



## **If I Lie**

*Corrine Jackson*

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A powerful debut novel about the gray space between truth and perception.

Quinn's done the unthinkable: she kissed a guy who is not Carey, her boyfriend. And she got caught. Being branded a cheater would be bad enough, but Quinn is deemed a traitor, and shunned by all of her friends. Because Carey's not just any guy—he's serving in Afghanistan and revered by everyone in their small, military town.

Quinn could clear her name, but that would mean revealing secrets that she's vowed to keep—secrets that aren't hers to share. And when Carey goes MIA, Quinn must decide how far she'll go to protect her boyfriend...and her promise.

## **If I Lie Details**

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Author : Corrine Jackson

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## From Reader Review If I Lie for online ebook

### Rachel says

I am amazed at how breathless I am after finishing If I Lie by Corinne Jackson. This story is about Sophie Topher Quinn. Quinn's boyfriend Carey is a soldier stationed in Afghanistan. He was home for awhile for the summer. Carey told Quinn a huge secret that he made her promise not to tell anyone. A promise that Quinn has protected with her life. Its the middle of Quinn's senior year when the story begins. Quinn and everyone else in her small town has just found out the Carey is MIA. To make things worst for Quinn is everyone thinking Quinn cheated on Carey. In reality there is more to Quinn's story than what appears on the outside. It is also the story about the results of Quinn's mother cheating on her father when she was eleven.

Quinn's story is full of passion, heartbreak, the power of a promise and the struggle to stay strong while being oppressed no matter what. It is a story that I will never forget. I feel aching pain as I dwell in every struggle Quinn faced. I wished every moment that her amazing best friend Carey could have been their to help her. If he had been there all the horrible things that happened to Quinn would not happen. Despite Carey never being in the present for the most of the book, all the flashbacks reveal that he truly care for Quinn more than anyone else in the world.

It is heartbreaking watching and learning every secret Quinn had to keep. This book flawlessly stitched what happened in the past together with the present. I felt no head-jerk as the story weaved from present to past. The truth of Carey and Quinn's secret and of what really happened during the summer is heartwarming. Tears spill thinking about the bad luck they both faced. For the separation they endured throughout this book.

I constantly wanted to bang Quinn's head for being too stubborn to admit the truth. Quinn is self-less in her love for Carey. I understand why she kept her secret but I wish she did not. I ached as she felt self-loathing. Every feeling Quinn feels is raw, rich and moving. I desperately wish I could have put a warm quilt over Quinn. I completely understood her disgust for her mom and dad. Her mom left her and never came back till her senior year in high school (the middle of the book). Her dad pretends she never exists and is distasteful towards her because he thinks Quinn cheated on Carey. Quinn's whole life is dysfunctional and I amazed at how well she stays strong no matter what.

I cannot write this review without mentioning George. George is a true role model and friend to Quinn. George is a snarky and elderly Veteran of the Vietnam War who is currently at the VA Medical Center where Quinn volunteers. He never believes the flammable rumors of Quinn. He constantly brings joy to her life and cares for Quinn like she was his own daughter.

George is funny. George is loveable. George is delightful.

This is a story about hope. A story about promise. A story about regret. Most of all, a story about love. A story about remembering who you are in face of adversity. One mistake can lead to heartbreak. One moment.

Like Quinn remarked, "Sometimes a moment defines your, defines how people see you the rest of your life." (Jackson 249)

Remember to always have hope and to keep those you truly know you, truly love you close. That is this unforgettable book true legacy to me.

Originally posted at Unforgettable Books

## Jackie (No Bent Spines) says

5/5 stars

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SPOILER

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Ok so I pretty much adore this book. It has everything; secrets, tears, tragedy, love, fear, hurt, devastation, renewal, everlasting bonds and above all friendship. I know that Carey is gay and all and left her to fend for herself while he went off to war but I just couldn't bring myself to hate him. It was obvious that while he was not in love with Quinn (Sophie) he did love her. The only thing I would change would be that Quinn and Blake end up together. I love Blake so much and he and Quinn were each others halves. Although Quinn did not see it at first, Blake saw it, felt it, from the start. It was pure and beautiful and real. Not much is Real Love these days. I love how this book was a marines novel, it gave it a depth that a lot of other books don't usually have.

Even though Quinn didn't know she was lost, Blake found her, that is what kind of made their on of a kind, almost forbidden love all the more amazing and perfect. It was like through everything she had been through, Blake was always there.

I-I just can't describe how much I love this book. If only.....If only she didn't move into her mother's home before she went off to college and stayed with Blake everything would have been perfect. I mean, I get that whole 'You have to forgive to heal' and what-not, but Sophie can forgive from afar. The people at home (Blake, her dad, and Carey) need her more than her mom does.

This book is a military novel that will make me want a love like Sophie has the ability to possess forever. This book is truly one of a kind and will be treasured in my memory forever and always.

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## Talia Vance says

This book! I read this book in one sitting. This is the kind of book that takes hold of your emotions and won't let go. I cried, I laughed, I cried some more, and in the end, I was just in awe.

Sophie Topper Quinn is easy to love. Branded the town slut after she is caught cheating on her war hero boyfriend, Sophie can clear her name, but doing so would mean betraying her boyfriend whose secret is not hers to tell. Doing the honorable thing comes at a huge price, as Sophie is bullied, ostracized and made to suffer alone.

