



The Space Between Before and After

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Forty-two and divorced, Holli Templeton has just begun to realize the pleasures of owning her life for the first time. But the experience is short-lived. Her son Conner has unexpectedly fled college in Rhode Island and moved to Texas with his troubled girlfriend, Kilian. This alone is difficult to handle, but as Holli begins to understand the depth of the girl's problems, concern turns to crisis.

Conner's situation is worsening, and as if that's not enough, Holli notices signs of serious decline in the beloved Texas grandmother who raised her. She has no choice but to leave the comfort zone of life in New York and return to her hometown in Texas to care for the people she loves.

In the tight space between these two generations, Holli initially feels lost. The journey back stirs so many unresolved hurts from her childhood. But something else happens in this uneasy homecoming. Comfort arrives in the ethereal presence of the mother long lost to her, and Holli is surprised to find that as she struggles to help her son and grandmother, the wounds of her own past begin to heal.

The space between before and after—easily the most challenging place she has ever known—begins to reveal an unanticipated hope for what the future might hold.

The Space Between Before and After Details

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Author : Jean Reynolds Page

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Margi says

A well written story with many layer to it. It seems each chapter pulls back a layer and the reader finds out a bit more information about this family. The characters are really well written and their struggles seem realistic. I liked the fact that not all characters have a happy ending. Life isn't like that so books shouldn't be either. There is a great mix of characters as well; some are young, some are middle aged, and some are elderly. My criticism of this book is that it is a bit drawn out. Some of the middle chapters could have been eliminated and the story would have flowed anyway. This book would bring about a great discussion for book clubs as it covers many family issues

Laurel-Rain says

What happens to a woman's life when she is suddenly pulled into the drama of her young adult son's problems?

Holli Templeton had just begun carving out her own independent life after her divorce from Harrison, when she receives word that their son Conner, who left school without an explanation, has moved with his girlfriend to Texas. The two of them have set up a household behind Holli's grandmother's home, where Holli grew up. Determined to help him sort things out, Holli plans to return home; then she talks to her ex-husband, who agrees to go with her.

But before the two even set out on their journey, additional layers of drama unfold to complicate the whole situation. First of all, they discover that Conner's girlfriend Kilian has Cystic Fibrosis—and then an additional health issue presents itself. Meanwhile, Holli's grandmother Raine begins showing signs of disorientation and confusion.

Sandwiched as she is between the two generations, Holli is suddenly confronted with memories of the past—her confused and confusing childhood, the neglect she sustained at the hands of her father, and her mother's death. Secrets from these past traumas insert themselves into her present-day dilemmas, creating unforeseen challenges.

How will Holli face up to each crisis, and how will she finally put to rest the issues from the past? Will Conner and Kilian stay together or separate? What will happen to Holli and Harrison as they work together as a team?

"The Space Between Before and After" is a multilayered family drama that offers insight into the nature of understanding, forgiveness, and the healing power of the passage of time.

The author skillfully weaves the story between the past and present, in alternating chapters; as each point of view is offered, we catch a glimpse of Conner, Holli (in the present) and Hollyanne (the childhood self). Our understanding is enhanced by these shifting perspectives.

Five stars.

Andie says

I had mixed emotions about this books. It's a story of a family, and how secrets and lies affect generations of family members. It's also about faith, belief and trust, and how to overcome troubling pasts. The main character had been looking forward to the time of her life when her son was in college, and her parents were healthy, and she could finally focus on herself. But she finds herself enmeshed in her son's rash decisions, and her mom who is suffering from memory loss and not able to be on her own.

The story was interesting, and there were enough plot twists to keep me interested. But there was a huge disconnect between the descriptions of each character's feelings, and what the author portrayed. The author would state that a character was in turmoil, but his or her actions didn't reflect anything like that. It was very difficult to get a firm grasp on what the characters were thinking, and the reactions of most of the characters didn't fit in well with the story.

Overall, I'm glad I read it but I would not highly recommend it.

Rachelle says

Forty-two and divorced, Holli Templeton has just begun to realize the pleasures of owning her life for the first time. But the experience is short-lived. Her son Conner has unexpectedly fled college in Rhode Island and moved to Texas with his troubled girlfriend, Kilian. This alone is difficult to handle, but as Holli begins to understand the depth of the girl's problems, concern turns to crisis.

