



## **When Patty Went Away**

*Jeannie Burt*

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"When Patty Went Away" is a family drama set in the mid 1970s. It plays out in a remote farming community in the Northwest when rebellious and nasty fifteen-year-old Patty Pugh disappears. Jack McIntyre, a quiet farmer and his beloved daughter, seem to be the only ones who care. No one looks for the girl, yet Jack cannot let her go, and a search will require him to rise against his own wife and against the customs and traditions of his community. In a quest reminiscent of "The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry," Jack sets out on an uncertain journey which lands him in the underbelly of Montreal, where he encounters a world he could never imagine.

## When Patty Went Away Details

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Author : Jeannie Burt

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## **From Reader Review When Patty Went Away for online ebook**

### **Sam Sattler says**

"When Patty Went Away" is, to me, like two books inside one set of covers. There are two very differently styled and paced stories being told here, one of a hardworking farm family about to lose the farm that has been in the family for generations, and one about the horrible life that a young runaway finds herself living in Montreal. The second story is actually the climax to the first, of course, and as such, it is the much shorter of the two - and that, in my opinion, is a good thing.

Jeannie Burt's novel is set in the Oregon farming country of 1976 and focuses on the Jack McIntyre family. Jack lives with his wife and daughter in the same house he grew up in when he was helping his own parents run their small farm and dairy operation. His one brother does help him bring in the crops on occasion, but Jack is the one who has his whole future invested in the success of the farm. So, when a sudden hail storm destroys his entire crop, the future of the McIntyre family is placed in jeopardy.

The family's struggle for survival comprises the bulk of the book, and it is a story I found myself totally immersed in. But the book was, and is, always heading toward its ultimate climax involving Jack's daughter's best friend, one Patty Pugh. If there is such a thing as a "rescue friend," Patty is certainly one of them - a teen without a real home of her own who ends up spending as much time with the McIntyres as she does with her own family. When she suddenly disappears, and no one seems to care, Jack McIntyre becomes obsessed with finding her and bringing her home.

The first eighty percent of "When Patty Went Away" is a solid 4-Star story and it is probably why the last portion of the book was so jarring to me. The culmination of Jack's quest to find Patty is so surrealistic that it felt like beginning an entirely new book rather than continuing with the one I had been reading. Perhaps the author intended for her readers to see Patty and Montreal through the eyes of the rather naive Jack McIntyre character. If so, I understand the sudden shift in tone and realism, but it caused me to slightly lower my assessment of the novel.

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### **Gary Sedivy says**

The man telling the story is a farmer in Eastern Oregon. It took me a while to realize that Jack is a 'drifter' - not in the sense of a bum, or hobo. He is basically rudderless - like a helpless boat in the sea of life, being blown about by the wind, tossed by the waves, no control. He goes through life on the farm, with his wife and child, and his friends from high school. Whatever happens, seems always to be directed by others - his father who owned the farm before him; his wife who is good at holding grudges as well as being judgemental; and his long time high school friends who get him into some trouble. So often he does not know what to do, other than just exist, living a reactionary life, always slightly befuddled. At one point he laments that he dreads Whatever Will Happen. He doesn't know what to do with whatever will happen. Finally, he takes a small step on his own, and he grows from there. It seems this is one of the few times he has taken initiative; it is halting, in fits and spurts, but it ends up resolving an issue that has caused pain and coldness between him and his wife.

This is a well written book. I am thankful to our son and his wife for taking us to the author's night to hear part of this book being read. It was also enjoyable to recognize towns like Hermiston, Athena, Weston, and businesses - Lamb-Weston located in Eastern Oregon.

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## **Amanda says**

This is one of those books that really make me wish I could use half stars. The current average of 3 1/2 stars is right about where I'd put this book. I'm torn. Really though, my problem is, I'd give the first three quarters or so of this book a solid four. As others have mentioned, this reads like two different books. While some care less for the slower pace of the first part, I enjoyed it greatly. Though I did not grow up on a working farm, I did grow up on many acres outside a small town, and the pace and familiarity were welcome. It was a reflective slow build that held my interest, even as I recognized what the narrator did not see staring him straight in the face sometimes.

