

Disappeared and Found

Kerry Reis

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In the mystery novel Disappeared and Found, a young woman looks for answers about her past and ends up finding more than she bargained for.

Kerry Reis's mystery novel *Disappeared and Found* involves an adoption story that might actually be a kidnapping.

Dorothy is a medical student enrolled in a community college. During a lab experiment, she tests for her blood type, but discovers that it doesn't match her mother's or father's. When she asks her father about this, he refuses to give her answers. Dorothy tries to contact her family doctor, who also treated her mother's cancer, but the doctor dismisses Dorothy, too. As a last resort, Dorothy contacts a reality television show, *Finding Family*. Through it, she learns that her DNA matches another man's; the show suspects that he is Dorothy's sibling.

Scott, Dorothy's birth sibling, is also in contact with a television show, *Without a Trace*. When they meet, Dorothy learns that she was not put up for adoption; she was considered kidnapped, and her birth mother is still missing. Now that Dorothy has emerged, alive and well, the FBI gets involved, reopening the nineteen-year-old cold case.

While Dorothy grew up in Sacramento, the potential kidnapping took place in Green Lake, Oregon. Dorothy and Scott, alongside law enforcement officers, move between both cities as they investigate. Locations are fleshed out with details about restaurants, landmarks, and nature, while the layouts and decor of particular rooms also ground the characters in their locations.

Some characters have similar names; within the text, names are confused or switched, and it is sometimes hard to determine who is in a scene. The text's excessive adverbs lead to awkwardness, as when Dorothy smiles coyly at her brother. Conversations are stiff; some read like soliloquies, their deliveries sounding forced.

Though Dorothy's experiences are emotional, including the reunion with her birth family and the subsequent investigation, her internal thoughts aren't shared. She's an aloof figure, and it becomes hard to relate to her with empathy. Scott is a more active character: he's aggressive and takes action. He's positioned as someone who makes his own choices, and his clear-cut decision-making is compelling. The enforcement officials working Dorothy's potential kidnapping case are less believably constructed; their protocol for interviews, and their evidence collecting, seems sloppy.

The narration is detached as it moves between characters, its point of view jumping from Dorothy to the investigating officers, between the heartwarming family reunion and the ongoing investigation. This back-and-forth pattern moves both of the plot elements forward well. Secondary characters involved in the disappearance of Scott and Dorothy's mother give themselves away with their obvious reactions and statements, though; the plot twist at the end of the book is spoiled too early on as a result.

In the mystery novel *Disappeared and Found*, a young woman looks for answers about her past and ends up finding more than she bargained for.

JULIA ZOUHAR (April 7, 2020)

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