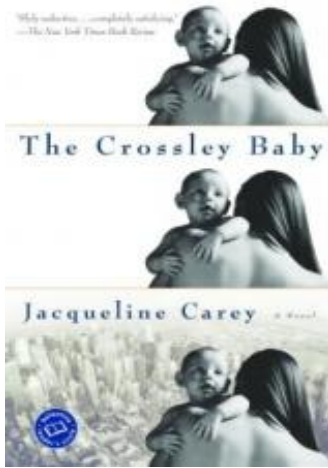


The Crossley Baby

by Jacqueline Carey



About the Book

Bridget, Jean, and Sunny Crossley grow up in modest circumstances on Long Island, and all end up in the New York City of the 1980s. Free spirit Bridget, the oldest, is a well-traveled, sometime massage therapist in the East Village. Outspoken Jean is a corporate headhunter in double-breasted power suits who lives in a gleaming Upper East Side tower. Harvard-educated Sunny, the youngest and sweetest sister, drifts from eligible boyfriend to eligible boyfriend until she falls for a Harlem real estate developer and starts a family.

When Bridget dies unexpectedly during what should have been a routine operation, she leaves behind a ten-month-old girl named Jade. The big question becomes: Who should take the baby? The obvious and expert Sunny, or the never-at-home career woman Jean? The answer is, of course, more complicated than either sister could have anticipated.

Discussion Guide

1. Carey does not organize **The Crossley Baby** as a straightforward chronology but freely interweaves current developments with episodes from her characters' past lives. How does it affect your attitude toward the conflict between Sunny and Jean to see them in younger incarnations?
2. Do you think the novel comes to a clear conclusion about what sort of mother would be best for Jade? Were you pleased with the way the custody question worked out?
3. In her interview, Carey says that Jean and Sunny become to some extent more like each other as the novel progresses. In what ways? How else do they change? Did you notice any similarities in the pressures that they react to?

4. The sisters come from a family in which lengthy feuds are part of the family lore. Why are feuds good fodder for fiction?
5. The sisters come from a family in which lengthy feuds are part of the family lore. Why are feuds good fodder for fiction?
6. What part does the city of Manhattan play in **The Crossley Baby**? Would the story change in essential ways if it were set elsewhere?
7. What effect does the style of a novel --- right down to the way an individual sentence unfolds --- have on your enjoyment of it? Are there particular sentences in **The Crossley Baby** that seem stamped with the author's sensibility? How would you characterize that sensibility?
8. Reviewers have repeatedly praised the combination of wit and gravity that Carey brings to her writing. Can you think of other writers who tell serious stories in a comic and disarming manner?

Author Bio

Critical Praise

"Reviewers have repeatedly praised the combination of wit and gravity that Carey brings to her writing. Can you think of other writers who tell serious stories in a comic and disarming manner?"--- *The New York Times Book Review*"Carey's portrait of modern 'superwomen' is both poignant and precise. . . . [Her] wit radiates throughout this contemporary comedic saga of sibling rivalry run amok."--- *Booklist*"The witty writing is clear and unpretentious, and love and money are examined from a variety of viewpoints; things are seldom as simple as they seem. . . . Readers have complete access to the thoughts and feelings of both sisters, who are fully imagined."--- *Library Journal*"[A] wry, quirky novel . . . [Carey is] an engaging and often funny writer. . . . Her sharp descriptions of the sisters' various milieus give the novel its piquancy."--- *Publishers Weekly*

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