The relationships in this book are complex, believable and completely real. Sophie and Carey- the love between these two is so genuine, and even when you want to bean Carey over the head for putting Sophie in the position he does, you feel the genuine affection between these two. Sophie and Blake- These two love each other in a way that is both warm and heartbreaking. There is a true triangle here, as Blake and Sophie's mutual love for Carey always hangs above them. Sophie's relationships with her former friends, her single father, the mother who abandoned her and a grizzled veteran who gives her the unconditional love she craves are layered and real.

The writing is gorgeous, and there were times I wanted to pause and just soak it in, but the story wouldn't let me pause for long, compelling me to keep turning the page until I knew that Sophie was going to be okay. LOVE!

## Jessie (Ageless Pages Reviews) says

### Read This Review & More Like It On My Blog!

This is just so so good, from start to finish. I'm still having a hard time putting coherent thoughts about it together, but *If I Lie* made me cry, oh, once every 75 pages or so. It's gripping, and touching, and altogether beautiful in several ways. This is a book that made me feel things (All the feelings!), that made me care intensely about its wide cast of multi-dimensional characters people; all in all, this is a damn good book and I literally have zero complaints. It and the themes and issues explored in those 276 pages brought to mind *The Scarlet Letter* and another novel I recently read, *Speechless* by Hannah Harrington, on how inaction and silence can be as harmful as telling secrets. And, however much I was initially reminded of those novels, this is very much its own novel. Corrine Jackson is undoubtedly an author to watch and she more than proves her talent with this contemporary debut. Though I read an ARC of this, I fully plan to buy my own copy when it's available. Heart-breaking in a variety of ways, *If I Lie* is easily one of my best of 2012 reads.

This book is so much more than the blurb seems to let on. It's not the same tired old highschool angst and melodrama about a girl caught in a cliched love triangle. *If I Lie* is anything but that. It's heartfelt and emotional. In the end, it's about hope, love, trust, family, and ultimately, what it means to be your own person. It's about growing up, moving on, and learning how to live with curveballs life can and does throw at you. Though I called the secret even before starting, the heart of the novel isn't uncovering what happened those two days before Carey shipped out, but in watching how that secret affects and continues to impact the characters various lives after he's gone.

Main character and chief protagonist Sophie Topper Quinn is one of those few and far between heroines: she's strong, passionate, honorable, stubborn, flawed, and real. I absolutely loved Sophie and reading about her life, through her ups and downs, her stubbornness and her pride. This is the kind of character I can care about, root for and invest in heavily. Her voice is... real, organic -- it gets under the skin and makes you care about her and her life. She has hopes and dreams, is an active protagonist, even if some of what she does is more harmful than goo in the long run. This book is a great example of how first-person POV can be used effectively to make a reader identify closely with the narrator. I felt what Quinn felt, her full spectrum of emotions caught me early. Her inner monologue is just so realistic and further reinforces how authentic and grounded this character is. Corrine Jackson has this characterization, voice, plot all down pat here in *If I Lie*, and I was impressed even as tears were streaming down my cheeks, multiple times.

Though my family isn't nearly as military-oriented as Quinn's is shown to be, I do have a brother who is a Sergeant in the Marines, and who has served two tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. And while, thankfully, he has never been MIA or wounded in action, the actions of the characters in this novel really hit home for me. The simple fact of not knowing where they are or how your loved one is is stressful and can lead people to do things they otherwise wouldn't. I'm not just talking about Quinn here (though her case is obviously not the same as others), but Carey's parents and friends as well. While their actions towards Quinn can be and often are abusive, I understand how it is to act out of fear for someone you love but cannot do anything to help. Corrine Jackson's skillful writing and my personal experiences makes it so that I understand them, even if I disagree with how they act. One of the best things, out of a multitude of options, about *If I Lie* are how human **all** these characters are, even the antagonists of Jamie and the Breens. They're practically alive with their flaws, mistakes, and errors.

I picked this up yesterday morning, intending to read a few chapters before I went to work out. I ended up pushing back my workout by several hours because I absolutely could not, and did not want to, put this

down. *If I Lie* is compulsively readable, even as it repeatedly shatters your heart and wrangles all your emotions. Though the ending is more open-ended than anything, I choose to see it as a hopeful finale, for Quinn, for Blake, (view spoiler). It's perfect. This is a great book. Read it and love it. I can't recommend it highly enough. Well done, Corrine Jackson. You have made a fangirl out of me with just one novel alone and I eagerly anticipate whatever else you publish.

Eventually, I did get to my gym. But first, I went to see my brother and gave him a big hug and a 'thank you' for all he has done. Though the military is far from perfect, I am eternally grateful for what they all - every branch and every individual servicemember - have sacrificed for this country.

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## Arlene says

*Sometimes a moment defines you, defines how people see you for the rest of your life.*

What an emotional journey! *If I Lie* by Corrine Jackson has been on my wishlist for quite a while because the premise hooked me pretty fierce. Now after finishing this novel, I'm happy to say I was definitely NOT disappointed. It was worth every minute of the wait and every emotional punch delivered throughout the book.

This book is packed to the brim with relevant themes such as friendship, sacrifice, loss, integrity and self discovery. These are all powerful concepts wrapped around a story that takes place in the here and now as a war is fought in Afghanistan, where troops, families and friends are left to pull the pieces of their lives together. If this is the new trend in YA Contemporary then sign me up. It's a subject I hold near and dear, and I applaud Jackson for her masterful approach delivered with integrity and truth.

