



You Belong to Us

Molly McCaffrey

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On April 5, 1970, Molly McCaffrey was born in a Catholic hospital and given up for adoption when she was six weeks old. Nearly thirty years later, she met her birthmother who had spent the time since McCaffrey's birth working at that same hospital, in that same ward—labor and delivery—wondering what had become of the baby she had long ago named Anne Marie.

But something else occurred shortly after McCaffrey's birth. Her birthmother married her birthfather. And together they had four more children, giving McCaffrey an entire biological family she didn't know existed. A family that owned a biker bar. A family that karaoked together. A family that gave each other guns at Christmas. A family that she had virtually nothing in common with.

YOU BELONG TO US tells the story of McCaffrey's attempt to connect and find common ground across that span of years as well as class and educational lines. The book follows more than a decade in the lives of her unconventional family and asks the question that lies at the heart of adoption: Do we belong to the people with whom we share our blood? Or do we belong to those who raise us?

You Belong to Us Details

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Author : Molly McCaffrey

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From Reader Review You Belong to Us for online ebook

Debi Huff says

Even though the outcome was not what one would hope for the emotions of the author and her expectations not met come through loud and clear. I was the birth mother of an adoption triad but my reunion with my daughter was and still is much happier. I am so sorry that Molly didn't have the same experiences I have had. Thank you, though, Molly for being so honest with your journey.

Katina says

This book is a no-holds barred examination of the author's experience as an adoptee meeting her adoptive family after years of growing up in a closed adoption in a happy childhood with her adoptive parents. It's not a rosy picture. It's quite raw. I guess that's what I liked about the book, and what made it great for book group discussion.

Because the book is a memoir, the reader only gets the author's perspective and her take on what others might have been feeling. As an outsider, I felt I saw several alternative explanations for some of the strife and difficulty that developed between McCaffrey and her birth family. Where she seemed to jump to conclusions about her birth family's unwillingness to raise questions, or their seeming anti-feminism, I saw basic class differences, and a yearning to be close (on her birth mother's part at least). To me, it seemed likely that this was coupled with the obvious pain of giving up a baby and seeing in her accomplishments, perhaps, a sense of regret over what she, as a mother, would not have been able to give her.

There was also this undertone of exasperation. For instance, the author is frustrated by the holiday gifts she gets from her birth mom because they invariably arrive while she is out of town. And she is annoyed by the beers her birth mom brings to a family dinner because it is being held at a vacation rental, and she (McCaffrey) will have to leave the place the next day, making the beer somehow wasteful. [Beer doesn't go to waste. Leave it for the next guests. Or just discard it. Why is that an issue?] The way she described being needed by these - to me, seemingly small problems - made me question her reliability as a narrator.

In any event, even though the book really made me quite sad, it inspired spirited discussion, and some degree of introspection about parenting on my part, so I recommend.

Angel S says

I couldn't put this book down! It's so brutally honest, I love that McCaffrey doesn't hold back. Reading this book was an emotional experience in the best way.

Kat says

this is the only review i have ever done on a book i didn't like.

the author feels very entitled and superior to everyone/everything and i feel very sorry for the tucker family

who were only generous and loving toward her. im glad her birth family cut off ties with her before this book came out and i can only imagine how hurtful it is to them. i wish her birth sister would write a book on their side of the story.

the author did not heed the advise of her birth and adoptive parents in regard to this book and the feelings of other people. she always assumes what people are thinking or feeling, she never once asked anyone. she criticizes everything and everyone without once truthfully reflecting on herself and her own shortcomings. she criticized the size of the rooms her birth family had in the houses they earned the money to purchase by working while she was living in a dorm room for YEARS as a adult at taxpayer expense, never holding down a real job.

she has been supported her whole life financially by her parents, her husband and the state taxpayers who funded all travel, hotel, food and the four hours it took her to do her dirty laundry which she drove to the hotel with her.

i was appalled at her actions and thoughts. my heart goes out to her birth family. im glad i got the book through the library so she would not get any money from the proceeds of the book from me. i doubt it even entered her mind to give the money she got from this book (if any) to her parents to pay them back for all they gave her, which for some reason she felt she deserved.

Bea Mcknight says

Based on true evens, the book is powerful, sad, tragic, funny - everything a good book should b. The main characters are captivating.

Lyn nep says

This is an interesting story of the tangled web between an adoptive family and a birth family. The attempt to blend after thirty years is understandably an emotionally trying experience on both sides. (I have a granddaughter I didn't meet until she was almost 17, and that has been a challenge for all involved!). But the author's elitist attitude about her education and privileged upbringing cannot have made it any easier for any of them.

This book also could use another go at the editors' desk; even I noticed typos, punctuation and grammatical errors. Disappointing at best.

Julie says

I read this in less than 24 hours - what a story! A very open and honest memoir, it really exposes the complex path and spectrum of emotions of Molly's journey of discovering her biological family. A great read!

Lenisa Jones says

Loved being able to meet this author and hear her story on how met her birth parents. Very fascinating and she did a great job putting a timeline of her life together to write this book.

