



# Watch Me Disappear

*Janelle Brown*

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**A woman vanishes on a solo hike in California's Desolation Wilderness and leaves behind a family reeling from the loss of this charismatic, enigmatic wife and mother, who, they come to learn, was very good at keeping secrets. A bold departure from the author of the national bestseller *All We Ever Wanted Was Everything*.**

Billie is vibrant—a beautiful, outdoorsy California mom, a far cry from the reckless youth she'd been, but her troubled past seems only to enhance her natural charisma and allure. She and her husband Jonathan have an enviable life - a great house in Berkeley, a lovely, sensitive daughter, friends, nice things. As their daughter Olive reaches adolescence and needs her mom less, Billie throws herself into extreme sports—marathons, scuba diving, rock climbing. These challenges make her feel alive, but one day, on a solo hike in the Desolation Wilderness, she vanishes from the trail—no body, only a hiking boot, is found. Her family is devastated. Jonathan drinks; Olive grows remote. But a year after Billie's death, Olive starts having waking dreams—hallucinations?—that her mother is still alive. Jonathan worries about Olive's emotional stability, until he uncovers a secret that sends him on his own quest for the truth—about Billie, their marriage, and the stories we tell ourselves about the people we love.

## Watch Me Disappear Details

Date : Published July 11th 2017 by Spiegel & Grau

ISBN :

Author : Janelle Brown

Format : Kindle Edition 369 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Suspense

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# From Reader Review Watch Me Disappear for online ebook

## Liz says

I had trouble connecting with the characters in this book. A woman goes on a solo hike on the Pacific Crest Trail and never comes home. Only her boot is found. Her husband and 16 year old daughter are left to cope as best they can. A year passes. The daughter begins "seeing" her mother in some sort of hallucination/waking dream. The husband begins to discover his wife was telling him lies. No one seems to know who the "real" Billie Flanagan was. The whole premise of the book is how much do we really know those we love.

The writing was decent and there wasn't anything fundamentally wrong with this book. It just never truly grabbed me, although the second half of the book, as the husband begins to investigate Billy's past, is much more interesting than the first half.

My thanks to netgalley and Random House for an advance copy of this book.

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## Matt says

First and foremost, a large thank you to NetGalley, Janelle Brown, Random House Publishing Group and Spiegel & Grau for providing me with a copy of this publication, which allows me to provide you with an unbiased review.

Turning to a new author, I wanted to see what Janelle Brown had to offer in this interesting story that explores the family unit and its dynamic when a significant piece is missing. After Sybilla 'Billie' Flanagan goes missing during a solo hike, her immediate family is left to wonder what happen, while never giving up hope. Billie's husband, Jonathan, is left to wonder about his wife, entering a state of numbness as he goes through the motions of a memorial when she is seemingly dead. Adding to his confusion, Jonathan must juggle his teenage daughter, Olive, who is determined not to shut the door on her mother, wondering if she will walk through the door at any moment. When Olive begins having some visions of her mother, she holds out that Billie is alive and just away from them, either by choice or having been kidnapped. This lights a fire under Jonathan, who has been filling his time writing a memoir of life with Billie Flanagan. When Billie finds some information about Billie on her computer, this opens new potential pathways that go back three decades and the breadcrumbs that Jonathan follows leads him to believe this might have been something orchestrated. However, there is nothing to substantiate any of this, save for a gut feeling and a daughter whose focussed seems stronger than ever. Where is Billie Flanagan and was her disappearance something that had been in the works long before that hiking adventure? Brown offers up an interesting spin on a much-used plot, allowing readers to weigh the strength of a family's determination to find what belongs to them. An interesting read for those seeking something more emotion-based than a thriller or crime story.

