that action is that he talks to his sister, a lawyer, who investigates further. With her identity confirmed, the Spring family is notified. As a result, a court order that returns Jennie to them soon follows. The consequence is that Janie is forced to move.

The Spring family can hardly wait to welcome Jennie home. Her sister Jodie is eager to share her room, cleaning and making room for the sister she always hoped for. When Janie arrives, they expect her to go back to being Jennie immediately. It doesn't happen. Their action or expectation causes Janie to be even more reluctant and reclusive. When Jennie finally starts behaving and feeling as though she belongs, a visit from the police is enough to change everything again. Dredging up the whole scene again pushes Jennie back to the Janie personality, making her fearful that her other parents will be unable to cope with more pain. The consequence is that she goes home to them, causing her birth family some initial resentment and a great deal of pain again.



Style

Point of View

"Whatever Happened to Janie?" is written in the first-person perspective. The perspective switches between primarily between the two main characters, Jodie and Janie, in this second book of the Janie series. Alternating between the character perspectives, the reader is first given an insight into Janie and who she is now. Janie and Jodie are both slightly introspective, constantly comparing and examining life then and now, the fiction with the reality. While at times the perspective switches even within a given chapter, the thoughts and relationships are clear and uncomplicated, leaving the reader with a clear idea of how these characters feel as their realities change.

Reeve and Stephen also have short passages that are in the first person perspective, ensuring that the story is recounted from all sides involved or affected. The first-person perspective as told by Stephen in the last two chapters clearly show the transition that Stephen makes from angry with Hannah and seeking revenge to accepting that Hannah's life is her own punishment and there is no need to pursue her any further. It is also clear that Stephen is ready to honestly attempt to bridge the gap between Janie and their family. Stephen decides that he will get to know his sister and her 'family' better, which is a critical element to this segment of the series.

Setting

"Whatever Happened to Janie?" by Caroline B. Cooney is set primarily in three main locations. The book opens with Janie in her home in Connecticut, trying to say goodbye, and packing her things. It is the home she has lived in for over twelve years. Janie is moving back to her birth parents and family in New Jersey. The family still lives in the same tiny house at 114 Highview Avenue in New Jersey as they lived in on the fateful day when Jennie disappears from the local mall. Janie is taken by Interstate to her birth family. Four days later, she is faced with her first day in a new school. While she tries to be anonymous, the entire school knows her story. She attends a basketball game with the rest of the family and other than a visit to her Aunt and Uncle's near by, Jennie lives in the home where her family waited for years.

Jodie and Stephen take a trip to New York City after Janie is driven back to Connecticut by their mother. They are determined to find Hannah and make her pay for kidnapping their sister, and ruining the lives of everyone involved. They arrive at Penn Station and walk around it once to get their bearings. After visiting several soup kitchens, Stephen begins to understand the magnitude of the task they have undertaken, and wants to go home. He turns to Jodie only to find she is gone. After some frantic moments, and a few helpful police officers intervention, Jodie is found and the search for Hannah is over. They head home and are no longer angry. They are also ready to get to know their sister better.



Language and Meaning

"Whatever Happened to Janie?" is written in a simple and straightforward style, allowing the story line and the emotional content to carry the reader through from beginning to end. The author does a good job of separating the locations used from the opulent and financially secure Johnson and Shields households to the cramped and long outgrown house that never the less manages to cope at the Spring household. The other two main locations are also well outlined. These are the secondary, out of home locations.) The school is compared adequately to the one Janie attended in Connecticut, and the trip that Stephen and Jodie take to New York City is nicely seen through the observations of the characters who have led a rather sheltered life up to this point. The security and constant monitoring is also examined and the resistance to the monitoring is sharply contrasted by the perception of loss that Stephen feels when he turns around in New York City and discovers Jodie is gone. In those few moments, he is able to appreciate the way that his parents felt when Jennie went missing.

