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Julie really likes the new girl in her class, Carla Warner. Still, there's something odd about her. The things Carla says don't quite add up, and she seems to avoid answering certain questions. At first Julie is sure there's a sensible explanation, but as Carla's stories become more outlandish, Julie can't escape a disturbing fact: either her new friend is lying ... or she's in real danger. An illustrated Looking Back essay provides facts about America in the 1970s.

The Tangled Web: A Julie Mystery Details

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From Reader Review The Tangled Web: A Julie Mystery for online ebook

Marian says

So the mystery itself isn't really all that mysterious. You know well before Julie does what's going on, and if that bothers you in any given mystery, you probably should skip this one. However, reading a bit more about Julie's life was interesting enough to keep going and besides, I wanted to know what was with all the lies.

One thing I really liked was that unlike a lot of other AG books, when Carla's lies are exposed, Julie doesn't automatically forgive her. She still tries to do the right thing by helping Carla, but she doesn't immediately forget how Carla tricked her and how much that hurts. Even at the very end, Julie's still a little bit angry towards Carla and that's very realistic and probably my favorite touch. Julie wants to be Carla's friend and is moving in that direction, but still wonders how long it will be until she can trust her again.

Ciara says

there is a new student in julie's class. she tells everyone that she has a twin brother named tim who attends a private school for pianists, as does her high school-aged brother, tom. she also has a brother in college, named todd, a sister in kindergarten named nancy, & a baby sister named debbie.

i like that i can remember all the names of this girl's fake relatives, but i can't remember her name, & i already returned the book to the library.

she also tells everyone that she lives in one of the big fancy painted ladies in a neighborhood that is kind of far away from the school. julie is really impressed. she feels resentful that she, her mom, & her sister are all crowded together in a small apartment, & that she doesn't have a bunch of baby siblings running around, or a fancy dog that knows lots of tricks. she thinks her new friend has the best life.

until she & ivy run into the new friend at the farmer's market. she's working one of the booths & julie recognizes the skinny, haggard-looking woman working beside her as a woman she saw picking through trash cans not long ago. the new girl explains that the skinny woman is barb & that she's bad news. she's a "thief" & the new girl claims that she is working "undercover" to keep an eye on the woman & report back her findings to her father, who is a successful doctor/private detective. julie becomes very concerned when the new girl returns to the booth & barb seems to menace her with a knife. because i know that when i am an evil villain who is being investigated for thieving out of trash cans, i always make sure to menace children with knives in full view of the public. especially at the farmer's market. it's really difficult to get sucked into the mystery when julie & ivy are being so fucking dense.

allow me to add that the new girl is introduced & gives everyone her incredible backstory within the first twenty pages of the book. at that point, i was like, "oh. i bet she's an only child who doesn't have a dog at all & lives hand-to-mouth in some depressing apartment with her mother, who was the woman shown trash-picking in the first chapter." & seriously, the way that julie freaks out & "gets chills" upon seeing someone picking through trash is really fucked up. she acts like she saw the woman administering a speedball to an infant or something.

the new girl does do a pretty good job of fooling julie at times. julie bumps into the new girl out walking a dog that fits the description of the dog she says she has & can do lots of tricks & stuff. julie then pressures the new girl into allowing julie to walk her home. the new girl goes to a painted lady & invites julie inside. julie is pretty wowed by how huge the house, but is confused about the lack of kids' toys or other signs that a big, boisterous family full of professional-grade teen pianists & detective/doctors lives there. then a man comes home & the new girl hustles julie outside in a panic. julie is concerned that her new friend seems to be so afraid of her father.

at this point, i was like, "duh. new girl is a dog walker & this is the dog walker's house." & this was confirmed a few chapters later when the new girl misses school. julie stops by the fancy house to drop off her homework & just lets herself inside. no one is home & julie takes the opportunity to wander all over the house & peek into every room. i wouldn't do that even at the home of my dearest friend. julie needs to learn some manners. then the gray-haired dude comes home & is like, "who the fuck are you? oh, you're friends with my dog walker?" he gives julie the new girl's real address & of course it's a depressing walk-up & the new girl lives alone with barb. she tries to convince julie for a second that all her stories are true & that she's actually just deep DEEP undercover spying on barb, or that the door to a linen closet actually opens into a hallway filled with bedrooms for all her other siblings (which is swiftly debunked when julie opens the door & discovers...linens). finally she admits everything & says she just wanted to feel what it was like to have a great life. blah blah blah. we all saw that coming from the third page.