Monica Spees says

If you want an open, honest look at adoption and the ripples (positive and not so positive) it can cause before and after a child makes contact with her biological family, this book is it. Molly McCaffrey's memoir helped me, as a daughter of an adopted child, get an even closer look into the emotions that come with being adopted, because it's not as simple as sadness or happiness, good feelings or bad feelings. This book will make you laugh, make you think, and sometimes make you uncomfortable. But that's what makes it good. Whether or not you're familiar with or have been touched by adoption in some way, "You Belong To Us" is a great read.

Brandy Meredith says

I have been absolutely blown away by the emotional journey captured within the pages of this book.

Adopted at the age of 6 weeks, Molly grew up knowing she'd been adopted but loving the life she'd lived with her adoptive parents--her real parents.

In her late twenties, out of curiosity about who and where she came from, she hesitantly began the steps required to find her birth mother. Her memoir emotionally chronicles the fear, curiosity, confusion, guilt, and anger that guided her through finding and meeting her birth family.

Her experience was especially emotional because, not only did she find a birth mom, she also found out that, after putting her up for adoption, her birth mother and birth father reconciled, got married, and had four other children who were all Molly's full-blooded siblings. Instead of finding one person, she'd found an entire family, most of whom never even knew she existed... some of whom would like to pretend she didn't.

The book is a very emotional read that begs the question... How much does our biology affect who we become? And is it possible for one person to heal a thirty-year-old "wound" that the other person sees as a blessing?

I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in the human condition and both our abilities and inabilities to accept, adapt, and move on.

David says

Not only is this an excellent family memoir...it's a story so crazy you won't believe it's true. But it is!

Molly says

This is the best book I've ever written!

(Not sure what else I would say here, but I hope you all enjoy it.)

Beth Browne says

(Disclaimer: Although I work for the publisher, I was not paid to write this review.) If you were adopted you'd want to know who your birth parents were, wouldn't you? I thought so too, until I read this book. But what if your birth parents were about as far from the culture you grew up in as they could possibly be? What if it turned out you didn't even like them? It certainly never occurred to me that an adoptee might deeply regret finding her birth parents.

McCaffrey says her story made a great tale to tell at parties and this is what partly inspired her to tell it in a book. But a great story is only as good as the storyteller and McCaffrey has the gift of storytelling, drawing out the tension in the way of the best fiction. This book is a page-turner. At first, she's reluctant to initiate the search. When it turns out to be much more involved than she expected, requiring lots of hoop-jumping and even a group counseling session, she gives it up. But the issue of where she came from before she was adopted will not leave her alone and eventually she is carried along on a tide she is powerless to stop.

Along the way, McCaffrey grapples with issues of identity and struggles to balance her own needs with that of her birth family, particularly her birth mother, whose life was so affected by having to give up her first child. As McCaffrey tries to come to terms with her biological heritage and to get to know her four biological siblings as well as her birth parents, she tells the tale with unflinching honesty and quite a bit of fascinating reflection. Is she the person she was raised to be, or is she the product of her genes and how does a person reconcile the two, particularly when they are so disparate? It doesn't take the reader long to fully understand the group counseling requirement.

With vivid and lyrical prose, McCaffrey carries us along on her journey of self-discovery, letting the reader in on her innermost thoughts and feelings, including a rare journal entry, which pretty much sums up the book. "You know, being adopted isn't weird at all, but knowing your biological family is the weirdest thing in the world."

You Belong To Us is an engrossing memoir of family relationships and the complicated webs between people. At times shocking in its brutal honesty, McCaffrey's story is also deeply moving. Add this book to your memoir-reading list. You won't be disappointed.

Kristie says

I was fortunate enough to be an early reader for this book, so my review speaks to a pre-published version of it. That said, I don't believe it has changed much from the early version that I read.

So. The book. Molly McCaffrey is unflinchingly honest about her emotions and her journey as she finds the parents who gave her up for adoption as an infant. The author's voice is authentic, and although some reviewers are unhappy with her elitism, I think that's part of the appeal of the book. It's refreshing to read a

memoir in which the author doesn't try to paint herself in an unrealistically flattering light. McCaffrey spares no one--not even herself--as she examines the emotions and the motivations behind all aspects of adoption and the reunions that are sometimes a part of that process.

As someone who identified strongly with McCaffrey's birth family, I struggled with the author's attitudes toward them. As a person who reads a LOT of books, I appreciated McCaffrey's honesty. This was an emotional book to read, and I can't imagine how difficult it was to write. Kudos to Molly McCaffrey for putting her life out there for all to examine and judge. I admire her tremendously, and I recommend this book to anyone who is interested in the not-so-pretty side of adoption and anyone who can appreciate honesty and the bravery that sometimes comes with it.

Twosycamores says

Every person in the adoption spectrum should read this book. It gives a true account of a person's journey in finding their birth parents and the delicate nature of the relationship. You won't want to set this book down.
