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They Never Came Back



Synopsis

In a busy school cafeteria, a teenage girl is confronted by a classmate who questions her identity. He explains to the students who have crowded around that the girl bears an uncanny resemblance to his cousin, who was taken away by social services five years ago. Her parents abandoned her, fleeing the country after being accused of embezzling millions of dollars. The students are intrigued, but the girl shrugs off the attention as a case of mistaken identity. As the days pass, however, the boy refuses to relent and even brings his parents in to back him up. But they are not the only adults involved. An FBI agent who has been working the case these past five years believes that whoever this girl is, she can serve as bait to help the FBI capture the fugitives. In this powerful novel that explores the possibility of mistaken identity, the evils of money and greed, and the heartfelt obligations of family and loyalty, Caroline B. Cooney has once again crafted a page-turner that will resonate with readers. From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 6-10 • Five years ago, 10-year-old Murielle Lyman's wealthy mother and father fled the country after being accused of embezzlement, and their plans to take her with them fell through. Now 15, going by the name Cathy Ferris and living with a kind foster family, she starts

summer school in her old tony hometown of Greenwich, CT, hoping to get news of her parents and possibly reconnect with her extended family. But she never expected that her cousin Tommy would recognize her, or that the FBI agent assigned to their case would reappear and want to use her as bait to catch her parents. Cooney has crafted another thriller with a lot of appeal. With chapters alternating between Murielle's past and Cathy's present, readers will speed through the pages. The book couldn't be more relevant in light of the Bernie Madoff scandal; Cooney's adaptation of a complex fraud story for this age group is interesting if one can look beyond some weaknesses. For example, Cathy's classmates at times come across as unrealistically invested in the possibility of Cathy being Murielle. This book will appeal to the same crowd that's been reading Cooney's reluctant-reader-friendly titles for years. --Jennifer Barnes, Homewood Library, IL Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

Cooney's latest novel offers intrigue but isn't quite up to the bar set by many of her previous novels. Fifteen-year-old Cathy Ferris is studying at a summer language program in Greenwich, Connecticut. During lunch hour, a boy in the program mistakes Cathy for his cousin, Murielle Lyman. Five years ago, the Lymans fled the country after stealing millions from their clients, leaving their 10-year-old daughter in foster care. Cathy's classmates—including a girl whose mother was imprisoned because of the embezzlement—get caught up in the scandal. While the FBI plans to use Cathy to trap the Lymans, and her classmates attempt to sleuth out the real Murielle, Cathy wrestles with her own identity and betrayal. The mystery surrounding Murielle's identity is intriguing, and readers will wonder if the evasive Lymans will ever turn up. While this novel fails to deliver the action of *Code Orange* (2005) or the drama of the incredibly popular *Face on the Milk Carton* (1990), it is an accessible read for reluctant readers, if not quite a must for devotees of suspenseful thrillers. Grades 6-9. --Kimberly Garnick --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

The author weaves the tale with believable twists and turns. You are not quite sure which story to believe until the final chapters. Most teenage girls will enjoy this story.

Classroom library

If you like a book that will keep you up at night not wanting to put it down, this is the one for you.

So far, this is my favorite Caroline B. Cooney novel. I first became introduced to Ms. Cooney's writing in 1994, as a sixth-grader reading "The Face on the Milk Carton" and "Whatever Happened to Janie?" On my own, I followed those up with "The Voice on the Radio", "What Janie Found" and "Janie Face to Face." From reading "They Never Came Back", it reminds me of a situation where an adopted/kidnapped child might come face-to-face with his/her biological family. I often wonder what social media might do to someone, such as an adoptee, who sees a lookalike online (via Facebook, YouTube and/or a dating site), who could be a relative, and how such an experience might feel. "They Never Came Back" takes us into the lives of Cathy/Muriel and how a possible case of mistaken identity has occurred. This novel has undertones of "The Face On the Milk Carton" and its follow-ups, but it is a completely different story. At first, it might take some time getting used to switching back-and-forth between Cathy's story/Muriel's story, yet it makes sense. I highly recommend this book.

My daughter fell in love with Caroline B. Cooney when she read *Code Orange* a few years ago. She read several more titles, and often urged me to join her, but until I listened to *They Never Came Back*, I never had. We both enjoyed this school story with a mysterious twist. The cover is a little creepy, but the premise isn't really. One day Cathy Ferris is eating lunch in the cafeteria when a classmate, Tommy, comes over to her insisting she's his cousin Murielle. Five years ago Murielle's parents disappeared, fleeing persecution from embezzlement. At first his 10-year-old cousin Murielle lived with them, but when his parents were suspected to be in on the scheme, she was put in foster care, where she was lost in the system. The story is told in alternating chapters from Cathy's and Murielle's points of view (present and past) as the truth of the situation is revealed. This book is neither creepy nor scary, as the title and cover might lead you to believe. It moves along at a nice pace, though it isn't completely suspenseful (This is a good thing for me, so don't read it as a negative. I can't read too many heart-thumping action-packed novels without fearing for my cardiovascular health). **CONTENT NOTE:** The content is very clean in this novel featuring 15-year-olds. There's some very very mild crushing going on, but no other "mature" behavior or cursing, as far as I remember, which makes it a perfect book for those older middle grade readers (4th and up) who are looking for more "grown up" reading fare, yet it's also appropriate enough for older middle school readers looking for a clean read. **AUDIOBOOK NOTES:** Suzy Jackson's voice was upbeat and pert and was a delight to listen to.