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The space between before and after—easily the most challenging place she has ever known—begins to reveal an unanticipated hope for what the future might hold.

I started this book and got sucked right up in the story. Killian is the tragic character you find yourself being mad at the whole book while Connor is a confused young man trying to do the right thing. Add Holli, Connor's mother, to the mix with her baggage and you have one big fat drama happening. Mixed through that story is Holli's past, as she sees it and as Raine, Holli's grandmother, finally tells it. The story was well written but the last fifty pages or so were flat and felt rushed. It seemed like the author got tired and just added happily ever after and quit. Other than the ending, it was a great easily flowing story.

Amy says

I struggled with whether or not to give this 3 or 4 stars. I'd prefer 3.5 to be honest. I enjoyed the book - good story, nice characterizations, interesting plot, etc. However, it must not have been particularly engaging as I sat it down for over a month as I read some other items that I got from the library. I think that the writing is definitely reminiscent of Jodi Picoult but not nearly as engaging. The novel focused on character development and did an amazing job of it with the weaving in and out of the present and past for the characters of the story. I really thought that the family dynamics were interesting and well written. Overall, I enjoyed it and will be looking at some of Page's other novels in the future.

Anna says

Well, interesting story, interesting ideas. The idea of tying the story together with the space events was far fetched, but creative.

I got a bit annoyed with the narrative. The author switched perspectives every chapter, but because the mom Holli/Hollyanne was the *primary*, those chapters were in first person, and because the son Connor was *secondary*, those chapters were in 3rd person. Not sure why she couldn't make the plunge and put it in his perspective, but it was pretty jarring.

Also, she repeated the same style in each chapter that something had already happened, and you would hear about it a page or two into the chapter. That could have worked once or twice, but didn't really add value or suspense to those chapters. I wanted her to tell the story in chronological order just once! Ah well.

And you really didn't like *any* of the characters. The mom was really whinny and self centered, the son was still too young, too immature, the girlfriend Killian you weren't really supposed to like. I still can't tell though if you were *supposed* to like them or dislike them.

Cute story for a light read, especially if you like stuff about ghosts and visits from beyond, but I definitely wouldn't read it again.

Abigail says

I really liked this book. I like how the author wrote each chapter from the perspective of one of the characters in the book. I also like how she wrote it from a young Hollyanne or an older Holli. The story has many twists to it and I won't give any away, but it will keep your interest till the very end.

The story is about the day a young girl named Hollyanne's (called Holli as an adult) mother dies while she is pregnant with her sister, and what happens to her life after that event. The events that happen change many things in her life forever. The story is also about Holli's son, Conner dropping out of college and living with his girlfriend that has Cystic Fibrosis. Another story line is the story of Holli's grandmother named Raine and how she is starting to have Alzheimer's disease and how the family reacts to it. There are many things that happen in this book that I think most people will be able to find a person they can relate to, either because they are divorced, child of a divorce, stepchild, stepparent, Generation X, Baby Boomer or Senior Citizen.

This book dealt with death, illness, senior citizen issues and many other poignant issues of the time. I found it a very interesting read, and I think the author is a very talented writer. The story was a little depressing at times, but I do recommend it.

Hayley says

It took me about 9 months to finish this book, it was hard to get into, so I stopped reading about 1/2 way through. When I finally came back to it, it took me awhile to get back in because I couldn't remember what happened. The only thing that saved this book for me was the ending. And it's also the only reason I'd recommend this book, if you can get over the shifting between past, present and multiple characters, then it's worth the read. But this is a book you should read within a week or month, it's very hard to get back into or finish if you're reading it over an extended period.

Cindy says

I gave this book 4 stars because of the skill in presenting the new Holli, the childhood Hollianne, the son; all of the different perspectives at play within its pages.

Usually when reading a book where chapters are written using different points of view, I come to care about one person's story more than others. With this book, I felt the chapters flowed in such a way that I was equally interested in all the characters.

Other reviews have stated that the ending felt hurried, but I felt like it was a perfect ending and one that I didn't really see coming.