This is the first piece of Brown's work that I have tried, which has left me a little on the fence. I was expecting a high-powered mystery, with characters that sought truth and sifted through lies. Brown works hard to create these characters: the lost and drifting Jonathan, his eager and determined Olive who is suffering the loss and her teenage epiphany, and the ever-elusive Billie, who comes to life in the stories that

are told and through the other two characters. Brown serves to deliver the Billie persona through the ever-winding memoir on which Jonathan has been working and the increasingly vivid images that Olive develops. With a story that could have delved deep into mystery, Brown presents something that is more worthy of an emotional journey and one in which all the characters find and lose themselves at the same time. I found myself begging to find something on which I could grasp during the first portion, but by the end, the twists had me highly impressed as the narrative took me in directions I was not sure I would have originally liked. A journey full of mystery after all!

Kudos, Madam Brown for an great book. I think I may come back to see what else you have to offer sooner than later.

Like/hate the review? An ever-growing collection of others appears at:  
<http://pecheyponderings.wordpress.com/>

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## **Carrie says**

A year after Billie disappeared Jonathon and his daughter Olive are still reeling from her loss and trying to find a way for them to move forward with their lives. Billie had gone hiking by herself and never returned and after more than a week of searching the authorities called off the search finding evidence that suggested Billie may have died in those woods.

Now Olive is having visions of her mother and thinks that she just might be still alive out there and waiting for her family to find her. Jonathon is trying to get a death certificate issued so they can move on with their lives but at Olive's insistence finds himself also questioning his wife's fate. The two begin to investigate and uncover the secrets Billie had hidden.

Watch Me Disappear is another book that I struggled with deciding how I really wanted to rate this one. After much deliberating I decided to just stay down the middle with my rating as there were some things in here that I just kept thinking about that sort of bothered me with this mystery. However, even with my doubts I still got engaged and would definitely pick up another read by this author so in no way did I find this one bad at all either.

The first thing I found odd about this mystery/thriller read was that quite honestly for me as a reader it lacked the thrilling part for the most part. Taking place a year after Billie's disappearance perhaps left out that beat the clock discovery for me. At that point I thought to myself if she is alive then there's like a 99% chance she's left on purpose so perhaps you guys should just move on and leave the secrets buried.... although as a fan of mystery/thriller I was still curious as to what happened, just not as intensely.

But also, I found Olive's "visions" to be a strange addition to this type of book. Thinking to myself while reading these parts and how that gets played out later that this type of thing really didn't fit this book in my mind. Somehow that whole part of the read made the story progress but it just had an odd feel to it being included, although that is just my personal opinion and it may not bother others. So these things left me scratching my head a bit but thinking I'd try this author again because I saw a lot of potential to the writing.

I received an advance copy from the publisher via NetGalley.

For more reviews please visit <https://carriesbookreviews.wordpress.com>....

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## Deanna says

My reviews can also be seen at: [https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress...](https://deesradreadsandreviews.wordpress.com)

Billie Flanagan was a beautiful woman with the kind of life many wanted. She seemed to have it all. But everything changes one day when she goes for a hike and disappears. One of her hiking boots is found, but there's no sign of Billie anywhere.

As the book opens Billie, Jonathan, and Olive are relaxing on the beach after a picnic lunch. Billie and Jonathan have been married for 16 years. They are watching their daughter, fifteen year old Olive walk along the shore. Billie seems to be worried about Olive but Jonathan shrugs off her concerns.

***"In life the world is tough on soft things. She's going to need to grow a thicker skin or she's going to spend her whole life being too afraid to try anything"***

Billie started acting strangely right before her disappearance. Now a year later, Olive has been pulling away from everything. She feels like she's constantly waiting. Waiting for her mom to walk in the door or call on the phone. Then Olive has a type of vision and "sees" her mom. It seems so real. Her mother says things to her in these visions...

***"I miss you. Why aren't you looking?"***

Olive becomes convinced her mother is alive. Her father is worried about her. Is it just her imagination...her hope...or something else? Up until then, Jonathan and Olive had been coping the best they could. Until Olive starts this imagining...or hallucinating that her mother is still alive.

***"You aren't trying hard enough"***

Jonathan thought he knew everything about Billie. Her traumatic childhood and everything else. But when he starts to learn other things about her life, he wonders just how much she didn't tell him about her past. They had married after knowing each other for only six weeks. But Jonathan was positive she was right for him. He had felt like she was his missing piece, and HE could give her the love she'd lacked throughout her life.