Sophie Quinn, the main protag in this novel, has sacrificed her reputation, happiness and hope of having a memorable senior year. See she lives in the small military town of Sweethaven, where sons, daughters, and even parents are deployed to fight the war against terrorism. The novel kicks off with an emotional news break that one of their own is missing in action. It happens to be Quinn's boyfriend Carey, which she was caught cheating on ultimately leaving her to battle against the town's hatred because of her betrayal. As the story progresses and the players in this novel make their appearances, we begin to discover that Quinn's betrayal holds a whole new layer of truth and secrets which she's committed to keep hidden. However, to what length is she willing to sacrifice her integrity to protect another?

Quinn captured my heart from the get go. There were moments in the story when I felt an overwhelming frustration for her situation simply because I became vested in this character. At times Quinn's was the only side of the story important to me, but she forced us to consider the other side of the coin despite wanting to feel dislike and disappointment for both Carey and Blake.

Blake makes a few appearances throughout the novel, but one thing I must say about him was I still don't understand how he let Quinn take the fall and face the firing squad on her own. Despite Carey's role being played from the sidelines as he's missing in action, we get glimpse of his side through flashbacks. It wasn't until the very end, did I finally feel compassion for him.

As far as the pacing of the novel goes, it's timed to perfection. So much happens, yet as a reader you never feel rushed. At the end of the journey I felt I got to know all of the main players and their multiple layers of complexity. I became acquainted with Quinn, Carey, Blake and George to such an in-depth level without feeling neither short-changed nor overwhelmed. Great balance and pacing throughout.

Overall, Corrine Jackson has penned a worthy novel full of emotion and hope, and she's made an impression on me. Definitely enough of it to have me now keep my eyes out for anything else she plans to publish.

Enjoyed it much!

*Someday... these days will be a shitty reminder of a time when we weren't the best versions of ourselves.*

I'm giving away a copy of this book. Visit my blog for giveaway details:

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### **Kiara says**

I hate this book. The whole plot is rage inducing. Carey is a coward and Blake is a douche. Some of the books I've read recently have very strong protagonists and so when I read Sophie I was disappointed. I did not like her meekness or suffer in silence attitude.

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### **Jasprit says**

If I Lie is a book which puts you in a stupor of emotions that my feelings are all over the place about how I feel about this book. On the one hand it's gritty, raw and Jackson's writing left me in a huge mess. The unexpected blows kept chipping away until at some points I couldn't take any more.

Quinn's life is hell right now; she's been tagged the school slut for cheating on her boyfriend Carey before he was going to be deployed to Iraq. Carey was the school hero; no one could ever say a bad word about him, and now he's MIA. So everyone at school comes down that much more on Quinn, it's her fault end of. Her father acts like a drill sergeant around her, always cold, sticking to a strict schedule at home. He doesn't even remember Quinn's a vegetarian anymore, continually serving her meat dishes. Quinn knows why he's like this, he expects her to turn out just like her mother who also brought the family reputation down.

Quinn honestly doesn't deserve this sucky life, if people knew the honest truth about why she did cheat then I'm sure they would take back every bad word and insult said about her. But Quinn was such a decent person she decided to keep her promise to Carey, sticking out being ridiculed and teased for months after Carey had left. Judgements made about her that were totally underserved and heartbreak, over losing the boyfriend she loved and the one she could never have.

Jackson's writing was just incredible; the story she weaved was so delicately thought out and elegantly written. It is hard to believe this is her debut novel, with the amount of inner turmoil I suffered reading this you would think Jackson had been a published author for years. For me those are the best novels you can find, ones that can get under your skin and can leave you reeling afterwards.

Jackson also deals with tough real life issues so well; a large amount is focused on the army life how difficult it can be leaving loved ones behind, losing loved ones in battle and adapting back to life when coming back home. Jackson was able to illustrate how tough of a process it could be. Also the issue of having no one to turn to, Quinn was totally abandoned when everyone found out she cheated, even her best friends didn't wait to ask her what really happened. They were just quick to pass judgements. Quinn could have spiralled out of control, she'd lost her boyfriend and her best friend and was made the school scapegoat. But she battled on, and that's what I truly admired about her. She didn't stay at home and mope away, but continued to go to school and try to hold her head high, for she had every right to do.

My favourite relationship which emerged from this story was the one between George and Quinn. Quinn had

initially been forced into helping out at the VA hospital but ended up forming such a close bond with George. He was honest, blunt, but most of all could see the real Quinn, when everyone else dropped her and despite hearing all the gossip he was the same George through and through.

But on the other hand, there were the actions of the characters which really aggravated me and thus brought my rating down. The story slowly eases you into the back story of several characters, so part way through I really thought I got to know them so well, but then some of the things they did made me want to yank my hair out. Even though I didn't like this as my emotions would quickly change from one extreme to another, the character flaws were done so well, that I often didn't see them coming.

I have to hand it to Jackson, *If I Lie* is a poignant story (the way I clutched my kindle over the two days I read it would give a clear indication of how much I was captivated). And yet again I'm pleased to say *If I Lie* was one of the few books to surprise me with its ending. I'm hoping, actually pleading it ended this way so that we can re-enter Quinn's complicated world once more.