When Murielle was 10 years old, her parents abandoned her in their flight to escape prosecution for embezzlement. With foster parents and a new name, Cathy (Murielle) has become comfortable with her new life, but still desperately misses her parents and extended family. When her cousin shows up in the school cafeteria and recognizes her, her real name and history are exposed. Although an interesting premise, the "danger" of revealing her identity seems over-exaggerated. The drama of the other students' fascination with Murielle's parents is also overwrought, especially considering the dry nature of the explanations of the embezzlement. Might be mildly interesting to fans of the author.

THEY NEVER CAME BACK by Caroline B. Cooney is a great thriller for middle grade readers. There are just enough twists and turns in the plot to keep readers focused, and it offers a few thought-provoking questions to make readers consider just exactly what they would do in the same circumstances. Chapter one is about Cathy. She is enrolled in a special accelerated summer school. The program squeezes one full year of Latin into a summer course. Her focus is Latin morning, noon, and night. One afternoon in the cafeteria, Cathy is shocked when a boy named Tommy approaches her table and calls her Murielle. He even drops to his knees before her as he insists she is his long-lost cousin. He claims she was taken from his home five years ago by social services. Then he adds that she had been abandoned by her parents, who were guilty of stealing millions of dollars from business investors. Suddenly, Cathy is the center of attention. Chapter two begins with Murielle. Ten-year-old Murielle is a lucky girl. Her parents are in the financial investment business, and they are able to provide her with anything her heart desires. She is used to living in a fancy house, having pretty clothes, new things whenever she wants, and private lessons in just about anything she is interested in doing. Even though they are constantly working and leave her in the care of various babysitters and housekeepers, Murielle thinks her parents are terrific. One afternoon, Murielle is with her Aunt Lois headed toward the airport. The plan is that her aunt will be dropping her off to catch a flight with her father. They will be flying to England where they will meet up with her mother. Suddenly, Aunt Lois turns the car away from the airport and begins shouting about how she won't go through with the plans. Murielle has no idea what is going on except that she is not going to be going with her parents. At that point her life changes forever. Could Cathy and Murielle really be one and the same? Is Cathy, who lives with a struggling foster family, really the daughter of millionaire investors? It's been five years since their scandalous disappearance. Could they really have been more interested in money than in their adorable little Murielle? THEY NEVER CAME BACK is a fast-paced novel with a unique plot. Caroline B. Cooney's smooth flowing prose

will keep readers on the edge of their seats as they follow the action to see just exactly who is who in this clever mystery. Reviewed by: Sally Kruger, aka "Readingjunky"

A good read, even for an adult in her 50's!

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Back Stretching: Back Strengthening And Stretching Exercises For Everyone (lower back pain, healing back pain, stretching exercises, back pain treatment, ... pain relief, stretching, back pain Book 1) They Never Came Back From Zero to Sixty on Hedge Funds and Private Equity: What They Do, How They Do It, and Why They Do The Mysterious Things They Do They Hurt, They Scar, They Shoot, They Kill: Toxic Characters in Young Adult Fiction (Studies in Young Adult Literature) The Walt Disney World That Never Was: Stories Behind the Amazing Imagineering Dreams That Never Came True The First Americans: The Story of Where They Came From and Who They Became The Tests Came Back And My Blood Type Is Definitely 73% Taco: Composition Notebook Journal, 8.5 x 11 Large, 120 Pages College Ruled (Back To School Journal) Understanding Girls with ADHD, Updated and Revised: How They Feel and Why They Do What They Do Working: People Talk About What They Do All Day and How They Feel About What They Do The Employee Experience Advantage: How to Win the War for Talent by Giving Employees the Workspaces they Want, the Tools they Need, and a Culture They Can Celebrate Defeating ISIS: Who They Are, How They Fight, What They Believe The 100 Best Business Books of All Time: What They Say, Why They Matter, and How They Can Help You Miracles: What They Are, Why They Happen, and How They Can Change Your Life Queens of the Ice: They were fast, they were fierce, they were teenage girls (Lorimer Recordbooks) John Cena: I never back down, I never quit He Never Came Home: Interviews, Stories, and Essays from Daughters on Life Without Their Fathers Voyagers of the Titanic: Passengers, Sailors, Shipbuilders, Aristocrats, and the Worlds They Came From Mistakes That Worked: 40 Familiar Inventions & How They Came to Be They Came to Baghdad Mistakes That Worked: The World's Familiar Inventions and How They Came to Be

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