***"For sixteen years, I tried my hardest to live up to that promise: to watch out for her, be her safe harbor. We made a beautiful life together, raised a beloved child, and built a nice home, at which point I must have forgotten my vigilance. Because in the end, I didn't manage to keep her safe at all"***

What happened to Billie? Was she kidnapped? Is she dead? Or is it possible that Olive is right and her mother is still alive?

I wouldn't really say WATCH ME DISAPPEAR is a thriller, but more of a character driven family drama. Which isn't a bad thing. It was a very interesting story with a satisfying amount of mystery and suspense.

Overall a solid, entertaining novel. There were some good twists. I found the characters believable, flawed, and some not all that likeable. But they were intriguing. Though it may have been a bit slow-paced at first, it picked up and soon I was immersed in the well-written and quite moving story. I had to find out what

happened to Billie. But not only that, I really wanted to know how things worked out for Olive and Jonathan too.

*" Who you want people to be makes you blind to who they really are"*

This was my first read from Janelle Brown but definitely won't be my last.

Thank you NetGalley and Random House Publishing Group for providing an advanced readers copy of this book for me to read in exchange for my honest review.

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### **RoseMary Achey says**

Yes, there are twist and turns, but this book moves at a glacier pace. It felt like a puzzle made up of pieces that did not fit. A teenage daughter and husband try to put their lives back together when their mother/wife never returns from a hiking trip. There are lots of dead ends that were not particularly well developed.

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### **Monnie says**

More than anything else, I think, this is a character study; what I *know* is that it was riveting to watch the threads that hold together three close-knit characters - a father, a mother and a teenage daughter - begin to twist, unravel and, depending on what you read into it, come together again.

The story begins about a year after the disappearance of Billie Flanagan, who went for a solo hike in a California wilderness area and never came back. She left behind a loving, trusting husband, Jonathan, and their teenage daughter, Olive; because her body never turned up, their lives have been turned upside down. On one hand, they hold out the hope that she'll turn up - apparently, she's always been a bit of a "hippie" who disappears for a day or two on a whim. On the other, they want the whole thing to be over. Jonathan and his attorney have petitioned the court to declare Billie legally dead - partly to bring some measure of closure and partly so Jonathan can collect the somewhat hefty life insurance settlement. He quit a high-stress job to concentrate on writing, and he's already behind in tuition payments to his daughter's pricey all-girl private school.

He's also run through the advance he got from a publisher for rights to his as-yet-unfinished book detailing life with the offbeat (to say the least) Billie. This book is interspersed with bits and pieces of what he's written that reflect not only his feelings for her and their life together, but how those feelings evolve as new information comes to light.

Suddenly, for instance, Olive begins to "see" visions of her mother, who passes on cryptic messages that convince the girl that her mother is still alive. Jonathan, needless to say, thinks Olive is heading off the deep end - especially since the visions are interfering with her schoolwork and relationship with him. Still, his curiosity is piqued enough that he sets out to look for other clues as to what really happened (including digging into files hidden in Billie's laptop). As the story progresses, he learns - much to his dismay - that Billie has lied to him and Olive. But the question is, were those lies simply omissions of a past events that are too painful for Billie to share or to cover up a more insidious life that came before her husband and daughter?

Helping to console him is next-door neighbor Harmony, a caterer who was Billie's best friend. That complicates the situation by eliciting quite different emotions from Jonathan, who leans toward going with the flow, and Olive, who (quite understandably) resents the intrusion. Adding to her angst is that she's just beginning to come to terms with her own sexuality as awareness of what her mother really was about begins, for better or worse, to grow.

"Who you want people to be makes you blind to who they really are" is a tagline in the book's official description - and it's right on target. This is a don't-miss book that grabbed and held my attention from the start, and I heartily thank the publisher, via NetGalley, for the opportunity to read an advance copy in exchange for a review.

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### **Jennifer says**

I can often judge how much I'm enjoying a book by how long it takes me to finish it -- and this one seemed to take an eternity.