Thank you to Leanne for reading this with me, you can check out her awesome review out here

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### **Purcheria says**

Wow...Wow...I have no words. Like. None. They fail me...I've come undone...There are not enough words to describe the emotional journey this book takes you on. It is as heart-wrenching as it is beautiful.

This book was a joy to read, not just because of the story, but because of the way the story was told. Corinne Jackson knows how to tell one.

This book shows you what it's like to be human, to live with true human emotions. It makes you realize that no one's perfect; not your friends, not your loves, not the adults who are there to protect and teach you, and not your parents who swear to love you unconditionally. The situation that Quinn has to deal with absolutely floored me. It was unfathomable that she had to live so alienated from her world, the world that she grew up in. Everyone abandoned her. Her friends, her family, her boyfriend. But yet she kept on, *every day*. And yes, there were times when she had her weak moments, but how could she not.

Quinn has to be hands down one of the strongest characters I have read in a book. Even after everything she goes through she keeps her head up and perseveres. She could have told this secret, could have let herself off the hook, but she didn't because that was the honorable thing to do. And whether or not you agree with that decision, it shows what kind of friend and person she is. The kind of inner strength that is needed to live through all that hurt and come out on top is nothing short of amazing.

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### **Jenny - TotallybookedBlog says**

*4.5 Stars*

This book made my heart hurt and was such a thought provoking read. It was beautiful and the writing was flawless.

There was certainly a lot to take in with this book but I found I kept pace with the authors story and Sophie/Quinn reached into my heart and held it all through this book.

What a wonderful loyal and strong character Sophie was. She sacrificed so much to keep her promise to her

boyfriend Carey that, at times, I was willing her to tell! I actually did shout at my Kindle once “just tell someone”. I wanted the cruelty towards her to end. I wanted to reach in and hold her and tell her everything was going to be okay.

*“Some words hit you like a tree branch slapping you in the face. And some words rip into your flesh, leaving scars so deep, they never completely fade”*

Sophie/Quinn wasn't perfect but she was honest, mature beyond her years at times, pragmatic and loyal to a fault. She didn't play the victim, even though she very well could have. My frustration at her for keeping her secret was born out of a deep feeling and connection I felt for Sophie...I felt this connection to the point where I wanted everything to be okay for her. I wanted, with all my heart, for Sophie to enjoy her life and everything around it. I wanted her to be happy. Oh I wanted so much the hatred towards her to end because she didn't deserve any of it.

*“I can't go home to sit alone in the dark. I belong nowhere. Nobody wants me”*. Yes, my heart ached for Sophie.

This book was so emotional and moving. The author really sets the pace and doesn't let you go for one minute. Just when you get through one emotional ride, the roller coaster goes right back up the top and you're plummeting again. Hearing the story in first person by Sophie really does have an impact whereby you feel everything Sophie goes through and at times it's not pretty.

Sophie was captured kissing a boy that isn't her boyfriend Carey. Carey is the hometown hero who is serving in Afghanistan and is currently MIA.

Sophie is harbouring a secret for her boyfriend Carey.. A secret that could clear her name and end the constant taunting and ridicule she suffers daily at the hands of her “friends” in her town. But to clear her name, Sophie would have to break a promise she vowed to keep. A promise she made to Carey before he left for Afghanistan and one she intends to honour at all cost.

The blurb really doesn't do this book justice. You will never understand the emotional journey of this book unless you read it and experience the emotion first hand.

I haven't stopped thinking about this book since I closed the last page, such was the effect it had on me.

This book about friendships, loyalty, accepting people aren't perfect and not believing everything you see and hear gripped me from start to finish. It's about misconceptions and how they can affect those around us. There are always two sides to every story and this is discovered through flashback glimpses from Sophie. It unravels slowly for the reader and the impact of some of the reveals had me gasping.

*“Sometimes a moment defines you, defines how people see you for the rest of your life”*

Everything in this story felt real. The relationship between Sophie and her father broke my heart and her relationship with George made my heart soar.

This is one book that will stay with me for a long time to come.

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**Mara says**

**WARNING: this book will make you cry, or sob, or wail**

Ah, someone help me, I'm drowning in my emotions.

**Characters:**

You know that feeling when you start relating to the character so much that you just find yourself sobbing for them? When it gets the point where it just becomes *personal*? When you're in so deep that you ache for the character so badly and just want to take them from the author for a while to comfort them? When a book does this to you, you *know* that there is some brilliant storytelling going on.

Well *that* is what the author made me feel for Sophie.

I really connected with Sophie/Quinn/Q (all of these names were used at one point in the novel). I think we all understand how it is to be misunderstood; how it feels to bottle up something so deep inside that it eventually starts consuming you. And wow, the author conveyed this so well my heart was aching for Sophie throughout the whole novel.

**General thoughts:**

Corrine Jackson is not afraid to confront real issues: war, dysfunctional families, cheating, and (view spoiler). And you know what I **loved** even more? Something we don't see in YA literature very often with female protagonists? (view spoiler)

I honestly did not expect to like this book as much as I did; it just didn't seem like my type of book judging by the synopsis. But while skimming through the goodreads reviews I read some great ones which convinced me to give it a go. So thanks guys ~~I have way too much faith in readers opinions on this site. Thank God for that.~~

**So if this ordinarily isn't your type of book, just take a leap. You'd be hard-pressed not to shed a few tears over it.**

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**Christy says**

*Sometimes a moment defines you, defines how people see you the rest of your life. You can accept it or fight it. If your lucky, you'll recognize the moment when it happens.*

This is true for not only Sophie Quinn, but many characters in this powerful debut book. Wow, this book was emotional and heartbreaking for me.