the one surprise is that an especially cranky & sullen disabled vet that hippie hank helps out with down at the veteran center is the new girl's older brother, whose name really is todd. julie convinces todd to join the other veterans at her place for thanksgiving dinner, & she invites the new girl & barb. the family is really excited to spend the holiday together, & julie's older sister describes todd as "dreamy," even though he's in a wheelchair. they spend a good part of the day flirting over what records what they like. julie gets a brainstorm to ask the guy with the dog & the huge fancy house to hire barb as a live-in housekeeper. he has enough bedrooms for barb, the new girl, & todd, & he has an elevator, to accommodate todd's wheelchair. ~*~happy endings~*~

pretty saccharine stuff.

Sesana says

[was a compulsive liar (hide spoiler)]

Jennifer says

ooh it was a good mystery

Lisa says

A totally plausible mystery for a 9 year old girl to have, easy to follow for my 6 year old, suspenseful and easy to read out loud, loved it! A lesson behind it as well. And all set in 1974 San Francisco. Give me more!

Carolyn says

I can't help myself - I love the Julie mysteries. It also helps that I read this aloud to the kids while we drove all over northern California. Great discussions on being honest and the reasons some kids (and adults!) choose to lie.

Juny says

This one was one of my favorites.

Laura says

This story teaches a good moral---lying is wrong. I liked the 70s theme. This was a fun read.

Makena Fernandez says**Great Read!**

This book was a good one!
Parts were awesome and sometimes I felt like I wanted to jump into the story and be Julie!
I wouldn't say it was exactly a mystery but it was a fun book!

Arzu says

Unlike other "mystery" books, this book isn't really that mysterious. Worth reading but not the best book.

Amanda says

It was the first day of school when Julie realizes that there's a new girl in her class named Carla Warner. Knowing Julie she obviously knows she wants to be friends with her. When Julie invites Carla to eat lunch with her she finds so much about her but something seems off. Are Carla's stories about her family real or does she not want anyone to find out about her real life?

Kathryn says

Julie has an interesting friend named Carla Warner. She is very secretive about her family and doesn't tell Julie much. When her fibs began getting outrageous, Julie tries to find out more. It's hard to find clues but she eventually finds some. In the end, Julie finds Carla didn't tell her much about her family because she was embarrassed because her family was poor.

Kristine Hansen says

Well, maybe I saw this one coming from a long way off, but the journey was still a good one and how the whole thing unraveled was enjoyable and fun to read. I like Julie and her desire to do the right thing. I like her heart for other people. And I like the time period and wish I remembered more of it back when I grew up in the 70s.

Ashley says

Julie really likes the new girl in her class, Carla Warner: Still, there's something odd about her. The things Carla says don't quite add up, and she avoids answering questions about her family. At first Julie is sure there's a sensible explanation, but soon she starts to wonder what's really going on. A disturbing discovery leads her to realize that her new friend may be in real danger!

About The Author: Kathryn Reiss was a girl not much older than Julie in the 1970's. She grew up in Ohio but now lives in a Victorian-era house near San Francisco with her husband, five children, two cats, and a very clever border collie. She always loved reading mysteries and started writing them herself because nothing mysterious, eerie, or criminal ever seemed to be happening in her own neighborhood!

In fourth grade she told a whopper of a lie to a new girl at her school and quickly learned that honesty really is the best policy.

Kathryn Reiss's previous novels of suspense have won many awards. She teaches creative writing at Mills College. She loves to travel with her family and have afternoon tea in her garden with friends-and she is always hard at work on a new story.

This book teaches a great lesson, honesty is the best policy. I love how Julie forgave Carla in the end for telling lies, Carla was lonely and enjoyed writing stories so it was easy for her to make up a story when she started going to a new school.

Traci says

It wasn't much of a mystery, but then, I'm not ten years old, either.

It was a pretty good book with a good lesson about friendship and about lying, as well as teaching just a bit about Vietnam.

