



# Three Black Swans

*Caroline B. Cooney*

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## **Three Black Swans** Caroline B. Cooney

Lives are in the balance in bestselling author Caroline B. Cooney's newest young adult thriller, "Three Black Swans."

Missy and her cousin Claire are best friends who finish each other's sentences and practically read each other's minds. It's an eerie connection--so eerie that Missy has questions she wants to put to her parents. But she's afraid to ask. So when Missy hears an expert discussing newborn babies on the radio, it makes her wonder about her family.

Missy just can't let go of those nagging questions, and decides to use a school project about scientific hoaxes to try to uncover the answers. She enlists Claire to help. As part of the project the girls perform a dramatic scene that is captured on video at school. After the video is posted on YouTube, Missy and Claire realize that they've opened Pandora's box and much more than they ever imagined has come out. Not only are their identities called into question, but so is the future of everyone involved.

In this riveting, heartrending story by thriller author Caroline B. Cooney, the truth changes the lives of three families--as the bonds of blood must withstand the strains of long-hidden secrets that are at last revealed.

## **Three Black Swans Details**

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## From Reader Review Three Black Swans for online ebook

### Spypigeon says

One of the worst books I have ever read in my entire life, And trust me- I've sat through the Twilight series. I mean, kudos, the idea was actually pretty original. This book is basically about cousins Missy and Claire. When Missy is given the assignment to create a hoax, she plays her cousin off as her long-lost identical twin. Which brings me to the point that if she's her cousin, then why did everyone fall for it? I mean, the author spends a good chunk of the book talking about how they spend every weekend together, and how they spent their entire childhoods right next to each other! yet, apparently, no one knew of Missy's cousin because Missy never talked about her. Why is that? The author plays her off as this social butterfly( or at least compared to Claire she seems to be), yet she never talks about her best friend who happens to be her cousin? Anyways, back to the story, Missy takes Claire to her school and they both appear on the school's morning announcement together. While Missy is explaining about her twin with vigor, Claire just breaks down crying. Thus, the boy who does the morning announcements( which are for some reason filmed; oh, that's where the tax money goes)decides to put it on Youtube without asking the girls. Woah, he's so nice. And thanks to him, all the drama begins to unfold. And that's where the story starts into the second act.

The second act is poor. I mean, the introduction was pretty decent. A few weird character problems, but they can pretty much fly. In the second act, Claire starts to come to the realization that Claire and her may actually be twins. And for some reason she starts crying over it multiple times. She tells Missy and Missy is like 'woah' (God, these characters make me want to jump off a cliff). Also, the reader is introduced to a new character about half-way through. Now, I'm not counting this as a spoiler, because if you didn't see this coming, then your IQ may be dangerously low. But, woah, there's another girl! And guess what? She looks just like Claire and Missy! Man, I thought this book called 'Three Balck Swans' would only have two characters; that's why they used the number three in the title. Now, I find the third girl (Genevieve) pretty likeable. She's nice, and her parents are pretty harsh, which makes you feel for her. Anyways, Genevieve finds the video of Claire and Missy on Youtube( since the video went viral from word of mouth), and discovers that they're all triplets. This leads us to the third act where Genevieve gets the idea to get the three of the girls together. All while they discover about their past and realize who the birth family is.

Now that the basic idea of the story is out of the way, now comes one of my biggest problems with the story- it's that the author doesn't get the whole twins/triplets thing. She describes them as looking exactly alike, having the same laugh, features, weight, etc. Now, my brothers are twins( who are like the ones in this story(( meaning they look alike in most features)) ), and they're nothing like this! One of them is taller than the other, a lot of their facial features are different, one is certainly heavier than the other, and their laughs are completely different. Now, not a lot of people can pick out the differences between twins unless they lvie with them( like myself), so it makes sense if everyone else thinks the girls all look like clones( in fact, they describe the girls as twins so much, I kept thinking this was going to turn into a sci-fi book). But the girls all think they look exactly alike, as well! They keep saying 'it's like looking in a reflection'. Either the author was too lazy to actually design three, different, individual characters, or these girls are extreme triplets.

Also, another issue, is that the characters react to things weirdly. Like the principal finds out what Missy did was a hoax, and she actually gets mad at her. She even says 'you tricked us'. Well, it's called a hoax. That's what it's supposed to do- trick people. I can understand the principal saying to the teacher 'that hoax project was a complete waste of time', but not the principal snapping at Missy. Also, after Missy declares it was a hoax all of her classmates are like 'cruel, feelingless, monster- a pox on you!'. Well, how would they like it if everyone shuns them for their lame hoax? Lastly, at the part when Genevieve confronts her parents, her mother actually grabs a knife out of nowhere and puts it to her wrist. I cannot even cover that, it's just so stupid.

So forget this book, I'm going to go read bad Harry Potter fanfiction!