One word I would use to describe Quinn is loyal to a fault... although almost everyone in the book thinks she is the exact opposite. Quinn is keeping a secret that is huge, and tearing her apart. Everyone believes she cheated on her boyfriend Carey (with his best friend Blake- although no one realizes who the boy in the picture is) who is currently serving overseas in the Marines. Carey has gone mia and she refuses to explain herself because she is protecting him and his secret. It doesn't help that she has an estranged mother who cheated on her father 6 years ago.

Quinn has it rough, not only is one of her best friends (Carey) mia but all her friends, Carey's parents, Blake (at times) and even her own father believe the worst of her and some of them actively make her life

miserable. She is tough, there were times I wish she would clear her name even if it was just with George, or Blake, or Angel, or her Dad just someone! But, she didn't.

Although I liked both Blake and Carey, the man I fell in love with in this book was George. A old grumpy man who is a war vet and one of Quinn's only friends. George was her family. He was great and I loved his and Quinn's relationship.

*'You're amazing kid. You have so much to give. You have the kind of heart that can't be hidden forever. One day, people will see that about you, and you are going to knock them on their asses with how stunning you are.'* This is exactly why George was the best character in the book!

The ending was not so much of a HEA, but I liked that it left it open for a potential HEA... I would be really happy with a sequel (view spoiler) I won't be forgetting this story any time soon...

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### **Limonessa says**

Bittersweet, and a real tear-jerker.

I found the first part of the book, all that hate and that mean girls situation a tad too much, it was hard for me to believe that a whole community, adults included, would react in such an immature and petty way to something that was absolutely not as bad as they depicted it.

At the same time I would have loved to see the mean girl put in her place in the end in a more satisfactory way and some other situations explored a bit better.

Quite an emotional read, deserves 3 stars if only for character development.

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### **Linda Sims says**

Unlike the majority of reviewers this book didn't quite sit as well with me. Quinn gets caught kissing a guy who isn't her boyfriend. Carey the boyfriend in question is the towns darling and local hero and is off fighting in Afghanistan.

So it's obvious there would be some flack headed Quinn's way. But not to the extent that happens in this IMO. Teenagers fall in and out of love and relationships, so would the whole town and I mean the whole town including adults treat this young woman in this way. I found that rather unbelievable. Then there's the fact that Quinn and Carey are not really boyfriend and girlfriend, but Quinn has to lie to keep Carey's secret. Why?! That's something else that was hard to believe, faced with all this pressure, wouldn't most seventeen year old girls cave in and tell!

While this is different and I can see what the author was trying to achieve, it just didn't seem plausible. As to Carey's secret, really to ruin a young woman's life in her home town was worth it for that, I don't think so. Plus Carey's secret was rather obvious. But most of all when Quinn got caught kissing the other guy why didn't she just say that Carey and her were no longer an item, or that they were just friends. Which after all was the truth.

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## Keertana says

*If I Lie* is easily one of the better written contemporary debuts I've come across this year, if not the best. It is powerful, thought-provoking, and is beautifully written. While it touches upon a variety of subjects and something or the other is constantly happening throughout the novel, at its core, it is a character-driven story like no other. I guess if I had to, I'd describe *If I Lie* as a cross between *The Scarlet Letter* and *Speechless*, but really, it is a novel that manages to hold its head high and stand all on its own, for although it covers a similar subject matter, it also covers so much more. It is a novel not only about bearing burdens, facing a cold shoulder of shame, torn families, friendship, and the army; it is also a story about *hope* and *perseverance* and the ability to find strength and courage even in the darkest of times.

When Sophie Topher Quinn is caught kissing a guy – a guy who isn't her marine boyfriend, Carey – it is the worst thing she can ever do in her small town. Where Sophie lives, nearly every family has had, or still does have, relatives in the army, so when Carey goes MIA, far from being ostracized, she is utterly ruined. Yet, the truth of the matter is this: Sophie didn't cheat on Carey. Nevertheless, despite her innocence, Sophie is forced to take the blame for her heinous act because not doing so would reveal the truth - a truth that would break Carey apart. If that isn't enough on her plate, Sophie is constantly compared to her mother who left her military father years ago, running away with his brother instead. In a world of lies, where Sophie is branded as a whore, a traitor, and must deal with her broken grief about her ex-boyfriend's status in the military, it seems uncertain that the truth will ever come out.

*If I Lie* is an intense and heart-breaking read. I think what struck me the most about this novel though, for all the issues it undertook, was the fact that *every* character was multi-dimensional. I don't know how it would be like to have a mother who cheated on my father or have friends who shun me or be a mother who abandoned her child, but I felt all those emotions and understood the reasoning behind these acts so clearly. Jackson paints such a vivid and unforgiving picture of Sophie's life, of what she's been through, of what the people she's known have been through, and of what compels them to make the actions that they make that I am simply in awe of her skill. Here, dear readers, is an author to look out for.