One the surface it seems like the type of book that I'd enjoy -- a beautiful, active Berkely, CA mom goes out for a hike and never returns. Nothing but a hiking boot is found. She's presumed dead and her husband and teenaged daughter are left to grieve, and to ponder how much they really knew their wife/mother.

This is much more of a character study than a who-dunnit. The elements of a good book were there, but something was definitely off. The book was a painfully slow read for me, the characters were largely unlikeable, and their actions often times seemed inauthentic.

Thank you to Spiegel & Grau and NetGalley for a galley of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Trin says**

So boring. A book constructed almost entirely out of red herrings -- everything that looks like it might be used as a potentially interesting plot thread fizzles out to nothing by the end. And then, the actual ending... You know the scene at the conclusion of *Psycho* in which Norman Bates' character and motivation is explained to the audience in case any of them are particularly slow? Or the scene at the end of the film version of *L.A. Confidential* where the entire plot is re-articulated, as the viewers are once again presumed to be unusually thick? Well, that's this book's entire, lengthy epilogue, which destroys any lingering ambiguity and basically confirms everything a reasonably astute reader could have assumed from chapter one. Snore.

One point of interest: I am vaguely curious if the author considers Billie to be a sympathetic character. Because she kind of reads to me like (view spoiler). An interpretation which, seeing as it's almost completely unexplored, isn't actually all that interesting either. Ah well.

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### **?Karen says**

Publish date is TODAY, July 11, 2017. The publisher has sent me a link to the book trailer so sharing; my

review remains the same as before otherwise. :)

<https://youtu.be/-mWcNxKWkZ4>

I fell in love with this book during the Prologue when the family of three visits a preserve for monarch butterflies during the start of the monarch migration to the eucalyptus trees of Northern California. I knew the family was one that would grab my interest and hold it. This was a lovely family moment, but one of their last because the mother is soon missing and presumed dead after a solo hiking trip from which she never returned.

Then it is a year later and the father Jonathan and daughter Olive are still in a tailspin over the death, and barely coping. When Olive thinks she is having visions of her mother, Billie, Olive believes her mom is trying to tell her that she is not really dead and in fact is in need of rescue. Jonathan, a writer working on a memoir of grief over the loss of Billie, discovers some incongruities of his own and begins to wonder the same thing. Only he really needs Billie's life insurance policy to pay out so, what to do? He decides to do what's best for Olive, but there are many twists in the story to come, many secrets that Billie held close.

This is one of those books where you won't want to read ahead because there are so many surprises. The last sentence -- well, just wait!

I was happy to have been given an ebook from the publisher through NetGalley, and an ARC from LibraryThings.

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## **James says**

4 out of 5 stars to *Watch Me Disappear*, a new mystery and suspense thriller, set to be published on July 11, 2017 and written by Janelle Brown. Many thanks to the author, NetGalley, Random House and Spiegel & Grau for this Advanced Reader Copy (ARC) in exchange for a fair and honest review.

### **Why This Book**

I saw this book floating around on Goodreads, which prompted me to read the description. I checked NetGalley to see if it was available and was awarded the request back in April. I had a few other reads to complete before it, but settled in last week to be able to release the review a few weeks before the book's publication, as part of an effort to promote the novel.

### **Approach & Style**

The book is told mostly in the present tense, which is not something I have experienced very often; however, it worked very well given the suspense and thriller aspects.

I read it via Kindle Reader on my iPad. It is about 5000 lines or 350 pages.

It is mostly told in a third-person point of view and switches focus on a few different characters. There are also 5 chapters which are news articles that one character writes as part of the book he is publishing. These serve to connect different story points and keep the momentum of what's happening behind the scenes.

### **Plot, Characters & Setting**



Billie and Jonathan have been married for nearly 20 years and they have a 16-year-old daughter named Olive. They live in the East Bay, which is further into California, across from San Francisco. As the story starts, it's been almost one-year since Billie went missing after she was on a hike, leaving behind her husband and daughter to wonder if she was kidnapped or died somewhere in the forest, as a body was never found.