So here we are, going along at an easy rural pace, a little naive but believable. One expects the narrator will eventually figure a few things out, for good or for ill, in time or not. One does not expect that the story will make a sudden, screeching right turn and rip into fifth gear. The story morphs from reflective into high speed, and just flat out weird. I felt as confused, lost, and out of place as the narrator, and I can't decide if that's a good thing or a bad thing. Still, it's interesting, in it's own uncomfortable way. What suffered was the believability. It no longer rang true. The writing, though graphic, wasn't as strong nor as gripping. Given the setting the reader is suddenly thrown into, maybe that isn't such a bad thing either. What it did do was change this book I'd recommend without hesitation to any who don't need their books with a dose of adrenaline to one I'd definitely give careful consideration to the potential audience before doing so.

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## **?Karen says**

3.5 stars.

The farm setting, the slow pacing, and the storyline reminded me of Kent Haruf, but the writing doesn't quite measure up to his talents.

There wasn't much happening in the first half except farm life, the loss of an important crop and the impact that can have on a family, and just overall the struggles and dedication of our farmers. Jack seemed like a good fellow, not really what you'd call happy, but content with his life up to now. His wife Molly is a judgemental Bible quoter while he won't set foot in a church. They have just one child, Edie, but her best friend Patty is almost like a daughter, except Patty is too wild and sassy for Molly to really get as close to her as Edie and Jack have gotten. When Patty's mother lets a man with questionable motives move in with them, Patty takes off and it takes a while for Jack to decide that if he doesn't try to find her, even if just to get Edie out of her depression, certainly no one else cares enough to do so.

There were some things left unanswered for me, but overall I liked this a lot, enough to finish it all in one weekend. If you don't care a bit about farming, this may not be for you as it's loaded with perhaps too many such details.

I won an uncorrected proof from Library Thing.

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## **Katie/Doing Dewey says**

I avoided *The Casual Vacancy* because I was afraid a story about the dark underbelly of a small town would be too depressing for me. Given that expectation, I was completely surprised by how much I liked the setting of this story. I liked the mystery, which kept me completely hooked. I also liked that the author used the setting to touch on deeper themes, making me think about how we sometimes ignore truths right in front of us and how we should sometimes try looking at our surroundings with fresh eyes.

The beginning of this story was particularly engaging. I was immediately drawn in by the beautiful writing. It was plain but poetic and felt perfect for a story told by a farmer who loves his family, his land, and his community. It reminded me of *Sarah, Plain and Tall* but wasn't like anything I've read recently. I found the unique feel refreshing. The characters were so real, each with their own flaws and worries and secrets. I loved learning about their relationships with each other and their complicated pasts. By the time Patty disappeared, I was deeply invested in the story and couldn't stop turning pages to find out what happened to her. This is where things started to get strange.

For the last half of the book, I often found it hard to even follow what was happening. As Jack searches, he gets drawn into a strange and decadent world which felt surreal and disconnected from the rest of the story. While this might have been intentional with the reader sharing the character's feelings of confusion, I can't say it made for enjoyable reading. Eventually there is a dramatic confrontation, which might have made all the strangeness worthwhile if it had resolved anything. Instead, Jack goes back to life as usual and we slowly learn vague details of what happens to Patty as she reaches out to Jack over the following years. Instead of the confrontation being followed by dramatic change leading to a satisfying resolution, the story trickles its way along to a somewhat flat ending. I thought this was a letdown after the promising beginning, but given the great writing, I'd definitely give this author another shot.

*This review first published on Doing Dewey.*

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## **Arlena says**

Title: *When Patty Went Away*

Author: Jeannie Burt

Published: Muskrat Press, LLC. Paperback

Reviewed By: Arlena Dean

Rating: 4

Review:

"*When Patty Went Away*" by Jeannie Burt was some 'family drama set in the '70's being told from a male POV. This story has a good plot with a mystery that will bring out some deep emotions. The read was of a wheat farmer family (Jack McIntyre) from Walla Walla Valley of northeast Oregon, who was really having a hard time surviving and the young girl who had run away to Montreal. Now, I know you are probably wondering how these two come together but the author really does a good job with each chapter and it will connect so well to each other that you will find it hard to put down till the end. This author's description given of this eastern Oregon region was really so well done of this interesting of this farm life. Be ready for a intriguing, suspenseful read where you will find the characters so very believable such as Jack, Molly (his wife), Edie (the daughter), and Patty Pugh (Edie's friend). You will find that each one of the characters have

there own story. From the story we will find that a young girl(Patty) has disappeared under 'sinister circumstances.' Why is it that it seemed no one seems to care and then there is Jack who feels that he must go look for her and bring her back home? What all with happen as "Jack set out on an uncertain journey which lands him in the underbelly of Montreal, where he encounters a world he could never imagine."