What else is there to look out for in this compelling read? Well, first and foremost, you *will* need tissue boxes for this novel - I don't care *how* freaking cold-hearted you are, you will need them. I didn't think I would and honestly, I didn't cry when all sorts of horrible things happened to Sophie, but I *did* sob my eyes out when it came to George, the old veteran who becomes a father-figure to Sophie and is an integral part of this story. I ~~loved~~ love George and he totally wins the award for my favorite character in this tale, especially because he is the sole person who sees Sophie for who she is and fails to buy into the gossip surrounding her. Sophie too is so incredibly strong that I can't help but admire her. I think most people think of kick-ass heroines as women who have fighting prowess or can take down a man, but I think what makes someone kick-ass is their inner strength and ability to go on in life without letting the troubles of life bring you down and Sophie is truly incredible. More than anything else though, she is an inspirational character and a headstrong woman, possessing all the qualities I love, not only in a character, but in a friend.

Yet, its wonderful characters and its richly developed and realistic relationships aside, I think one of the best things about this novel is its ability to have silver linings despite all the sorrow within it. Yes, it is an intense and emotional read and yes, Sophie goes through some terrible situations both in school and her community, but despite all of that, at the end it is *her* who comes out as a stronger person and one who knows who her true friends are. Furthermore, the messages and themes that come out of this novel are so realistic and have such a large degree of truth to them that you cannot help but ponder over them for hours afterwards. Even the romance, which is subtle, takes a well-deserves backseat to the other issues this story tackles, and is the very definition of bittersweet; and the rocky relationships Sophie sustains with her parents, which gradually develop into something better while managing to maintain its realistic roots, contain such deep and provocative messages that they will keep you thinking into the wee hours of the night.

I can say so much more about this book, but I almost don't want to. I don't want my interpretation of this story and its characters to influence yours. I want everyone to go into this novel not knowing what to expect and emerge from it a tear-stricken mess, but one whose heart is infinitely lighter and happier than it was before. If you like Melina Marchetta, Hannah Harrington, Markus Zusak, or Kirsty Eagar novels, you'll love this one. It follows the same themes of self-discovery, strength, and family that those authors often write about and *If I Lie* is a debut that simply cannot be missed. It will make you think. It will make you reflect. It will make you sob. It will make you smile. It is so realistic that I am floored by the unique path Jackson chose to take this novel on and I love her all the more for it. I am so grateful to have gotten a chance to read this novel just days before its release as I might have overlooked it in favor of the other reads releasing on the same day, but believe me, this is utterly remarkable. I don't believe I've ever had occasion to say this before, but if you skip out on this phenomenal tale, then you are truly missing out. Read it.

You can read this review and more on my blog, Ivy Book Bindings.

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### Jaime Arkin says

I knew it... from the very first chapter of this book I was hooked. I didn't put it down for 3.5 hours and I didn't want to, I had to keep turning pages to find out what would happen next.

Right off the bat you know this book is going to break your heart, but in subtle ways. I can admit - it takes **A LOT** to make me cry and though I wasn't crying while reading this, I was sniffing ... a lot. (I'm claiming allergies)

So here's the deal, Quinn, or Sophie Topper Quinn, has done something the little town of Sweethaven, North Carolina can't fathom... cheated on her hometown hero boyfriend Carey. But what the little town doesn't know, is the truth. As the summary says, it's a "*novel about the gray space between truth and perception.*"

Carey and Quinn (Sophie) were best friends forever and things naturally evolved into a relationship. They dated for two years before he entered basic training and had to leave. Everyone expected them to get married, have kids and reside in the small military hometown. But secrets are revealed when he returns on a leave that only Sophie knows.

An inadvertently caught indiscretion on the part of Sophie throws her life into something she could never have imagined. This is not your typical high school angst that Corrine Jackson writes about that's for sure. The secret that Quinn vows to keep is quite predictable, but everything else isn't.

When everything hits the fan, Sophie expects Carey to clear the air once and for all on his next leave... only he's deployed and then becomes MIA.

Sophie Topper Quinn is a wonderfully written main character and I found myself loving her. She's strong, passionate, loyal but most of all she's real. I found myself rooting for her, cheering her on in every single way, and when her heart was breaking, so was mine. The things that this girl has endured in her life made me cherish my seemingly quiet life. And she has done it all with as much grace as one can expect for the age of 17.

The story is intense and heartbreaking when you dive into it. The characters are incredibly written and the picture that Jackson creates is so vivid, I felt that even though I'd not experienced the things Sophie had, I could hurt just as she had. And that my friends, takes talent. Each character was so well developed and realistically written.

My favorite part of this novel is the relationship that Sophie has with George. Upon the town finding out about Sophie's indiscretion, her father dumps her at the VA Hospital stating that she will be working there three days a week - little did he know, it would offer her the love and relationship she's been craving since her mom left when she was 11. George is a veteran who becomes a wonderful father type figure for her... offering her advice, listening when she wants/needs to talk... or even giving it to her straight when she needs to be pointed in the right direction. He sees Sophie for what and who she is, not letting the town gossip influence him in any way.

I think the best part about this book though is the hopefulness it conveyed. I never once got the feeling that Sophie was ready to give up. Despite all the emotional situations in both school and within her community she plows forward, always reaching for something better. She's beat down and bullied and teased and tormented, but she comes out of the whole situation stronger, knowing the true definition of friendship and love.

