



Annabelle

Ruby Jean Jensen

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Make Believe Terror

Jessica liked to play make believe in the old abandoned stone mansion. She liked to pretend that the beautiful golden haired woman in the portrait was her mother. And that the big dollhouse she had found upstairs was hers, along with the family of dolls who lived there. Sometimes she was sure the dolls moved all by themselves. Sometimes she even heard them whisper to her. Only instead of calling her Jessica, they always called her Annabelle.

Life Like Horror

Annabelle had come back to them. The dolls had lived for so long by themselves. With no one to dust them off, play with them or love them. But now Annabelle had come back. And everything would be just like it was before. Only this time, they would never let anyone hurt Annabelle. And anyone who tried would soon discover that pretty dollies can have very ugly tempers.

Annabelle Details

Date : Published March 1st 1987 by Zebra

ISBN : 9780821720110

Author : Ruby Jean Jensen

Format : Paperback 320 pages

Genre : Horror, Fantasy, Paranormal



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From Reader Review Annabelle for online ebook

Dave says

Ruby Jean Jensen, truly one of the forgotten horror authors of the 80s and early 90s. She published books like crazy under the Zebra imprint in the 80s, and really became the queen of evil doll stories. Annabelle is no exception. It is the story of a young five year old girl named Jessica who escapes the confines of her family's Louisiana home to visit her "castle" next door. The "castle" is a old run down mansion long abandoned after a terrible crime in the late 1800s. There she discovers a doll house and befriends some very unique dolls. The dolls call her Annabelle. This is the start of Jensen's roller coaster ride of terror.

I like Jensen I do but sometimes I struggle to finish her novels other times they fly by and I'm disappointed to see them end. I really struggled with the first two thirds of this novel. It's not that there isn't an interesting story filled with tension. Mostly my struggles were the result of her overly long descriptive style of action. There is not a lot of dialog and pages and pages of description of the girls thoughts as she explores the mansion and a lot of redundant detail. For example by the third time she described the girl avoiding a hole in the staircase I literally wanted to just throw the book across the room and call it quits. I get it, there is a hole she has to avoid but we don't need two pages describing the hole more than once. Seriously!

So why ultimately did I end up giving the book three stars? Well Jensen recovered nicely for the last 100 pages and I was pretty glued to the exciting end. Dolls are creepy and she is really good at capturing that but this still isn't my favorite scary doll novel she's written. Personally I found this to be an average story for her. If your interested in starting reading Jensen I wouldn't recommend this as your first try. There are better stories out there by her (The Living Evil, Jump Rope) to get you on your way. Still Jensen fans should have a copy. Let's not let this forgotten horror author disappear completely.

Tobie says

I read this book a very long time ago for the first time, and a few more times over the years and loved it. It is a great horror book.

Julian says

i liked this book because when i began reading i felt suspense. i recomend this book to people who like to read about scary stories. when you begin to read this book you get exited to continue reading. i remember that at nights i read this book until to late i could not felt asleep.

Rebecca McNutt says

This book was really gripping and creepy, a story of haunted dolls and the bizarre old store they reside in where strange things often happen.

Zakary McGaha says

Annabelle moves at a great pace, which is aided with its slow, creepy enchantedness (I made up a word, yes) that draws you in and makes you feel for the characters (even the dumb oaf of a father). The tale of a young girl, whose mom has just left her, finding comfort in an abandoned mansion with a HORRIBLE past is intriguing and strangely beautiful in itself, but once the events of the past start replaying themselves and dolls start coming to life, you know you're in for a treat! My only gripe is that some of the doll-scenes are beyond cheesy and, honestly, screw with the awesome tone of the book; they stand out like sore thumbs. There are ghosts here, too, and these ghosts were ACTUALLY scary, but the contrast between awesomely handled supernatural chills and clunky, dumb scenes with the most non-threatening haunted dolls ever is annoying.

All in all, though, this book ranks up there with Ruby Jean Jensen's other classic, forgotten, cozy horror novels. If you're a fan of Ruby and don't mind shelling out a hundred or more dollars for this one (I was lucky and found it for \$30), then give it a go. But, if you're just testing the waters, I'd buy Ceilia or Home Sweet Home first, as they are her crowning achievements, plus they sell a bit cheaper.

Seriously, though: out of all her Zebra titles, why is this generally the most expensive on the used market?

Bailey Jane says

This is one of those books that I bought at a garage sale, it's never won any awards, no one even knows about it but it's CREEPY. If you're like me and think that lifesized porcelain dolls in haunted mansions with a terrifying past are scary as hell, you'll love this book! I would wait and read it around Halloween time to make it that much scarier.

It's an easy read, not challenging at all, just a really eerie book about a young girl who finds an old abandoned mansion and makes it her place to play. She finds a dollhouse that must have belonged to a little girl who lived there a long time ago, complete with a lifesized porcelain doll family. The dolls begin to take on lives of their own and believe that the young girl is their owner, come back to play with them after so many years. When the little girl's family finds out she's been playing in an abandoned house, she is forbidden to set foot in it again. The dolls do not like that their owner has been taken away from them again.....

Emily says

It's been a while since I read something with creepy dolls. I enjoyed reading this at night, there are some parts in the book that scared me xD but then again, the idea of dolls walking on their own creeps me out.

Melissa says

I thought it would be scarier than it was, it seemed very anticlimactic

Destiny Davis says

It won't let me read it and it is making me really mad

Jill says

This book has nothing to do with the modern Annabelle movies.

