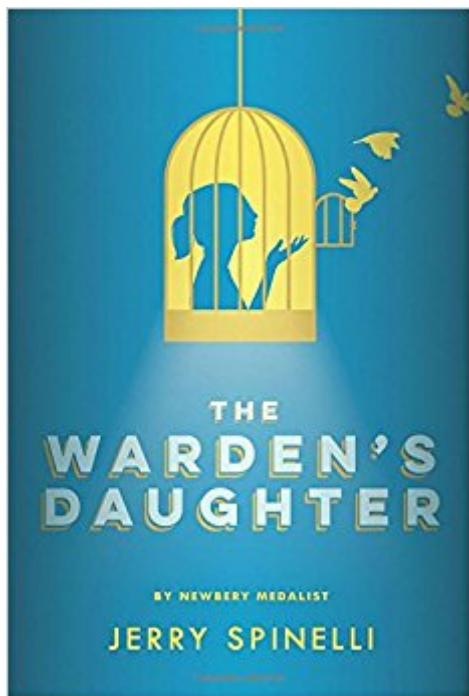


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# The Warden's Daughter



## Synopsis

From Newbery Medalist Jerry Spinelli (*Maniac Magee*, *Stargirl*) comes the "moving and memorable" (Kirkus Reviews, starred) story of a girl searching for happiness inside the walls of a prison. Cammie O'Reilly lives at the Hancock County Prison--not as a prisoner, she's the warden's daughter. She spends the mornings hanging out with shoplifters and reformed arsonists in the women's excercise yard, which gives Cammie a certain cache with her school friends. But even though Cammie's free to leave the prison, she's still stuck. And sad, and really mad. Her mother died saving her from harm when she was just a baby. You wouldn't think you could miss something you never had, but on the eve of her thirteenth birthday, the thing Cammie most wants is a mom. A prison might not be the best place to search for a mother, but Cammie is determined and she's willing to work with what she's got. "Jerry Spinelli again proves why he's the king of storytellers" (Shelf Awareness, starred) in this tale of a girl who learns that heroes can come in surprising disguises, and that even if we don't always get what we want, sometimes we really do get what we need. "This book is never boring and never predictable. Fame, good and bad fortune, friendship and mental illness all make their way into [Cammie's] narrative." "The New York Times Book Review" Praise for the works of Jerry Spinelli: "Spinelli is a poet of the prepubescent. . . . No writer guides his young characters, and his readers, past these pitfalls and challenges and toward their futures with more compassion." • "The New York Times" "It's almost unreal how much the children's book still resonates." • "Bustle.com" on *Maniac Magee*

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0550 (What's this?)

Hardcover: 352 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 42 customer reviews

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Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8 "As an elderly grandmother, Cammie looks back on the summer of 1959, when she lived with her stoic warden father in an apartment adjacent to Pennsylvania's Hancock County Prison. Young Cammie is filled with unprocessed grief from her mother's tragic death. She decides that Eloda Pupko, the distant but constant prison housekeeper, should be her mother figure. The summer is full of change. Cammie's fame-hungry best friend outgrows her, and her close relationship with verbose Boo Boo Dunbar, one of a handful of African American inmates, ends in numb grief when Boo Boo commits suicide. Finally, Eloda helps Cammie truly grieve for her mother in order to move on. Character development and realistic dialogue shine in this emotional historical fiction title. The pent-up anger that bubbles under the surface of Cammie's memories is palpable. Spinelli's characters are achingly real at times, although some readers may find it difficult to care about such a spoiled, entitled protagonist. With narration by an elderly Cammie, Spinelli artfully adds foreshadowing to keep the plot moving. However, the pacing is slowed by adult Cammie's endless reflections on her emotions and behavior. The grandmotherly perspective lacks a tangible connection to young Cammie's confusion on the cusp of teenager-dom. Period-specific details abound, but some hit the mark without context (will young readers understand that the passing reference to "the Hokey Pokey man" is 1950s slang for ice-cream man?). VERDICT Sentimental and reflective, this nostalgic story will strike a deeper chord in adults than in middle graders." Amy Seto Forrester, Denver Public Library

"It's a tapestry of grief and redemption, woven by a master storyteller who never loses his focus on Cammie's personal journey but connects it to Eloda's in a powerful twist. Moving and memorable." Kirkus, starred review "Spinelli again shows his mastery at evoking a particular time and place while delving into the heart of a troubled adolescent..." Publishers Weekly, starred review "The prison community is a powerful backdrop for Cammie's turbulent coming of age, populated with messy lives that brighten in Cammie's presence but that have their own demons to tame." Bulletin, starred review "Jerry Spinelli again proves why he's the king of storytellers." -- Shelf Awareness, starred review "This is a story about facing hard truths and growing up. Readers will love the details of having a prison compound for a home and adore the many secondary

characters who help keep Cammieâ™s head above water during her desperate search for happiness." -- Booklist"Spinelliâ™s gift for humorousÂ chaos and his trademark magic realism touches are showcased here, and it isÂ exhilarating to read about kids with so much urban freedom." -- The Horn Book"Character development and realistic dialogue shine in this emotional historical fiction title. Spinelliâ™s characters are achingly real."--School Library Journal

I think my heart might explode into bits, this book was so incredibly moving. Spinelli outdoes himself with this exquisite blend of historical fiction, family drama, and mystery. Cammie is a delight from the first page, with her quippy wit and bravery, she steals the show and it is easy for the reader to jump right into her heart and want what she wants. The plot is a lovely meandering of twists and turns and the reader begins to long for answers in much the same way that Cammie is searching....for what will fill her heart. The ending is phenomenal and a total surprise and the bits and pieces of historical elements make the reader especially nostalgic because growing up without a mother in 1959 would be especially lonesome for a young girl. But Cammie survives and thrives....and you'll be delighted to discover just how and why. Loved it.

Although Mr. Spinelli's books are geared more to young readers, I still enjoy them. Especially since I was born and raised in Norristown, PA (the subject town of this and his story "Maniac McGee"). The life lessons learned by "The Warden's Daughter" should be required reading for all preteen and middle school readers...as well as their parents and teachers.. Don't miss this wonderful story.

I thought this book was interesting because 1) the main character lives in a prison and 2) I can relate to her anger about not having a mother. Book has many colorful characters woven into the fabric of her life. From "the jailbirds" to Boo Boo the convict you learn a lot about Cammie's inner demons. Well written, it kept me riveted throughout the book.

Such a good read, however it was much more mature than I anticipated. Due to a few aspects within the text this book won't make it into my elementary classroom library! Very good for middle school- high school!

Great quick read! My mother in law recommended this book, and I'm going to share it!

Loved this story. Interesting setting, great characters. I want to go eat a banana split for Boo Boo.

She made me laugh she made me cry. Rich characters that brought me to tears on more than one occasion

A YA novel that will appeal to all ages. Accurate views of young teens and their perceptions.

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