When everything is said and done at the end of this novel, I loved the ending. It was real and it was wonderful. Someone asked me upon my completion if it's a HEA... and I didn't know how to answer that. Was I happy? But more importantly... was Sophie happy? I'd like to think so... but maybe the better description is hopeful. She has hope for something better than what she's endured and she's determined to have it.

I totally feel like this review isn't going to do this book justice. I don't want to give away too many details because I want you to experience this ride for yourself. Plus, if I covered everything, this thing would be as long as the book! LOL Just know my review only covers the surface of what this book offers readers.

Dear Corrine Jackson - thank you for a novel that is like a breath of fresh air. You allowed me to ignore the outside world for a tiny bit, taking me into the world of Sweethaven and it was a lovely experience despite the tears I shed (lol). I can't wait to read what you might publish in the future!

This is a must read for anyone and everyone. If you like well written characters and a strong, layered protagonist you must pick this up. I promise you won't want to put it down until you reach the last page, and even then you'll be looking for more.

Full review can be found on my blog, Fic Fare

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**Thomas says**

**3.5 stars**

Quinn's first mistake: kissing her boyfriend's best friend. Her second mistake: getting caught on camera kissing her boyfriend's best friend. Quinn has complicated feelings for both Carey, her boyfriend currently MIA in Afghanistan, and Carey's best friend, Blake, the boy who held her the night Carey left. But when everyone in Quinn's high school and town sees the shot of Quinn kissing someone other than Carey, they condemn her as a horrible person. After all, who would cheat on someone like Carey, a great guy putting his life at risk to serve the nation? But Quinn has reasons for what she did. Now she must decide between telling the truth and risking even worse consequences, or keeping her mouth shut and suffering the price.

I liked how much Corrine Jackson balanced in *If I Lie*. Quinn has to deal with an MIA boyfriend, another boy she might have feelings for, mean former best friends, an absent mother, a callous father, and more. However, all of these plot elements never felt overwhelming: Jackson writes in an easy, smooth way that moved the story along and kept my interest. Quinn's self-awareness and her developing fortitude made me appreciate this book too. The growth of her character tied together all of the conflicts in *If I Lie*, ensuring that the drama was not just there for drama's sake.

The flashbacks incorporated throughout the book detracted from my enjoyment of *If I Lie*. It's clear from the start that Quinn cheated on her boyfriend, and as the book moves forward, it's not difficult to discern the circumstances in which the cheating happened. However, Jackson kept going back to when it happened, how it happened, and where it happened, when she could have allocated more time to developing the conflicts occurring in the present. Even though Quinn claims herself by the end of the book, there could have been more growth within some of her relationships, like her bonds with her parents.

Overall, recommended for those who want a smooth YA realistic/romantic fiction with some military drama and a love triangle thrown in. Even though I was not blown away by *If I Lie*, I look forward to reading more of Corinne Jackson's writing in the future.

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## Hannah says

For the first time since I've started blogging, I've not known where to begin when reviewing a book. Where to even start to begin in sharing my feelings about this novel?

WHAT. A. FREAKING. ROLLER. COASTER. RIDE.

You know you get some books where you just want to sit in a corner with it and bawl your eyes out? That was what *If I Lie* was like for me. But instead of this happening halfway through, I was reaching for the Kleenex about four pages in.

*If I Lie* needs no introduction, except to say that you get what's in the blurb and then a whole lot of then some. It's like discovering Ben and Jerry's ice-cream for the first time – you know it's going to be great, and you're so eagerly anticipating it, that when you have that first scoop, you just can't stop. I hate giving spoilers, so all I'm going to say is if you think the blurb has you hooked, just you wait.

What Corrine Jackson has created here is an emotionally raw and powerful novel about what love, friendship and family means in a harrowing and incredibly real sense. I'm not American, and though we Aussies have a great sense of national pride and patriotism, it's not got a chocolate bar on what America has for its troops. And as an outsider to that world, as the reader we are dropped right into the situation that Quinn, our MC, is facing, and boy, is it a hard one.

Quinn is a character that I fell in love with from page one. She's dealing with the fall out for cheating on her Marine boyfriend, and it's not pretty. It's *Mean Girls* but one hundred times worse. If you've read *Speechless* by Hannah Harrington – it's worse than that. Quinn's keeping her head down and her chin up, despite all the flack she's copping. Usually at this stage, I'd be screaming at the MC with frustration, yelling at her to just have some balls and stand up for herself – fight back – but with Quinn, there's so much more to her situation. She cares – and loves – so fiercely for the people around her that she's willing to sacrifice a

hell of a lot – including her own happiness – to protect them. But at the same time, she has her flaws, just like the rest of us. Quinn's not perfect. She made mistakes, and she's ready to scream and yell, break down and confess all. And at the end, I was so proud of her for taking a stand, for seeing the people in her life that truly matter and care about her – and just generally not putting up with the crap that others gave her. This book, if anything, is all about relationships, communication and how we perceive people. It's about acceptance and looking deeper at people, seeing them from what's on the inside rather than just at skin level. It made me cross, angry, frustrated, sad, and really shocked that people – especially young teenagers – act in this way. My favourite, of course, is the sweet relationship that Quinn forges with war veteran George. There were, at times, when I felt frustrated with some of the outcomes of the book, but the more I thought about it, the more I understand the reasoning behind it. We are left to make our own presumptions – the whole thing behind the novel – and well, I'm not going to say much more than that. What I will say is GO AND GET YOUR HANDS ON THIS BOOK RIGHT NOW. I mean it this time too. And don't forget to buy a box of tissues (and maybe one more, for extra measure) on your way home. This is one book you will not be putting down. Unless it's to wipe those tears of course.

