



# Once upon a Summer

*Janette Oke*

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## **Once upon a Summer** Janette Oke

An orphaned boy finds his security in God after his aunt, who has raised him, marries and moves away.  
Seasons of the Heart book 1.

## **Once upon a Summer Details**

Date : Published July 1st 1981 by Bethany House Publishers (first published 1981)

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Author : Janette Oke

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## From Reader Review *Once upon a Summer* for online ebook

### Valerie says

Janette Oke is a wonderful writer. If you loved *Little House on the Prairie* and that's your kind of book, you will love all of Janette Oke's books! They are full of heartwarming stories and good values.

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### Lydia Dyslin says

I thought this was a good book. It was a enjoyable, light read with a good Bible message sprinkled in. It kind of reminded me of the *Little House* books by Laura Ingalls Wilder.

The family was extremely unique, and I loved all the relationships between the characters. You can really tell how close-knit they are just by the dialogue and their interactions. :)

The perspective of the book was also interesting. It was told in a first-person from the POV of the youngest in the family, a boy named Josh. This book was a romance but it was told through the eyes of Josh and I thought that was very interesting. It did annoy me that the accent was even kept in the narration, though. I didn't mind it in the *Love Comes Softly* series because it was told in third-person, but that "written-down-accent" thing all the time was SO annoying.

Overall, I enjoyed the book but I've read better from Janette Oke. 3.5 stars out of five! Would recommend.

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### Lila Diller says

I've always enjoyed Janette Oke's stories about simpler times. I always enjoy the little details of how the laundry was done or how much of their lives depended on horses.

Even though I would have liked to see this story from Lou's perspective, having it told by Josh, with all the colloquialisms and contractions, gave it a unique feeling from a bitter boy doubting God.

I loved Gramps and Lou and even Nat. I loved the few tidbits of humor. The scene where Gramps tricked the young man that the others had picked out for Lou was hilarious.

I especially loved the very casual way the faith threads were woven throughout their lives. And of course how Josh's ideas about God changed.

I don't know how many times I've read this series, but I will continue to reread it as it never disappoints.

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### Faith says

Such a sweet book!! The beginning seemed a little slow to me (though that could've just been my life and reading schedule at the time :P), but everything else about this gem made up for it. :) I loved the relationships

with Aunt Lou and "her men" (Grandpa, Uncle Charlie, Gramps, and Josh) and the strong faith woven through the book.

I would recommend this book to anyone. Can't wait to read the rest of the series! :D

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### **Duane says**

This is a lovely book, a Christian, pioneer, romance novel that was a pleasure to read. It was told from the perspective of a 12 year old boy, orphaned, being raised by his grandfather, his uncle, and his young aunt who is now his mother figure. It's filled with the hardships and the simple joys that you would find in that time and setting. Jeanette Oke is an excellent writer and she is at her best with this one.

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### **maggie says**

On Christian bookshelves the world over, one can spot a row of Janette Oke's books. So let me try one. Aaaargh! This is sickly sweet Mills and Boon about God-fearing folk. I tried to persevere (mostly for the reading challenge) but in the end extricated myself before I drowned in baby ducklings, twinkly blue eyed Grandpas and melt-in-the-mouth cornbread.

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### **The Book Man says**

"You didn't have to be a ma and a pa and four kids to be a family. All you need was people living together and loving and helping on another. That's what made a family- blood-ties and love-bonds. I was right proud to be a member of this family."

"Boys weren't supposed to cry-but I cried. I cried until my eyes ran dry, and then I jest laid and groaned."

"I don't understand all about God, but there's one thing that I'm as sure of as the fact that I live and breath. He loves us. He loves us completely, and always keeps our good in mind."

"Whenever something comes into our life that hurts us, we do the deciding -do I let this work for my good, as God intended, or do I let bitterness grow like a bothersome canker sore in my soul?"

"It did work! I felt clean and forgiven- and even better yet, LOVED."