### **Linda says**

I read many reviews about this book. Many people didn't like it. When I first started to read it I was a bit confused and I thought that it moved too slowly. But I like Caroline Cooney so I mustered on. And I'm glad I did! The book turned out to be rather phenomenal- one of those books that keeps you thinking about it for a long time after you finish reading it. After a slow beginning the book sped into overdrive and I couldn't put it down. Missy and Claire are first cousins who seem to feel a lot closer than cousins- like a part of each other. When Missy decides to put together a "hoax" video at school for a science project, claiming that the girls are identical twins separated at birth, and the video goes You-Tube, all hell breaks loose, opening a huge can of worms. Glimpses of what's going on are given to the reader throughout as the dialogue tells what the girls and then the parents are thinking. My one complaint: the book definitely needs a follow-up or at least an epilogue because I want to know what happened next!

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### **Savannahdennis1 says**

This book was a great book, it had such a entreating story. It started out from one girl listening on the radio about separated twins, then she found her separated twin, then they found the last piece to the puzzle, their triplet. The story kept getting better and better, the different girls living their own lives then they finally meet. This book however, kept getting repeated, how each of the three girls kept going back to the video of the "twins." All in all, I give this book a 4 out of 5.

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### **Chrissy says**

Whenever I pick up a Caroline Cooney book, I'm reminded of what it was like to be 15. There's just something about her (and Lois Duncan for that matter) that takes me back to my high school days. I was surprised to see that she had a new book out, so I decided to give it a whirl. Cooney has made an effort to stay current - YouTube and Facebook are prominent fixtures in this book about separated sisters who reunite courtesy of social media. By the way, no one quite captures the emotions of hysterical parents like Cooney (I'm reminded of the Face on the Milk Carton). Ultimately the book felt a bit rushed and contrived, but it kept me turning the pages. I think it would be popular with today's middle and high school set.

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### **Logan says**

The last half of this book, "Three Black Swans," by Caroline B. Cooney, was very suspenseful. I really enjoyed it. The differences in how the characters felt about their situation was very clear.

However ---

1. The delayed introduction of a main character, Genevieve, until page 73 was very disconcerting. I stopped reading the story, thinking some mistake had been made. I closed the book three times. I looked at the page numbers thinking that the binding somehow misplaced a number of pages. It threw me completely off the story line to have a story about Missy and Claire go on for 72 pages, and then be completely dropped in order to tell the story of Genevieve. It was only after I slogged through the next 15 pages that the link back into the plot became clear. This is one good example why Blake Snyder, in his book "Save the Cat," recommends introducing all the main characters in the first act. Unless we are writing an epic novel, a story

like this should introduce all the main characters in the setup part of the story. The first two scenes about the relationship between Genevieve and her parents (and grandmother) could have been folded into the first part of the whole story, avoiding the complete break in the plot that happens when Genevieve is finally introduced.

2. Some of this story was told in a style that seemed like an author's summarization of the story. It was written like backstory notes, rather than in a description and depiction of events and dialog. Half of the story does an excellent job of showing the emotions and feelings of the characters, but some of the other half is written in flat statements of how they felt, rather than showing it in the events and dialog of their lives. Part of this is due to the constant use of editorial flashback to fill in what happened in the past. The flashbacks are necessary because the events of the character's birth(s) and adoption(s) must be covered. But it seems to be mostly covered in a narrator's dialog rather than through the recollections of individual characters.

I think this book could have gone from good to great after a careful rewrite.

Logan

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### **Cecilia London says**

Meh. Cooney's writing isn't nearly as good as I remember but...the last time I read her was over twenty years ago.

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### **Vivian says**

This was quite a good book! Although it was a little slow in the beginning somewhere along the way it started to pick up and get really interesting! The story was slightly confusing but as you read it more everything makes sense. I really want a sequel or something so I know what happens next! It was good but I didn't like how the author introduced a significant so late into the story.

Missy and Claire have always been close from the beginning. Even though they're cousins they've always been eerily close, too close. Missy wants answers so she uses a science project about scientific hoaxes to get some answers, and she asks Claire for her help. They make a dramatic scene that goes on Youtube and things get out of control. The video not only uncovers the truth but something they never would have dreamed of.

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### **Dorer002 says**

I used to love Caroline Cooney's books when I was younger (probably Jr high aged), and thought I'd enjoy this as a guilty pleasure YA novel. It just didn't draw me in like I thought, it seemed silly and totally unbelievable. Too many cutesy coincidences and too much talking about texting. No thanks.

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### **Sarah says**

Author of numerous suspenseful novels, Caroline Cooney does it again in this fast past family drama. Yes, you read that correctly, fast paced family drama. Short chapters with cliff hanger endings will keep even the

most reluctant readers turning the pages. When sophomore Missy Vianello's teacher uses famous hoaxes to inspire her biology students, Missy sees a perfect opportunity to use her uncanny resemblance to her cousin Claire, a Junior at another school, to play a hoax on her classmates, and possibly uncover a family secret. The plot line here is fairly basic, but what Cooney does so well, is to place just enough possibility in multiple directions to leave the reader trying to solve the mystery. Cooney seamlessly incorporates technology into the story, and connects with modern readers, yet deftly avoids swear words, teenage sex acts, drugs, or anything else on the most offensive to conservative reader list. There's a reason she's been on top for over 2 decades. Sure, things get a little trite toward the end, and the dialogue can feel a little forced, but she knows her audience, and they'll love it.

