



Don't Look Behind You

Lois Duncan

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How can April give up her name, her friends, her boyfriend Steve, and everything she's ever known? April Corrigan feels like her life is over when she learns that her father has been working undercover for the FBI and the family must relocate under the Federal Witness Security Program.

No one can reach them now... or can they?

Don't Look Behind You Details

Date : Published August 1st 1990 by Little, Brown (first published 1989)

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Author : Lois Duncan

Format : Paperback 192 pages

Genre : Young Adult, Mystery, Fiction, Horror, Thriller, Suspense

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From Reader Review Don't Look Behind You for online ebook

Courtney Gorges says

Don't Look Behind You is a good book for 8th-12th graders to read. I think this is a good age because I don't think kids in middle school would understand what is happening in this book. This is a good book for boys and girls. This book is about a family who is just like any other family, they go to school, have jobs and the mom takes care of the kids. April feels like her life is over when she learns that her father has been working undercover for the FBI and then the family must relocate under the Protection Programs. I thought that this book was interesting, I liked the intensity of the book and how fast paced it was. I would recommend other people to read this book.

Alicia Neely says

Reference information:

Title Don't Look Behind You

Author Lois Duncan

Publisher Laurel-Leaf Year 1989

of pages 179 Genre Fiction

Reading level 6.4 Interest level grade 7-11

Potential hot lava: none

General response/reaction:

This book grabbed my attention from the first page. I absolutely loved the book! Duncan used a lot of good vocabulary that students would be able to understand, as well as situations all students can relate to. I was able to read this book in an hour and a half because it was a real page turner. I was constantly wondering what was going to happen next and if everyone was going to make it out safely.

Subjects, Themes, and Big Ideas:

The main theme of the novel is loss of identity. The family is completely uprooted from all they knew; however, they stick together and everything turns out okay. While reading this novel, I realized that no matter what, as long as you have family, everything will turn out okay. Right after the uprooting, the family hopes that the changes will be temporary, but quickly start to realize that things will never go back to what they were. Another theme is acceptance because April is not able to change the past events, so she needs to be able to accept these changes and move on with her life.

Characters:

- April Corrigan/Valerie Weber - eleventh grade tennis star who has everything, until her family enters WPP and leaves everything behind
- Bram Corrigan/Jason Weber – eight year old brother who doesn't understand why they moved
- Steve – April's boyfriend who betrayed her as soon as she moved away
- Jim Peterson – bodyguard in charge of watching the Corrigan family who's fate ended because Valerie was selfish

Plot summary:

April Corrigan had everything, until her family had to enter into the Witness Protection Program and change her name to Valerie Weber. Her father was working undercover for the FBI and his identity was revealed to a big hit mobster. The family was relocated to Florida and had a hard time keeping their identities secure. After multiple 'slip-ups' the mobster found Val and her grandma, Loralie. After a strong fight, the Corrigan family all survived and the mobster was killed. However, the family needed to be moved again because they knew that another mobster would be hired.

Strengths (including reviews and awards):

- New York Public Library Book for the Teen Age
- ALA Best of the Best Book for Young Adults

Drawbacks or other cautions:

I do not think there would be any drawbacks.

Teaching ideas:

- What is revenge to you? How is revenge the driving force behind the Witness Protection Program? How is April the victim of revenge?
- Divide the class into two groups and get them to act out a suspenseful scene for the novel.
- Stop reading after chapter 14. How do you think the book will end? Make predictions in a paper as to what will happen to Valerie and the rest of the family.

Relyn says

ICK! I have no idea if I am just sick to death of Lois Duncan and this project or if this book was as lame as I think it was. Either way, it was so dull and predictable, with such a spoiled, selfish main character that I ended up skimming the book. (I rarely skim.) A murder attempt and two actual murders and the book still couldn't hold my interest. UGH! After all that blech and being completely unbelievable, it still didn't end happily. Yes, I know that if you read the book, you will see that's exactly her point: "Life doesn't always have a happy ending." Still, if you are going to write a sad story and with an unhappy ending. At least make it INTERESTING!!

Falina says

I haven't read any Lois Duncan in a while, and this was as dark and interesting as others that I remember.

Why do I enjoy reading teen fiction so much when actually being a teenager was so awful? I'm not sure.