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## Ari says

Re-read May 2015

Oh, dear... How much can you sacrifice in your life for a promise that you've made and you don't want to break? How much are you willing to lose, when do you start living your own life & leave the past behind?

“IF I LIE” was a deeply emotional story, I've heard that here and there, but never truly believe it. Until I did.

This story will shake your grounds, it will bring tears to your eyes, it will frustrate you to no ends, it will make you think about how much hiding a truth for someone's sake is worth it. Will truth, love and friendship keep you warm on your lonely days, do they soothe your sleepless nights? Is a promise worth giving away your life, your friends, your dreams, your peace of mind?

Because this is what happens to Sophie (aka Quinn) when she decides to keep her promise, her ex-boyfriend's secret, she loses everyone and everything, and there's no going back.

I first read this story in 2012. It made me incredibly sad, it made me angry, it made me ache all over, but it also made me hope. It's a book that stayed with me long after. I couldn't understand how people could treat our girl like that, I really couldn't, no matter in what kind of town did they live and what sort of moral codes did they have.

I also think that Sophie could have told a partial truth, not revealing the secret, but not taking all the blame either. There should've been some midways that would have brought her less pain. Maybe it wouldn't have changed too much, but there was still a chance for things to be better.

One of the best things about this book is the characters development. As much as I loved some of them (Quinn/Sophie, George) I also hated some others with the passion of a hurricane. They were flawed, they felt real, they were so full of depth I almost forgot they were only characters in a story.

This story broke my heart, it brought tears to my eyes and it made my heart ache too many times to count. The relationships are raw, the pain is deep, the hurt is unforgivable, and people are fanatically mean.

“IF I LIE” was an emotional and intriguing story. It makes you think over all that’s happened, it makes you want to look for solutions, it makes you agree and disagree with all that you’ve been reading. It holds hope.

....And for all this, it also holds a special spot in my heart.

Happy midnight reading!

Find the full review and more at [ReadingAfterMidnight](#).

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2012 thoughts:

How much can you sacrifice in your life for a promise that you've made and you don't want to break? How much are you willing to lose and when do you start living your own life and leaving the past behind?

4.5 stars, review to come.

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### **Kimberly Sabatini says**

When I was in high school, I became fascinated with POW's from Vietnam. I was haunted by the idea that these guys had never come home. Who were they? Where were they? And what had they left behind? I "adopted" a missing soldier and wore my MIA bracelet until it wore out and broke in half.

When I was in college, I was a girlfriend of a guy who was in the army. Then I married him--making me a military wife. I fell in love with this fierce, dedicated, kind, bigger-than-life community. And sometimes I hated being just another piece in a finely tuned machine--even it it was made up of some very wonderful people. Sometimes I felt a little lost. I didn't always like who I was supposed to be and what was expected of me. I didn't know it then, but I was a girl who had things to say--weird, slightly off center things to say--and not speaking them was a bit unhealthy. So, I related to Quinn--having lived that life with my own kind of secrets pushed down inside me.

I'm sharing this information with you because I want you to know, that in my opinion, Corrine Jackson got it right. As I read her words, it took me back...

I'm a huge fan of authors who create people with depth. I like to see the characters have faults AND triumphs. Not only did Jackson do this seamlessly, but she also accomplished this with her presentation of the military. I both loved and hated the institution and it's affect on those involved in it--just like I did in real life. She didn't use hero worship and she didn't demonize either. She simply acknowledged that like all of us, it is made up of the good and the bad.

I was also grateful to see her humorous and touching relationship with an elderly veteran, George. I have always had a soft spot for the older generation. I think they are gifts that we often let pass us by. Jackson brought me to tears with her gentle reminder that it takes only one person to make a difference in someone else's life.

IF I LIE is a well written, beautifully balanced, heart-wrenching book that is about so much more than a

snapshot of people in a small military town. I hope it moves you as much as it did me.

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## Sadie says

This is a difficult book to review. It *is* powerful -- and I do believe that an entire town built into one belief system would fall to bullying and shunning someone they think has broken one of the cardinal rules. But there it went on too long. I find it hard to believe that someone would hold that secret through the things that character went through -- especially with certain people.

Why does she not tell George who has basically figured it out?

Why does she not tell her dad who now hates her because he sees her as her mother?

Why does she not tell Blake (in the beginning and then later at the end)?

Why does she not tell Angel who would have stood by her and kept her mouth shut?

Why does she not tell -- of all the freaking people to not tell-- Carey, whose secret it is what has become of her because of him?

These are just too extreme to the point where I stop believing them. Also, I've seen the word "martyr" in a lot of reviews and yes, it does begin to feel that way to me as well. It was just... too much. If she'd brought one person inside her circle (especially George since he was emotionally, physically and socially outside the town's group) I would have bought it more.

Also, the ending, while still powerful and touching, left me feeling sad, alone and bereft.

Would I pick up another book by this author? Yes. She's extremely talented. But, if this is going to be her style, I don't know if there'll be a third for me.

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