Billie grew up in a very religious family as an only child. She ran away from home a few times, and after father, a minister, was caught with a teenage girl, Billie left for good. She told her friends that he was an awful father and abused her from time to time. She became a free spirit and helped protect the environment and animals from disasters and corruption. One day, she meets Jonathan and after 6 weeks, they get married and later have a baby. She loves him, but seems to struggle settling down, often needing her free time away from the family life. Jonathan had a sister, but she drowned when they were children, and he's always felt guilt for not being able to save her. Years later, when he meets Billie, he's drawn to her and they quickly settle into a life where it's just the 3 of them. Olive is your typical angsty teenage girl going thru her own coming of age story.

Harmony, Billie's former best friend shows up at some point, trying to re-build her friendship with Billie. She also later tries to help Olive and Jonathan move on after Billie's death, offering both friendship and an attraction to Jonathan. Olive's best friend, Natalie, also tries to help Olive get over her mother's loss. But one day, Olive has a weird vision where she thinks her mother is trying to be found. Jonathan doesn't want to deal with it, as he believes Billie is dead, and needs the money from her life insurance to be able to afford to pay for their mortgage and raise Olive. But suddenly, as he begins throwing Billie's things away one year later, he finds notes and files that indicate she may not have been as honest with him as he thought. Jonathan begins to believe Olive and they search for Billie, learning various bits of information which cast Billie into a darker shadow.

Jonathan keeps coming to the same conclusion... over and over again about his wife:

The book is a quest for Olive and Jonathan to move on from Billie's death, but also to determine whether she is indeed alive or if something darker has happened to her when she supposedly went for the hike. It's a psychological thriller, leaving readers to question which information is accurate and which is just a red herring. In the end, Jonathan and Olive find a great deal of answers, learn what Billie had been up to in the last year of her life and figure out how to move on from the entire situation. You also find out exactly what happened to Billie when she went on her hike "to get some space for a few days."

### **Strengths**

The story is captivating and draws you in around the 15% mark. You really want to know what happened to Billie. Jonathan and Olive are likable characters whom you want to find answers in order to be able to move on with their lives. Both are written as believable father and daughter. There are tons of personal details about their lives, including when Billie was home with them. You see this from both a parent's and a lover's perspective. The story engages you and pushes you to decide what kind of a person you want Billie to turn out to be.

It's a real-life situation for the most part. How do you move on when someone you love is missing and you don't know if they are dead or alive? All the right questions and emotions come up. It's fantastic that the story starts nearly one year after she's missing, so we don't have to live through the initial phases of misery

and loss. We see and feel the pain, but it's the kind you've already nursed, and then it's ripped open when evidence shows that she may still be alive.

I did like the character of Billie, but it was because of solid writing. And I'm not saying she's done anything wrong related to the disappearance (no spoilers!). I didn't like her because she seemed selfish to need so much time alone, to seem callous about showing her feelings to Jonathan at times, for treating everything as "that's life, we'll figure it out." I wanted to see the motherly side of her where she cries and yells and wants to help her child. Instead, she seemed too much of a free-spirit who just went with the flow. Sometimes it's good, but Billie took it too far in my opinion. But that means the writer did an awesome job pushing me to feel this way.

This book is a definite commentary on marriage or relationships: how well do you really know the other person? Is it OK to keep secrets? Is your life together a surface existence or so deep that you have trust in all areas? When do you decide it's OK to just do what you want and be selfish, but tell yourself it's for the benefit of the other person? Huh???? That doesn't fit my definition of a relationship, but it certainly gave me something to think about. I'll think I'll tell my significant other tonight that I need 2 weeks alone just to be away from him as I have to think. LOL If someone told me that, I'd say... "Seriously? OK, sure. Be sure to leave the key when you go as your a\$\$ aint' coming back. I'm all for space, but let's work thru it together." Thank you. Off my soap box.

### **Concerns**

I don't think the character of Harmony was flushed out as much as necessary. As you learn more, she feels a bit deeper, but overall, it was a bit of a missing component.

I know we needed Olive, Jonathan and Billie to seem like the only people around in the family, but where were Jonathan's family and his friends. They seemed AWOL at a time they were likely needed.