Brenda says

Book on tape. I think I read this before because I went through a huge Lois Duncan phase. The character in this book was so self absorbed it drove me nuts. She didn't connect any of her actions with the consequences that followed. Typical teenager? Maybe, but still annoying.

Autumn Wittbrod says

I really loved the book. I am really into mystery's so 'Don't Look Behind You' was a real hit. I recommend this book to any one who likes mystery's.

Emily says

The 17 year old protagonist of this novel has been moved with her family by the witness protection program because her dad is basically a moron. She's not terribly bright herself, as she makes several obvious mistakes that lead the people searching for them right to their location. A juvenile or young adult reader may be more entertained by the story, but I was mostly just calling her an idiot in my head the whole time.

I have read other books by this author before and enjoyed them. I was excited to read this book.

Unfortunately, I was disappointed. Duncan's work is better when it has a tinge of the supernatural.

Natasha Mackay says

In this book, i would have to rate the characters a 5, Because the characters are the most entertaining and i love how they have a whole family, not just singled out characters. They were the Corrigan family, a family of 6. A mother and father, the mother's name was Elizabeth, she was a children's book author. The father's name was George, he worked for Southern Skyways. They had two children named April and George Jr. April was the older one, in 11th grade, very athletic, played tennis and was a cheerleader. George Jr. was the youngest, he was in 3rd grade, and he was very unique because he had one blue eye and one brown eye. They also had a grandmother named Lorelei, and she drove a white porche. Last but not least they had a dog named porky. The characters were very well described, it gives you a good image of how the family looks."My mother and brother were already seated at the table in the kitchen, and our fat golden cocker, porky, was positioned beneath it". The characters are believable only because its like an average family we have today.

I have to rate the setting a 2, only because i don't like old setting, but the book was pretty good so i have o give the setting some credit. This family lived in Virginia, Norwood. The setting is very important to the book because its what makes the story turn into something intense. The author makes time go by fast by how much is going on and how you try to relate to the book at the same time. The story could have had a different setting and still be the same, it did not make that big of an impact on the story.

I rate the plot a 5, i find the plot to be very clever. In this story the basic home family, doesn't end up to be exactly what you would expect. You later find out that the father was a secret undercover in the FBI. The family then becomes in danger and has to move away and completely change there life. i find a plot to be really good when ever it becomes very intense. This story was told in order, they made it like a movie, where things keep happening as you keep reading. I did predict the end, you just always know, that there will be a good ending. "Despite my reservations, i found myself nodding. "This time i'm choosing my own name, thought" I told him." In the end of the story everything is back to normal and she makes this joke because when her life changed, her name even had to change.

I rate the theme a 5, I feel like the message could be, to not take advantage of what you have, because it could just be gone at any second. The story is just pretty much her losing everything she had and changing without any warning. I think the title could have made a better connection towards the story, but I can see why they would make that the title. "I lay in bed, surrounded by my sleeping family, watching the play of lights on the wall across from me as cars sped along the highway in front of our motel, as I think back, and realize it's really happening" She thinks back and finally notices, that all of this is reality and she can't go back. Knowing you lost everything would be so hard to comprehend.

I liked this book, but it honestly all depends on what kind of books/stories you like. This book I would recommend to people that like an intense sad story. Kind of a mystery and gives you a perspective and a good theme.

Paige Bookdragon says

My first thought while reading this book is **"What's the point of the story?"**

I didn't read the blurb so I didn't know what to expect. But, ladies and gentleman, if you want to be surprised in a good way, then this book is not for you.

Ezra says

this book don't look behind you is so awesome. I really liked it a lot; some kids should read this book

April says

Don't Look Behind You
Lois Duncan
1989

Read for the challenge: Character with your name. In this case, the character's name is April. The character starts out a bit shallow but she starts to grow up a bit by the end of the book.

2 1/2 stars - The plot was simple and saw pretty much everything before it happened.

April says

April is ridiculously immature. I really hope she matures as the story goes on. Also, I don't really care for the writing style. Usually I like Lois Duncan's writing, but this book just isn't up to par. I don't relate with the characters or feel any sympathy for them at all. I'm hoping this book will get better as I read on.