I own the original paperback version of Annabelle, which I acquired sometime in the late 1990s. I recently rediscovered it while sorting through some things in storage. Ruby Jean Jensen wrote during the mid-1970s to the mid-1995s. Her primary horror topic revolved around hauntings, killer dolls, and evil/possessed children.

Annabelle is a story told in present day (1980s) that revolves around a child named Jessica who has just turned 5 years old that spring. She has an adult half-sister who lives elsewhere and a 12-year-old half-brother. Her father loves her but is the old-fashioned, leave childcare to the women type. Jessica's mother is his second wife, and much younger. They live in a small town area that is somewhat isolated from the world at large.

Annabelle was a little girl who had lived in a now-abandoned house with her father, mother, slightly older brother and infant sister. When Annabelle's father comes home from his business trips, he often brings back dolls as gifts. Her story is told through flashback and nightmares.

This story contains physical and emotional child abuse, as well as unspecified mental illness (my guess is postpartum psychosis on top of another underlying condition) which is kept secret as was typical for the early 20th century. It is not described as graphically as it might be by today's standards.

Revisiting this book in 2017 put a different perspective on things compared to when I first read it as a teenager. To start, I'm a mother now. A new level of horror was added because I knew no one was going to be able to protect the children in the story. The other thing that was odd - even for the 1980s, I think - is that the preschool Jessica was frequently wandering off on her own for hours. This is eventually noticed by people off and on, but supervising a small child doesn't seem to be on anyone's list of priorities.

In 2017, we have cell phones, digital cameras, and internet. None of these things were common in 1987. When a phone is used, it is a landline or a payphone. You leave a message with whoever picks up, if anyone does, and hope it gets to the intended person. If you see something bizarre while looking out the window, you can't Instagram it for proof. If you want information about the run down abandoned house in the area, there is no internet archive of records to search. You look in the printed paper phone book to track down the last living relative who owns the property and pay them a visit in person.

Things are creepier without the modern crutches. By the time people start to figure things out, the evil has already taken a foothold.

Jade says

I loved this book because it held my attention (which is hard to do these days) but I feel it had a few loose ends.

EvezBeadz.artfire.com says

love this book, was my first horror book ever read! Ruby Jean Jensen is a wonderful Horror novelist, easy and fun to read. classic.

have a copy for sale in my store. free world shipping, <http://www.artfire.com/ext/shop/produ...>

Robert says

I surprisingly do not have many books or stories on my bookshelf that are about evil toys. Aside from Tick-Tock by Dean Koontz (Which I still don't really consider an evil toy story as much as one about magic) and a handful of Stephen King short stories, there is not a book that has demonic playthings as its focus- until now! Jessica escapes from her turbulent home life into a fantasy world set in a decaying mansion where she has living Dolls as friends and a substitute mother in a portrait that resembles her. In actuality her new "mother" is a homicidal ghost and the dolls are the lingering grudge of her murdered daughter, Annabelle. The dolls are fiercely protective of Jessica, and attack anyone that threatens to take her away. The tragedies are paced well; first Jessica has nightmares as the ghost mother haunts her dreams, which brings the oldest daughter Brenda into the picture who buffers the unlikeable parents. The parents are opposite extremes, a young mother so concentrated on her career she neglects Jessica, and an old misogynistic father so overprotective it is detrimental. Brenda is pulled away from a possible romance with Rick, a periphery character that has enough of an outline to be appealing without making the story lose focus. Mrs. Archer, the ex nanny, goes missing, and Jessica's real mother is put into the hospital where she dies after a fatal car accident, and Robert is found hanging from a rope in the garage- all tragedies orchestrated by the Dolls. The last attack is on Paul, the father, but he is rescued by Brenda and Rick who smash the dolls. Paul is mostly in the background, grieving for his losses and then sedated after his injuries. The descriptions throughout the book are good, the dolls are satisfyingly creepy, some of the details become a little stale as each character finds the ruined mansion and sees the same cobwebs and broken stairs. The ending of the book feels rushed. Paul is sedated because of his crazed ramblings about dolls and his injuries, it gets a little weak as the duration of his hospital stay lengthens. Rick comes back from a day of research and reveals some of the Barlough mansion's history, also rushed but coming at a point in the story where a side trip for research would have made it lose too much momentum. The thing that lurked in the hole in the staircase if finally revealed, it's a doll that looks like Annabelle, I was hoping for something more gruesome or even a more disfigured doll, but it was okay. The ending is a little shaky, the last few paragraphs could have been executed better, especially the last sentence. I like the idea, it just lacks the impact it should have as the last sentence. Despite being a smidge sloppy towards the end, the story is still strong.

Kimberly says

I love anything by Ruby Jean Jensen. This book was even autographed. Though the author has passed away, her legacy of being the Queen of horror novels lives on! Mostly her books are about dolls or toys coming back to life or evil and strange children doing ugly things. Loved this book and all the others.

Kate says

I read and resold this book several years before *The Conjuring* and *Annabelle* came to theaters. I don't know if this book is based (loosely) on that *Annabelle* or if the doll is named in homage to that *Annabelle* or if it is just a coincidence. However, the story is entirely different from the Warrens' tale.

A frightening first chapter reveals how *Annabelle* gets possessed. Flash to current day, when *Annabelle* comes into the fold of a Ruby Jean Jensen-esque family. Soon, eerie deaths start turning up around the girl who currently holds *Annabelle*, and her older sister must find a way to save her from the doll's influence.
