



Louisiana's Way Home

Kate DiCamillo

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In Kate DiCamillo's beautiful follow-up to *Raymie Nightingale*, Louisiana Elefante is back, and she and her granny are out to face the family curse. When they stop to sleep in a small Georgia town, Louisiana is left to wander on her own. She meets Burke Allen, who is kind, has a pet crow, and can get her anything she wants from the motel vending machine. The two form an instant friendship.

Louisiana returns to her room to find her granny missing, having left a note that turns her world upside down. Louisiana must rely on the kindness of the people she meets, primarily the town minister and Burke Allen's family, as she tries to figure out what to do next.

Louisiana is a precocious lead with an interesting sense of ethics, a sometimes sharp tongue, and a lovely singing voice. Left alone in a strange place, far away from friends and utterly without family, she must learn some very large truths; much of what she thought defined her simply no longer applies. She knows she wants to go home, but how can she possibly find her way home when she doesn't even know who she is?

The book strikes a delicate balance between relating a charming, entertaining story full of colorful characters and imparting a deeply meaningful life lesson about deciding what kind of person to be. Not everyone Louisiana meets is interested in helping her, but those that do reach out to her with great love and compassion. Louisiana takes a large step towards maturity, learning to be her best self and to redefine what home really means.

CATHERINE THURESON (September/October 2018)

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