Just finished. This book did not get better at all. At the end, April is still the stupid, immature, selfish girl she was at the beginning. The epilogue is about how she meets a new boy, like that's the only important thing in

life. I am very disappointed with this book. I liked Lois Duncan's I Know What You Did Last Summer and Stranger With My Face. I had high hopes for this book, and it just didn't live up to those hopes at all. Very disappointing.

Kylee Palmer says

Don't Look Behind You by Lois Duncan

Reviewed by Kylee Palmer

★★★★

I haven't never read any books from this author before, but maybe I will start. I really liked this book! The main character, 17 year old April Corrigan had a big change happen in her life. Her dad worked in an airport called Southern Skyways, and had been secretly working for the FBI also. One day on his job he found a bag left at the airport with drugs in it, and there was identification in it. After handing it over to the FBI they took him to court. He was supposed to testify but before he could court was adjourned for lunch. While everyone was leaving the courtroom the drug dealer shot at Aprils father, the shot was off target, so he wasn't hurt.

After he was shot at, Aprils family went to a hotel so that the drug dealer couldn't find them at their house. They had been there for about two months when they had to move to Florida to live with their dad, this was because the drug dealer had dressed up as a maid and tried to break into their hotel room. While he had been pushing on the door trying to get in their bodyguard, Jim, had been just getting home and stopped him from getting inside. While they had been living in Florida they were informed that Jim had been murdered.

April made two friends in Florida named Larry and Kim, they were cousins, but she missed her old friends at home so she went to live with her grandmother but once she got there she found out something surprising. The drug dealer had disguised himself as a UPS man and got into her grandmothers apartment, and demanded to know where April and her family were, but when she couldn't tell him he got frustrated and broke her arm. So April and her grandmother went back to Florida but when they got there, they weren't the only ones that were there, the drug dealer was too. He locked them in a closet but once April escaped she had just enough time to run out to her car and lock the doors, she tried to start it but couldn't because she had left the headlights on and drained the battery. She got out and gave up, or so he thought she actually had a tennis racket in her hand and hit him as hard as she could with it which knocked him unconscious, and he fell in the ditch and drown.

The author used a lot of the same words too much, I think that if she would have used more words to explain it would have been a much better book, she uses the same terms a lot. In some parts of the book her word choice was really good though.

Kate says

The main character is so annoying. I want to beat her with her tennis racket.

kylajaclyn says

Man, what a total tool the dad is. He's absolutely the worst. All the men in this book spray their manhood in every direction; it made me want to vomit.

Molly Dettmann says

2.5 After her father's testimony leads their family to go into witness protection, April is desperate to have her old life back, but will it put them all in danger?

April was so dumb and childish, BUT I totally would be too if I had to give up my whole life for my father's stupid actions. This was a super quick read and overall it felt like a few chase scenes and then it was over. It was okay, and a young reader would probably enjoy the murder and teenage drama way more than I did.

Mary Gael says

reread this today to commemorate duncan's passing earlier this month; this book was formative for me as a child. it's not as chilling, now, nearly a decade later, but just as fun

Christine US says

Lois Duncan seems to have an ability to write whiny irritating self-important teenagers.

Abbie says

Actual rating - 2.5

I felt sorry for April because of the situation she was in, but I didn't like her. She was really stupid most of the time, and quite annoying.

She was told not to contact anyone for obvious reasons, but done it anyway. She moaned when she had to cut her hair to disguise herself, and moaned about giving her phone up, claiming that she would die without it. There was plenty more stupid and annoying moments throughout the book, and by the end of it I was sick of her.

This wasn't an awful read, but it wasn't a very enjoyable one either. Apart from April being an idiot, there wasn't much going on, so I was bored through most of it.

I'm glad it's over.

H says

This was really good--Duncan always does an A+ job with suspense. The actual story, though, was sort of overwhelmed for me by how irritated I was with April. I mean, I can understand the stupid thing she did in the hotel; she didn't really believe they were in danger. But when she runs away from home? Ugh. She risks her whole family's lives again, just because of her selfishness. I sort of wanted to strangle her. And yet, I think her reactions were really realistic, especially for a teenager in that kind of situation. I really liked the end--how it became a family decision to stay together and stay in hiding. It had to be a decision by all of them, or it would end the same way as the first time. I found the family's reactions to having to be in hiding a little hard to believe, though, in that not one of them really blamed the dad for the situation they were in, when it was completely his fault and his pride.