When the book ends, there are a few parts left too open for me. I want to know specifically what was true and what was false in regard to Billie's early days of running away from situations and people. She told one story. Another character told a different story. Seeing the whole picture, I struggled a little in deciding who to believe. Even in the end. But it was just a little bit, nothing to throw the story off.

I wasn't too big a fan of the newspaper articles interspersed throughout the chapters. They didn't seem to serve as strong a plot device as I thought they could or should. It helped me learn more about how Jonathan felt about Billie, but at the same time, I think I'd have preferred a journal entry, a conversation with a psychiatrist or even him just saying things aloud. It wasn't distracting, but I didn't get a lot from it.

### **Author & Other Similar Books**

It's the first book I've read by the author, but she's written two other books before this one. I would be interested in reading them as I liked her style. I plan to look them up and read if the plot sounds strong.

This book is not a thriller in that you are scared or afraid of someone being hurt. It's more suspenseful, trying to figure out what is really going on. In that vain, it's like *The Girl on the Train* or *Gone Girl*. You wonder for a while if you can trust the narrator. Maybe you can, maybe you can't. I won't say. But you get that feel from the book.

### Questions & Final Thoughts

The title is super-important, as you'd expect. She disappears. You question the entire time you're reading the book... "Who is saying those words?" Is it the mother, the daughter or the father? It could be any one of them. I liked that aspect. It's the perfect title, also because the word "disappear" can mean so many things: physically, emotionally, due to fear, due to memory loss... really engaging for those reasons. It got a 4 of 5 stars from me as there were some concerns and I struggled to stay focused in the first 15%. But once it got into the swing of things, I only put it down one other time, as I was very sleepy. But I read the last 50% all in one sitting, so it's definitely got game! And I sorta suspect, this might be a case of:

### About Me

For those new to me or my reviews... here's the scoop: I read A LOT. I write A LOT. And now I blog A LOT. First the book review goes on Goodreads, and then I send it on over to my WordPress blog at <https://thisismytruthnow.com>, where you'll also find TV & Film reviews, the revealing and introspective 365 Daily Challenge and lots of blogging about places I've visited all over the world. And you can find all my social media profiles to get the details on the who/what/when/where and my pictures. Leave a comment and let me know what you think. Vote in the poll and ratings. Thanks for stopping by. *Note:* All written content is my original creation and copyrighted to me, but the graphics and images were linked from other sites and belong to them. Many thanks to their original creators.

[poll daddy poll=9729544]

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### **Elyse says**

Library Audiobook narrated by Kaleo Griffith and Tavia Gilbert.  
It took me almost 3 weeks to finish this library overdrive audiobook.  
No red marks for being late, the book simply 'disappears'.

Whew, finished in the nick of time. ....

3 WEEEEKS to get the PUNCH LINE was a LONG WAIT! lol

To be fair — this was a part-time book choice. I listened to the story a little here - and little there - a few walks here - a few walks there—out in the garden- etc.

I enjoyed it though. Every time I picked up my 'audio/listening', I immediately got back engaged. Lazy - listening - easy to follow - easy to remember where I left off.

The narrators voice was CLEAR - NOT INTRUSIVE- GOOD- JUST RIGHT FOR THIS STORY.

Everything was kinda "just right" - AVERAGE!!! Average in \*NOT\* BEING A BAD THING. AVERAGE as GOOD!

This is a mystery - not a thriller-chiller- ( which is fine with me)-

I felt all three main characters were 'a little' annoying- but not the entire time.

We most want to know if Billie is dead or alive, and or what's the deal Bill? Anybody who reads 'at all' - or sees movies — is pretty sure Billie 'is' alive -no matter how much they say she is presumed dead. So.....the bigger mystery is... If Billie is alive, where is she, why is she hiding, why did she disappear, and what's the deal,.....Bill? Haha

While on the mystery journey — questions unfold...secrets surface ....lots of juicy tidbits to learn about:

Billie- the Berkeley mom Jonathan - the Berkeley husband - and Olive - the 15-year-old Berkeley daughter.