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### **Riya Shah says**

Honestly this book disappointed me very much. When I picked up the book, it was mainly because I love Cooney's works and was excited to read another book by her. But the beginning of the book starts out very slow and unfortunately it doesn't get any better. I thought the whole book was very predictable, and it was a bit of a waste of time to read.

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### **Sarah Sammis says**

Three Black Swans by Caroline B Reiner takes its title from The Black Swan by Nassim Nicholas Taleb. Basically, a black swan is a highly improbable event that actually has happened. Taleb describes these events as: unpredictable, with a massive impact, and something we want to explain to make them seem less random or unpredictable.

In the case of Three Black Swans, the title is a spoiler unto itself — three identical sisters separated at birth with shenanigans involved in their adoptions. The revelation of this long kept secret starts when Missy, the runt of the litter, uses her "cousin" Claire as part of a science class project (create a hoax and report on it).

Now here is where I step aside from the book to explain why I wasn't as impressed with the story as I might have been. The problem is this: it's a cut and dry twins separated at birth (except its triplets) story and it follows all the twists and turns this sort of story usually takes. Here, too, since Missy and her siblings are underage, Cooney has to pull some strings to make their coming together at all plausible. She begins, of course, by stacking the deck by making two of the sisters "cousins."

I hadn't really thought about how formulaic this type of story is until I listened to Carl Reiner's NNNNN which lampoons the twins separated at birth story to epic proportions. Ultimately the problem with Three Black Swans is that it takes this trite plot line completely seriously, whereas Reiner takes it to the most outlandish of extremes — well beyond even the most melodramatic telenovela, and then adds in a healthy serving of blasphemy.

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### **Jennifer Rayment says**

The Good Stuff

Story is fast paced with plenty of cliffhanger type moments

Some interesting ethical questions could be brought up for discussion  
The three young heroines are likeable and there is some nice character development  
Liked the relationship between Genevieve and her grandmother  
Good little mystery, makes you keep guessing what is actually going on  
I want Genevieve's grandma to be my grandma  
The Not So Good Stuff

Story jumps around in terms of point of view which was very confusing  
One of the main characters of the story isn't introduced till at least a quarter way through the book  
Believability is way off  
Genevieve's parents are horrible and not at all believable in their turn around  
Minor plots are put in that really don't need to be there  
I think I am just too old for this one so please remember that when deciding whether to read or not. I'm going to pass this one on to my neighbors teenage daughter to see what she thinks

#### Favorite Quotes/Passages

"But these days, no one kept adoption a secret. If you adopted a baby, you bragged about it. "I chose you," the parents said to their adopted child. "We chose our baby girl," they proudly told other parents."

"A radio sat on a sorting table. It was small and black with a long cord, and probably as old as her mother."

#### Who Should/Shouldn't Read

This is one I would suggest would appeal to actual YA readers (those in tween to teen ages) and not to the adult YA reader  
A good one for reluctant readers

3 Dewey's

I received this from Random House in exchange for an honest review

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### **Jill says**

Not my favorite Caroline Cooney book. This realistic fiction book tells the story of two cousins, Missy and Claire, who are very close and have a "strong family resemblance" in their appearance. Missy receives a Science assignment that she needs to research a hoax and present it to the class. She decides to bring her cousin to her school during the morning announcements and declare to the entire school that she found her "long lost twin." During her third hour Science class she tells everyone that it was just a hoax, but many still believe her as the girls look exactly alike. The video goes on YouTube and more problems occur for Missy, Claire, and their entire family.

The storyline was a bit unbelievable for realistic fiction, and it bothered me that the characters were always thinking in their head instead of doing! However, I did enjoy how she incorporated the title into the book several times.

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## **Saru (Queen of Bookland) says**

This was a great book! The aspect of twins separated at birth seemed a bit too dramatic and glossy, let alone triplets! But Caroline B. Cooney did a great job making the book seem more realistic. The characters were also very well created. Like Ned and Allegra. I pitied them, but hated them at the same time. Overall this was a spectacular mystery that keeps you guessing about the triplets' identities till the very end.

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## **Tiffany Neal says**

I noticed that there were lots of 2-3 star reviews on this one. I really can't be sure why because I picked up the book yesterday and was so intrigued by the story line and plot that I tore through the pages trying to figure out what was going on. I loved the back cover with the explanation of what black swans are, and I never read the inside cover, so I had no idea what the book was about.

There were some places that felt ingenuine or slightly unbelievable - the fact that no one noticed how much they looked alike, Gen's parents being so cold and heartless *STILL*. And for some reason the ending was slightly anti-climactic, but I guess that could be expected considering I was in major suspense and limbo trying to figure out what in the world was going on as I read the entire book.

Overall, I really enjoyed the change in pace with this book and found the idea unique and wonderfully interesting.

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