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### **Amanda says**

This was such a sweet book. I loved the fact that it was written from the perspective of a 12 year old boy. It was a nice change. You see the world through his eyes and it kind of took me back to the way I viewed the world at 12, even though this book takes place in the late 1800s/early 1900s. Joshua is a twelve-year old boy who lives with his 18 year-old aunt, his grandfather and his great-uncle and later, his great-grandfather. Joshua loves his little family and when he discovers that his grandfather and great-uncle start planning to

find a husband for his aunt, he does not like it at all. Joshua turns to God throughout the book to help him through, but also loses his faith. His questions of "Why would God let this happen?" are typical of many people, especially young kids.

I really enjoyed reading this book. It was a really quick read. I laughed out-loud a couple of times at Joshua's typical boyhood behavior and understanding of the world around him.

The book focuses on the importance of family and faith. It had a wonderful, heart-warming feeling about it. Janette Oke did a great job telling the story through a 12 year-old boy. Oke's writing really gives you a great idea of who these characters are and how they sound when they speak (which I love), "I liked things jest the way they were, but if I was to keep 'em that way, it was going to take some figurin' out".

I would recommend this book - especially if you are a fan of Prairie Fiction/Christian Fiction. It is the first book in the "Seasons of the Heart" Series and I can't wait to read [The Winds of Autumn!](#)

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### **Bekah says**

This book was perfectly charming, for lack of a better way to describe it. This was my first book by Janette Oke, though I have known her name for years. This was a delightful introduction for me into her writing.

What I Liked: I quickly became immersed into the world of Josh Jones and life on the farm with his grandfather, great-grandfather, uncle, and Auntie Lou. It was definitely a refreshing read and I so enjoyed a peek onto the Jones' farm.

The story development was very good. It didn't go too fast and it didn't go too slow, it was just perfect for a late summer read. I was also satisfied with the ending. There were a few times I chuckled at the humor in the story and I look forward to reading the second book in this series which I got at a library sale. The details this author interspersed in this story definitely painted a vivid picture for me.

What I Didn't Like: There wasn't too much I disliked about this story. It was very sweet.

I give this book 3/5 stars.

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### **Sarah's Reviews says**

Review written for and posted on Sarah's Reviews

Orphaned as a baby, Josh blames God for his parents' deaths and fears losing anyone else. So when Aunt Lou comes of age to marry, Josh is determined to do everything in his power to keep her from leaving. First order of business: scarring off the suitors.

Set on a farm back when telephones were the new thing, [Once Upon a Summer](#) is a heartwarming story that deals with anger, sorrow, and God's love. Slow paced but not dull, this book is a light read - appropriate for all ages.

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## **Kay says**

A little boring for me, but it's an older book(1981) and maybe just not my style (Christian fiction). I'm more of a crime/mystery fiction girl, but I chose the series as part of a book challenge so I will still try to read the other books. 1 down 3 to go!

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## **H says**

This was a really fun, really tender book. I laughed out loud several times while listening. Josh has a really comfortable head to live in as he tells his story. He really makes you understand what he's feeling. I liked how this book brought God into it, too--and how it wasn't a *bam!* I believe sort of thing. How Josh really had to struggle with his feelings and belief and come to know God for himself. And I liked how it didn't feel preachy at all, or at least not to me. It was more of a personal struggle, which is very relatable to anyone who's struggled with faith, I think. And I loved Gramps. And I liked how either Josh, Gramps, Lou, or all three of them would drive her suitors away--all except the right one, of course. And p.s., totally saw the right choice coming from the first mention of him at the beginning of the book. It's really rewarding to guess right. :)

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## **Angie says**

I LOVED this book. Fun, clean, great writing

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## **Andrea Cox says**

This cute story had me hooked from the beginning. I loved the perspective of a growing young boy. I think the author well captured the attitude and struggles of a boy trying to come to grips with how life has a way of changing. Just wait until you meet Pixie! She's so adorable. My favorite character was Auntie Lou. I appreciated her caring, welcoming, and wise personality. While I found the romance thread to be completely predictable, it was still charming and I enjoyed it.