Everyone in this family is hiking on their own path - it's their hiking 'together' that they are finding more challenging — HOW COME?

Billie says.....( after seeing a couple on the trail - and asking for directions) — “I like hiking alone - It gives your thoughts the respect it deserves”.

I agree with Billie.....but.....not at the cost of avoiding communication with your family.

My personal disappointment ( small and petty): Since the author had Billie go missing in the DESOLATION WILDERNESS.....I would have enjoyed a little more wilderness- disappearance- ‘ descriptions of the mountains, plants, the lakes, wildlife, and a little history about Desolation Wilderness.

Years ago - the Native Americans lived in that area —which was often known as “Devil’s Valley”. —It’s a gorgeous area - the crest of Sierra Nevada.....runs through it ( Calif. and Nevada)....just west of Lake Tahoe. However.....the author ‘did’ describe other beaches in California- and fun areas in Berkeley and Santa Cruz which ‘was’ delightful.

I had a little chuckle— it was a scene where they found one hiking boot— ( smashed cell phone and no Billie)..... Am I the only one who thought of the book “Wild” by Cheryl Strayed? maybe Billie, too, called REI, for a new pair of hiking boots? lol ( before the cell phone disaster)...

The epilogue is erratic...a little too long ( a sign of justification )....yet fits the ‘entire’ story.

3.6

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## **Debra says**

Billie Flanagan decided to go hiking alone and it has been almost a year since she has disappeared. Her body was never found. The only thing which remained was her hiking book. There appears to have been no foul play - she just disappeared leaving her husband and daughter to mourn her loss.

Almost a year after his wife's disappearance, Jonathon is struggling financially and has decided to write about his wife's disappearance and life without her. He is in the process of having his wife declared legally dead. He begins to drink a little more than he should and also begins to worry about his daughter Olive. Olive has been "seeing" her Mother. Olive begins to believe that her Mother is not dead but just "missing". Does Olive have psychic abilities? Is her grief causing her to see things that are not real. Is it wishful thinking that her Mother is still alive?

How much do you really know your spouse? After her disappearance Jonathon begins to find things and learn things about his wife. Things she had kept from him, things he never knew, things he did not want to know. As Olive and Jonathon go on a journey to learn the truth about Billie's disappearance, they learn about themselves, others and of course about Billie herself.

I went into this book with high hopes. The description sounded very promising. I started this book a couple of times and would put it down to read other books. It just didn't grab me as I had hoped it would. That is not to say that this is a bad book. I liked it - I just didn't love it. I wasn't too shocked by the ending. It did not shock me. I actually expected it.

The writing is solid in this book. The author did a good job describing this dysfunctional family. Jonathon busy at work doesn't notice the money coming out of the bank account, in fact, he really doesn't pay much attention at all. Their daughter attends a pricey private school that Jonathon struggles to afford after Billie's disappearance. Their "perfect" family isn't so perfect after all.

I really wanted to like this book more. As I already stated....I liked it - I didn't love it.

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley and Spiegel & Grau in exchange for an honest review.

See more of my reviews at [www.openbookpost.com](http://www.openbookpost.com)

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## **Linda says**

Once you lose your grip, you just seem to slip away.

And this one seemed to drop into a deep abyss for me.

Watch Me Disappear is the story of Billie Flanagan, wife and mother, who takes off unexpectedly on a backpacking trip on the Pacific Crest Trail in the Desolation Wilderness. Billie is hiking solo and hasn't given her family much of a heads-up. No explanation. No itinerary. No discussion. Full stop.

Jonathan, her husband, has been caught up in the weight of his job commitments and has hardly lifted his head to even gaze in the direction of his family. Olive, their sixteen year old daughter, attends a very pricey prep school and is overwhelmed with fitting in. But this complacency is soon shattered when Billie goes missing. Billie's car remains at the trailhead and all that the searchers can find is one of Billie's boots.

Fast forward and the one year anniversary of Billie's disappearance is approaching. Jonathan is awaiting the court's renderence of a death certificate. But Olive is not fully buying into the idea that her mother must be dead. In fact, she's having strange visions of Billie trying to contact her. She takes it upon herself to search for the missing Billie. Eventually, she ropes in her father. What they find together leaves a trail of massive question marks.