"When Patty went away and there was nobody to look for her, I finally saw that the world's going somewhere I don't understand, somewhere I don't want it to go, somewhere I can't hold on to." This says it all and to fully understand this quote and so much more you must pick up "When Patty Went Away" to see how this author will bring it all out to the reader. Would I recommend this novel? Yes!

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## **Heather says**

(This review can be found on my blog [The \(Mis\)Adventures of a Twenty-Something Year Old Girl](#).)

The blurb intrigued me a lot. This was a book I really wanted to read. However, I was a bit disappointed when I finally got a chance to read it.

The title definitely fits the book for at least the second half. (I'll go into more detail about that later). The title reminds me of someone who checks out of reality though.

I like the serene look of the cover. I don't really know how it ties into the book though. The cover made me think more of a holiday romance type.

I can't really fault the world building. I thought it was done rather well and very believable. From a historic viewpoint, the facts and events were all correct. It was interesting that Ms. Burt chose to narrate through the point of view of a man. She did a great job of making it work though. There was one or two times I felt a bit confused, but I put it down to just a personal thing like maybe I wasn't paying as much attention as I should've been. The only thing that bothered me was when the narrator of the book would suddenly start talking about a memory. It was too sudden, and I didn't know if it was happening in present time or if it was indeed a memory. I felt as if a memory could've had a better introduction so the audience was aware that it happened at another time in the book.

I felt that the pacing was too slow for about the first two-thirds of the book. It seemed to drone on and on about a topic I wasn't that interested in (farming). I realize that Ms. Burt was setting up a back story, but there was too much focus on the whole farming aspect of the book and not about Patty disappearing as the title and the blurb would suggest. Once the main character goes to Montreal, the pacing picks up decently, and it becomes a book that I had a hard time putting down.

The whole story line was a bit weak, I felt. First off, it reads like two books. The first two-thirds of the book is about a family who has lost their farm due to a bad storm. The reader then takes a journey into finding out how this family struggles to survive without their means of income. I found it a bit tedious because I don't really care about farming, and this book used a lot of farming terminology. The last third of the book is when Jack goes to Montreal to look for Patty. This explores the seedy side of Montreal (which could be just about anywhere) and prostitution involving runaways. I thought the story line was strong during this bit.

I felt that Jack was a well developed character and very likable. It was easy to feel what he was feeling and to feel sorry for him with all that he was going through. Molly is a strict God fearing woman. However, I felt that there was too much focus on her being overweight which was uncalled for. I didn't really like how Christianity was portrayed when it came to Molly. I'm sure there are people in the world like her, but there were times when I just felt a bit offended. I would've loved to know more about Patty and Edie as individuals. I just felt like they didn't get enough time throughout the book, Patty especially. I found it a bit hard to care about Edie and Patty especially as I felt like I didn't have enough information on them to care.

The dialogue fit this book very well. However, I think a lot of people will struggle with the farming terminology and have a hard time relating to the whole farm scenario. As I've said before, this book reads like two books in one. To further prove my point, even the dialogue is different. During the whole family losing their farm scenario, the language isn't vulgar nor is there any swearing (that I could remember). Once Jack gets to Montreal, the language turns a bit vulgar, and there is some swearing.

Overall, *When Patty Went Away* is just an alright read. The plot could've been better and the merging of ideas could've been smoother. Saying that, the main character is very likable and the world building was good.

I'd recommend this book to those 18+ who know something about farming or those who want a book that will last awhile.

**I'd give *When Patty Went Away* by Jeannie Burt a 2.5 out of 5.**

(I received a free paperback of this book from LibraryThing for free in exchange for a fair and honest review).