Jaime says

I really liked the story; in fact, it was hard to put down. But there were two things I didn't like about it: the editing and the ending. I caught at least four typos while reading, which annoyed the hell out of me. And my favorite part of a book is always the last paragraph. Usually, good authors sum up the thematic purpose of the story in some witty or touching way. I was disappointed with the last few lines of this one because they focused on the only character in the novel that I couldn't stand. Ruined it for me.

Lisa says

The best part of the book was when I finished it! It wasn't very good at all. It had too much whining and drama in it for me. At page 120 I wanted to give up and I didn't I stuck with it. I should have given up when I wanted to. The ending wasn't even good. In fact it was one of the stupidest endings to a book that I have ever seen. I would not waste my time reading this book!

Stephanie Griffin says

I'm not one to read the everyday drama kind of book, where a woman goes off and finds hope and faith and all that, but a certain storyline got me interested in reading THE SPACE BETWEEN BEFORE AND AFTER (even the name of the book makes me want to run in the other direction). Jean Reynolds Page's novel is about a middle-age woman named Holli whose grandmother is showing early signs of dementia and

whose son is having a crisis. Holli also has to come to terms with her past in order to move on with her future.

I found it weird that after presenting us with the characters we are supposed to come to care about, one death is marginalized, receiving just one paragraph. Another death is earth-shattering to Holli, but why? That particular character wasn't even well-liked. Having a character with Cystic Fibrosis was interesting, but we aren't told much about the condition other than patients aren't expected to live beyond their thirties. On the positive side, it was a fast read, so it didn't take up much of my reading time.

Peggy says

The writing style and topic of this book reminded me of Jodi Picoult's writings. There is good character development with fascinating interweaving of the characters' past and present. Conflict among family members is realistically portrayed, thus creating great emotional dynamics. There is an excellent portrayal of the effects of our past on our present and how hard it can be to move on. I loved the ending--upbeat but very realistic, too--not just "they lived happily ever after"--they still had problems, but they were working on them. I did not care for the language in parts, but this is an excellent writer and story.

Cindy Hudson says

In *The Pages In Between*, Erin Einhorn has written a memoir about what she finds when she searches for the Polish family that sheltered her Jewish mother during World War II.

When she was growing up in Detroit, Einhorn didn't know much about her mother's past until she wrote a paper on the topic when she was in high school. Her mother, Irena, offered only the basics: Born in the early 1940s, Irena's mother died during the war, while her father, Beresh, survived. Before he was taken away to a concentration camp, Beresh offered a local woman money and his home to live in if she would keep Irena safe. After the war, Beresh returns and makes his way with his daughter and new wife first to Sweden then to the U.S., where he made a new life.

When Erin, Irena's daughter, became a journalist, her reporter's mind refused to let go of her mother's story, and she wanted to learn more. Taking a sabbatical from her job, she moved to Poland to see if she could find her mother's rescuers. In the story of her quest, Einhorn mixes historical fact with current cultural observations with details of her journey to create a fascinating account that is very personal, yet universal in many ways as well.

The story will touch a chord with anyone who has ever wondered about the people who came before them: where did they live, what motivated them, how were their lives different from ours? There's genealogical research and observations about Jews in Poland. Einhorn takes a look at historical attitudes of Poles to Jews and how lingering feelings of distrust resulting from the Holocaust continue to this day. But she also looks at how this generation of young Poles is different from the one that came before, and she candidly assesses the differences.

All in all I think *The Pages in Between* is not just the story of one woman's search for her mother's history. It taps into the yearning that many of us feel about understanding our mothers and ourselves by looking at the events that helped shape us into who we are. I recommend it for mother-daughter book clubs with daughters in 10th grade and older.

Michele Shimp says

Back in June, Julie P. of Booking Mama wrote a review on a book I knew I had to read. The Space Between Before and After by Jean Page Reynolds lived up to Julie's review.[return][return]From the author's website: Forty-two and divorced, Holli Templeton has just begun to realize the pleasures of owning her life for the first time. But the experience is short-lived. Her son Conner has unexpectedly fled college in Rhode Island and moved to Texas with his troubled girlfriend, Kilian. This alone is difficult to handle, but as Holli begins to understand the depth of the girl