Rating: 4 stars

Reasons: There was one lengthy chapter that read more like a farming handbook on how to reap crops than an easy-flowing part of the story. Through the first half of the book, it's made really clear that Joshua hated school and dreaded going back when summer was over; yet, when school began, he instantly loved it and was eager to study. This inconsistency was shocking and disconcerting.

I am eager to track down a copy of book two in this series.

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## **Meredith says**

Slightly predictable and character development was lacking, but I found it to be sweet and enjoyable regardless.

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## **Sara says**

I do not want to say anything against this book. It was sweet, it was simple, it was boring. It was far more suited to a very young and unsophisticated reader. I have a friend who has insisted that I must read Janette Oke, so I have now fulfilled that demand. I can say with conviction that she writes for a reader who is not me.

Interestingly enough, I have seen a few movies made from her earlier novels and they were quite respectable, with interesting characters. Character development is her strength and I did like her main character, the young boy, Josh, who tells this tale of his life with his great-grandfather, grandfather, great-uncle and very young aunt. I actually liked all her characters, but there wasn't any plot to speak of and the end result was obvious to me from the get-go.

I feel almost guilty not to give this book a higher rating. It tries to tell a moral tale and I like that effort. But, if I am honest, it isn't up to my standards for what I want to get from a novel.

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## **Natalie says**

I expected this to be boring, but it was actually quite sweet and humorous. I liked it a lot. :)

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## **Nadine Keels says**

I don't read book blurbs when I don't have to, and I had no intention of looking at any blurb or other beforehand to know what this book was about. Janette Oke's name and the fact that I've known of this novel's existence for years was enough.

I was in for three noteworthy surprises from the beginning: first, this story is told in the first person, which isn't common for Oke's novels; second, the protagonist is an adolescent boy, Joshua, which isn't common for Oke's novels; and third, Josh's perspective, along with the well-intentioned but not-the-best-idea scheming of his grandpa and uncle, actually had me laughing aloud, something I'm not used to doing with Oke's novels. I mean, sure, I've enjoyed light moments she's handled with a light hand before, but some of the stuff here is just downright hilarious.

I liked seeing the dynamics of the different kind of family Joshua has, and the theme concerning him and "memories" is powerful. The last handful of short chapters makes for somewhat of an abrupt ending, but I didn't find it abrupt enough to jar my enjoyment or lessen my anticipation to continue the series.

Pardon if this little review is on the gushy side, but simple novels of faith and love and learning through trials

(and prairie life and the like) are what I count on this author for, and I've not been disappointed. There's genius in telling uncomplicated but engaging stories that just get the job done.

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### **Joanie Bruce says**

Janette Oke's books always make me cry, laugh, and get very emotional. This one was no different. It's a cute story about a twelve year old boy, Josh, being raised by an unusual assortment of relatives: his grandfather, his Uncle, his Great-Grandfather and Aunt Lou (who is only eighteen—not much older than himself.) When the men in the family scheme to find a husband for Aunt Lou, Josh is scared it will break up the only family he's ever known, and he fights it in every way possible. He blames God for taking away everything he's ever loved: his mom and dad, his grandmother, and his new puppy. Now he's afraid God will take away his Aunt Lou. This story is about a boy who blames God for turning His back on him, but through circumstances and his caring family, he finds love, acceptance and trust in God.

What I liked: the characters came alive with cute expressions, true-to-life feelings, desires and doubts.

What I didn't like: Nothing! I loved it all. :-)

I will definitely read more in this series, and I recommend it to all who love historical fiction.

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### **Loretta Marchize says**

I love Janette Oke books! I read this one Sunday night but forgot to do the review. (I've been having issues with that) I've read this book once before (2017 before I got Goodreads) but it was a good lighthearted book to read again.

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