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### **Denisa Howe says**

This book held my attention to the point I stayed up until 3 am reading it. I loved the characters that were created, uniquely different and blended very well in the telling of the story. I loved the fact that the story was told from a man's point of view. He was not overly mushy or emotional and yet he wasn't distant. His voice was very fitting to the plot and to a father, husband's thoughts. It was the story of a typical rural family in a small town setting that met with the unthinkable. Two close friends who grew up together, one mother a bit too strict and religious and one mother who was lost in her own world. Richly developed with amazing characters, a plot with mystery and one that brings out all the emotions we are capable of feeling. I received this book via early readers at librarything.

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### **Lynne says**

Set in the late 70's, 'when patty went away' by Jeannie Burt focuses on a Oregon farming family, the hardships they survive, faith in God and ultimately, the meaning of family.

Edie McIntyre and Patty Pugh have been best friends since childhood. They've shared everything... secrets,

holiday feasts and life in general. Patty is an integral part of the McIntyre's family dynamics.

When they are 15 years old, Patty's abusive home life spills over into the way she dresses, how she acts with boys, it even disrupts her education ... and when she drags Edie into her spiral out of control, Edie's God-fearing mother, Molly, grounds the girls from seeing each other.

Things go from bad to worse and when Patty runs away from home, the prudish community bids her good riddance. Patty's disappearance affects Edie to the point she seems to withdraw into herself, pulling further and further away from her mother and father, Jack.

After a freak of nature hailstorm destroys their crops, the McIntyre's secure farming life is stretched and stressed to the point of breaking. Molly depends on the power of prayer to make a difference but Jack has to take on a truck driving job to pay the bills and make it through that winter. Edie just sulks in her bedroom, mad because she feels no one seems to care that her best friend is missing.

Patty's absence affects Molly and Jack too, but in different ways. Molly thinks Patty is getting what she deserves for belligerently opposing God but Jack just wants to find Patty because of how he feels he is losing his daughters respect and at the end of the day, all he thinks is 'what if this were Edie missing'?

Jack's search for Patty takes him out of the only world he has known. Far away from his comfort zone of the wide open spaces of Oregon and into the slimy, back alleyways of Montreal, Canada. He succeeds in finding a world full of twisted and sordid people along with a confused and frightened Patty (whom he barely recognizes), doing things that little girls shouldn't be doing.

But with his successes also comes failure.

Even though it was somewhat long and drawn out, I still enjoyed reading this book. I thought the writing was good and I loved the vivid descriptions the author used. However, I have to admit, I didn't find anything truly remarkable about the story. Overall it was okay, but I'm not sure if there was supposed to be some underlying meaning to the story that I simply didn't get.

I won't not recommend it though, because like I said, the writing itself was really nice and overall it was okay. And maybe you will get more out of it than I did.

\*\*I won this book in a GoodReads first-reads giveaway listed by the author, Jeannie Burt. Thank you Goodreads and Jeannie Burt for the opportunity to read and review this book.

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## **Maureen says**

3.5 Stars.

Written from the POV of Jack McIntyre, a quiet and gentle farmer in 1970's Oregon, Jack is already in debt when a storm destroys most of his crop, and the bank is talking about foreclosure. The daily lives of Jack, his domineering wife Molly, and daughter Edie are laid bare, and it makes for an interesting read. Added to these financial pressures, Edie's best friend Patty goes missing. For all the hard work Jack puts into keeping the farm going, he tends to take a back seat in other ways, leaving many tasks to Molly. However when Patty disappears, and he sees how badly it's affecting daughter Edie, he decides to do something about it. From the daily routine on the farm, the story changes pace considerably, as Jack becomes involved with some very unsavoury characters, in his search for Patty. I really enjoyed reading about this family and their farming community and there was the added bonus of a mystery that builds up nicely.



\* I received this from a first reads giveaway\* Thank you to the author for my signed copy

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### **Pepper Jackson says**

The story of a man who loves his family and whose care extends to the disappearance of a difficult girl took me from the start. He has some awful problems of his own, but sees the devastation on his daughter and his home when fifteen-year-old Patty vanishes and no one cares. His dilemma and his decisions about Patty come at a price. The story has stuck with me ever since I closed the book.