Sounds like all the makings of a sensational novel. It was until it wasn't any longer. Watch Me Disappear seemed to be aimed more towards a YA audience. The situations and plot designs came off as contrived and forced. There was always an answer for everything and that same everything at the end was explained to the nth degree. Each character seemed to live in their own personal bubble. Denial was served morning, noon, and night.

Janelle Brown can write. She drew me in. Here's hoping that the next book will not be so caught up in tightly structured plot devices. There's talent here that needs to shine.

I received Watch Me Disappear through NetGalley for an honest review. My thanks to Random House and to Janelle Brown for the opportunity.

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## Kawther (TheVillainLibrary) says

The story is about a family dealing with the disappearance of the mother "**Billie**", she had a wild eventful past and everyone loves her and worships her, but one day she goes hiking and never comes back, which leaves her husband and daughter trying to make peace with what happened, did she die and they have to move on? or, did she disappear and they need to find her?

✿. ✿. ✿. ✿. ✿. ✿. ✿

*This book was provided by the publisher via NetGalley*

### Thoughts:

✿ **I loved the writing in this book**, It's beautiful and made me like the story from the first few pages, At first, the story was heartwarming and sweet, then it took a mysterious turn It wasn't thrilling or scary but very suspenseful and made me question the characters and the lives they had.

✿ **The characters** were great, i loved some and hated others, I admired "**Billie**" at certain times but hated her selfishness at some points as well , I was invested in the father and daughter's lives and feelings more, I really appreciate it when a book can do that, I also admired the relationship between them, you could feel the love they had for each other

But as the story goes on, you start to find out some not so pretty things about certain characters, Lies start to unfold, doubt and accusations start to take place over the good memories.

✿ **The plot:** I'm not sure how i feel about it, The events in this story didn't start picking up until about 70% of the book, it was a bit slow paced for my liking but i was okay with it because I was waiting for the big reveal, i had high hopes for a mind blowing twist that would leave me gasping, which didn't happen here, The actual reveal is good, I did enjoy it, but it left me a bit disappointed, It wasn't something unexpected, and I didn't get all the explanations i was waiting for .

The reason I'm giving this book 4 stars is because of the beautiful writing and the idea behind it, *Do we really know the people we love as much as we think we do?*

I loved that idea, and i enjoyed how it was represented in Billie and Jonathan.

*"Maybe this is why they say love is blind : who you want people to be makes you blind to who they really are"*

*"I was marrying a woman who didn't want to be known by anyone - not even me "*

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## Carol (Bookaria) says

**This book will have you turning the pages seeking for answers and, do not worry, the answers will come.**

It's being a year since Billie - the mother of Olive and wife of Jonathan Flanagan- disappeared without leaving a trace while hiking by herself in the *Desolation Wilderness*. All that was found of her was a hiking boot and this event left daughter and father reeling from her loss. After almost a year, they need to have her death certificate issued by the Court to get on with their lives but at this point Olive starts questioning the fate of her mother, investigating what happened and this is where the mystery begins.

The story is mostly told from the alternating points of view of Jonathan and Olive. As they start digging into Billie's past, disturbing secrets come up to the surface that paint a picture of who Billie really was, and of her independent and fierce spirit. Her past actions can be considered both courageous or extremely selfish. That is for the reader to decide.

This is the first book I've read from Janelle Brown. Overall, **I liked it and could not stop turning those pages, the characters intrigued me.** This is not a thriller, it is more of a character-driven mystery, the answers unfold slowly as we learn more about Billie's past. I recommend it to all mystery lovers looking for a haunting read, oh, and the last chapter left me spinning but completely satisfied.

*Thank you to NetGalley, Janelle Brown, Random House Publishing Group and Spiegel & Grau for providing me with a copy of this publication in exchange for an honest review.*

Review also posted on blog.

### About the author:

Twitter

Website

**Final note:** *Desolation Wilderness* is an actual place, I googled it and found this beautiful photo (source: wikipedia)

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