Structure

"Whatever Happened to Janie?" is divided into twenty-three chapters. The chapters range in length from four to nine pages. In the first chapter, life for the Spring family after Jennie's kidnapping is explained. The consequences as a result of the kidnapping include a heightened sense of awareness of all possible or potential dangers, and a definite lack of freedom for the remaining Spring children. The second and third chapters deal with Janie's home in Connecticut. Janie is packing, and trying to come to grips with saying goodbye to the woman who raised her. Her boyfriend Reeve sits next door, keeping vigil on their driveway for any sign that the lawyer has arrived to take his girlfriend to New Jersey. Chapters four and five document Janie's return to Jennie; the resentment that Stephen feels; the fear and loneliness that Jennie feels; and the disappointment that Jodie copes with. Chapter six is Jennie's first day in school. Jodie had so looked forward to showing off her sister, but things aren't what she had hoped for. Chapters seven through nine continue to document Jennie's trials as she adapts to live in New Jersey. In chapters ten and eleven, Reeve drives from Connecticut to New Jersey to see his girlfriend and to invite her to the prom, with her parents' permission of course. Chapter twelve is the first time that the Spring family sees the real Jennie. She is animated, excited, happy, and easy to get along with. Chapters thirteen through fifteen see the police return to the Spring household seeking information about Hannah in the hopes that they will be able to arrest her. Chapters sixteen and seventeen show Jennie's complicated and emotional decision to return to the Johnson home while chapters eighteen and nineteen reveal the Spring family's response and Janie's ride back. In chapters twenty through to the end, Jodie and Stephen go to New York to look for Hannah and finally manage to put that chapter of their lives behind them.



Quotes

"Mommy, please don't be mad" (Chapter 2, p. 17).

"She saw her picture on the milk carton" (Chapter 4, p. 30).

"Be brave, honey. It'll be a long day, but each day will be easier" (Chapter 6, p. 39).

"If you had ever looked across the bedroom when Jodie was doing her homework, you would have noticed she wasn't using an alphabet" (Chapter 8, p. 53).

"In this field of wrongs, there has to be a right somewhere. And it's right for you to be back with your real family" (Chapter 10, p. 70).

"When I was in junior high, I thought boys should live in a zoo and have keepers" (Chapter 12, p. 80).

"I think I wanted to go" (Chapter 13, p. 89).

"If the day came when you could get in touch, we had to be here" (Chapter 14, p. 94).

"I love my parents, and they're not you, and it's time to go home" (Chapter 16, p. 112).

"I refuse to share the same bedroom with Jennie for six more weeks" (Chapter 18, p. 113).

"From the minute I saw my face on the milk carton, I knew I was the one who had been bad" (Chapter 19, p. 122).

"We can get into the city really early, and hit the soup kitchens at breakfast, lunch, and supper" (Chapter 20, p. 126).

"When Hannah left the baby with them, when they changed their name, and moved, to keep the cult from following, they never wrote to their daughter again" (Chapter 21, p. 129).

"They doan stay pretty very long" (Chapter 22, p. 136).

"You've got a family that loves you, and Jennie's got a family that loves her" (Chapter 23, p. 145).

Topics for Discussion

Why is Janie afraid that her Johnson parents are angry with her? Why do they stop referring to themselves as her mother and father? Is this a good approach? Why or why not?

What is part of the deal made by the Springs for when Jennie is returned to them? How does Jennie feel about this condition of her return? How do the Johnson's and Reeve respond to this condition? Who is the first to break it and why?

How does Janie compare her home with the Johnson's to her home with the Springs? What are some of the most difficult adjustments for her to make?

What are Jodie's expectations for Jennie's return? How does she feel about having Jennie home? What are some of the things that she does in preparation for Jennie's return?

How does Stephen feel about Jennie? Where do his feelings stem from? When was the first time he voiced how he really felt about Jennie and her kidnapping? How did his parents respond?

What did Jennie's parents do in response to Jennie's kidnapping? How did this directly affect their other children? How do the children feel about the changes in their lives?

What sacrifice is made so that Jennie will always be able to find the Springs? How is the family directly affected by this sacrifice? How does this change after Jennie gets in touch with them?

How long does it take for Jennie to begin to relax with the Spring family? What happens that ruins all of the progress she has made? What request does Jennie have that her birth father denies her? What one good thing comes out of that event?

What do Jodie and Stephen go to New York City for? What is their plan of attack? What is their initial impression when they reach Penn Station?

What happens in New York City that rattles Stephen? What insight does he gain after his initial embarrassment? How does their trip to NYC end? Is their mission successful? Why or why not?