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### **Diane says**

I was lucky enough to win this book from the LibraryThing Early Reviewers. It takes place in Oregon in a quiet farm town. The story unfolded in a very deliberate way which kept me reading until I finished the book. Jack McIntyre is a farmer who has struggled to make a living in this hard countryside. When his daughter's friend, Patty disappears, he is one of the very few people who are worried about her. She has caused so much trouble in this town, most everyone else seems happy that she's gone. I feel that this book got the atmosphere right on how lonely it can be doing the right thing. Very hard to believe this was Jeannie Burt's debut novel...I will be watching for her next one!

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### **Rae Richen says**

I read *When Patty Went Away* by Jeannie Burt in two days. Stopped feeling guilty about leaving my To Do list untouched by page 51 and plowed on to the end because I wanted the family in the story to succeed. I cared about them.

The narrator, Jack McIntyre, an Eastern Oregon wheat farmer, is a believably fearful conflict-avoider, who describes himself, saying, "All my life I'd believed a farm was a solid thing, something to keep hold of, like my wife, like my daughter. A farm was not something that was supposed to lie open, vulnerable to anything that came along."

Jack is determinedly head-in-the-sand and afraid of others. I wanted to reach into the pages and shake the guy loose from his self-doubt.

His self-doubt is fed by his awareness that there are people he can never understand, evils he doesn't want to acknowledge, a community that doesn't like stand outs, and people ready to keep him under their thumb. He doesn't believe in his ability to think through a problem to its solution. The one or two decisions he ever made on his own are possibly going to cost him the farm that's been in his family for generations.

The contrast between Jack and his daughter's friend, Patty was beautifully handled by the author. Patty calls people on their hypocrisy in the way only an angry kid will do. She is sharp and she is unwilling for wrong to remain accepted. Patty is an entrepreneur, willing to go around people who are obstacles in order to bring her ideas to life. Jack's daughter, Edie, thrives in Patty's aura.

Patty's disappearance finally yanks Jack out of his inaction because he sees that his daughter without her friend is becoming like him, a wisp, pushed anywhere by any wind.

The strongest person in the story is Jack's wife, Molly, who has turned her sad losses into a wish to control. Molly finds that she can control others with the Bible and with judgement delivered in the language of the King James' interpreters. She controls the Ladies' Aid Society, Jack, Edie and most of their small town. She even befuddles the local banker with her God-assault.

Jack discovers that in the months of his dithering not one other person has reported Patty as missing. That's when he begins to change, to take some control over himself. He reaches reach out to help Patty's mentally ill mother. And he searches for Patty, ineptly, but stolidly.

The only part of this story during which I became aware of the author was toward the end when Jack abruptly decides to follow up on the one hint about where Patty has gone. I felt the author's dilemma. Having created a clueless Jack who could not move, she now had the tough job of convincing her readers that Jack could accomplish a miracle of courage.

The scenes of his action are well written, easily believed. I cheered for him, but I also wished the author had begun his transformation much earlier so that I could see that he had grown, not less naïve, but more determined through an increasing practice of confronting hypocrisy and the evils and attitudes that had previously paralyzed him.

I enjoyed *When Patty Went Away* and look forward to Jeannie Burt's next novel.

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### **Douglas says**

For the most part this was a good book. The story of a struggling farmer, his trials, and his search for a missing, troubled young woman who was once practically a member of his family is a good and meaningful one. The characters in this story are solid and believable without appearing as caricatures in any way. Jeannie Burt draws on her own experiences in rural Oregon to lend an element of veracity to her cast. Their struggles and how they wrestle with them are compelling.

However, it's a few chapters near the end that make for a jarring change of pace. The pace, the setting, even the feel of the novel changes. It does the change so abruptly it's unwelcome. It's almost as if we've taken a thoughtfully-paced story of an Oregon farmer and thrust him into a modern version of Aesop's fable of the country mouse and the city mouse. Although I can understand what the author was trying to achieve, I don't think she did so in the best manner possible.

Fortunately, the last part of the book reverts to the original pace, setting, and feel. It wraps up well, and I was satisfied with the characters redemption, so to speak.

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### **Cindy says**

I really enjoyed this book at first and almost gave it a 4 until it totally slapped me in the face while reading the last 50 pages or so. The writing is smooth and comfortable and the characters are interesting and likable in their own way except for maybe the controlling mother. She does have her reasons for her attitude however wrong it may be. The ending seemed to be spinning out of control and it left me feeling angry and cheated.

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