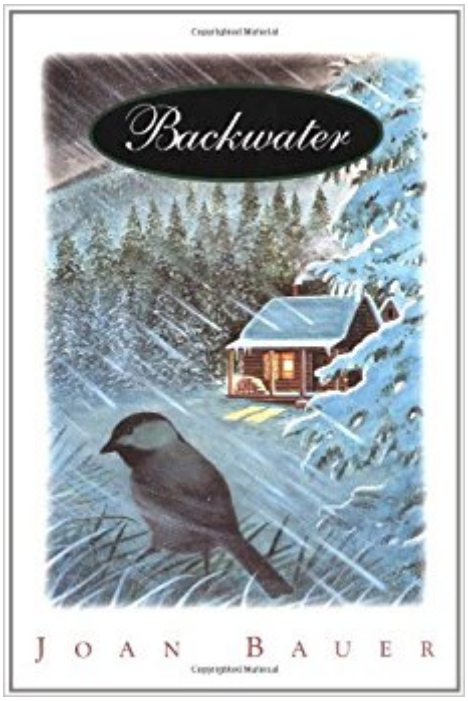
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Backwater (Novel)



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Synopsis

Ivy Breedlove’s family is driving her crazy. Generations of Breedloves have been prominent lawyers and her relatives expect her to follow suit. "We’ll make her a lawyer yet!" they pronounce at a family reunion. Well, not if Ivy has her say. But how do you have your say when the voices surrounding you are so loud? Ivy’s passion for the past provides an answer. As she works on completing a history of her illustrious family, she discovers other Breedlove women who broke the mold, including her father’s sister Josephine. No one will talk about the reclusive Aunt Jo, so when Ivy hires a wilderness guide to find her, her family is less than thrilled. Armed with her thirst for knowledge, Ivy undertakes a dramatic journey up an icy mountain and into the backwater to try to find someone, perhaps, like herself.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are two things you can count on in a book by Joan Bauer. One, it will make you laugh. And two, the girl who is telling the story will be really good at something, but not something you’d expect. In Squashed, Ellie wins the Giant Pumpkin Weigh-In. In Rules of the Road, which won the Golden Kite Award and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Young Adult Fiction, Jenna Boller is a whiz at selling shoes. In Backwater, Ivy Breedlove resists being good at the family tradition. For many generations the Breedloves have been successful lawyers. Among her loud and argumentative relatives, however, Ivy feels like "a goldfish swimming in a tank stocked with snapping turtles--it’s

hard to keep a lasting presence." Instead, Ivy is in love with history, especially the family history she is compiling. But a large piece is missing. Many years ago, her father's sister Josephine went away to be a hermit in the mountains, and ever since, the rest of the family has referred to her scornfully as "stuck in the backwater." Ivy, convinced that this "different" aunt holds the secret to her own differentness, sets out in a snowstorm to find Jo, with the help of backslapping, slogan-spouting wilderness guide Mountain Mama. Along the way she meets with a lot more adventure and understanding than she ever anticipated--not to mention snagging an excellent boyfriend. (Ages 12 to 16) --Patty Campbell

In this compelling, though ultimately uneven outing, Bauer (Rules of the Road) travels to a literal and emotional backwater, navigating the strong ties that bind-and have the potential to choke-a proud but dysfunctional family. For generations, the Breedloves have been respected lawyers in the community, and it's been expected-nearly demanded-that 16-year-old Ivy will follow in their footsteps. But Ivy feels driven to become a historian and, as her first major project, she undertakes the task of compiling the Breedlove genealogy. As the family gathers for the holidays, Ivy's time-saving Aunt Fiona (she has her own TV show, It's About Time) skims through the family history with a video camera. But Ivy determines that, to make the family tree complete, she must locate long-lost Aunt Josephine, her father's rebellious sister. Her search leads her to the Adirondacks, where she comes face-to-face with not only Josephine, but Ivy's own fears about life as a Breedlove. In the best passages, Bauer's characters crackle with eccentricity and exhibit glimmers of intense emotion. Mountaineering fans will also thrill at the wintry, rugged scenery. But in the end, readers may feel Ivy's adventure-and the extreme avenues taken by Josephine-to be too far-fetched. Ages 12-up. (May) Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I am working my way through all of Joan Bauer's books and I love this one, too! The young Ivy Breedlove is a wonderful character, but it's her Aunt Jo that I'll remember long after I've closed the book. Aunt Jo is eccentric but very real and very memorable as is Mountain Mama. One of the things I also love about Ms. Bauer's books is that the reader learns something along the way: anything from shoes to pumpkins or, in this case, a wintry mountainous trek through the Adirondacks.

This book is a required item for my child's school. The package arrived promptly and in brand new condition. Furthermore, the cost was less than the school bookstore. Only gave 4 stars because my

son did not necessarily like the book - it was required summer reading.

I am a big fan of Joan Bauer books, but I enjoyed this more than any other. It may have been the subject.

I bought this book for my 10-year-old son after he enjoyed another Joan Bauer book, Hope Was Here. Backwater is a wonderful story of a girl, Ivy, who is sensitive and does not fit in with her family of aggressive lawyers.Ivy is looking into her family history when she finds that her aunt Josephine is a hermit up in the mountains. The more Ivy learns about her aunt, the more she recognizes that they are kindred spirtits, and Ivy sets out to find her aunt. Ivy finds a wilderness guide to lead her to Josephine.Joan Bauer shows a marvelous understanding of the sensitive soul of Josephine. Along the way, Ivy finds strength in herself that she never knew existed, and this strength helps transform her entire family.Backwater teaches the importance of finding your own talents and celebrating them. I am a practicing psychologist, and I will be recommending this book to my patients from 10 years through adulthood.

"Backwater" By Joan Bauer Reveiw by Emily If you like an adventure story you would love this one. When the author Joan Bauer writes her books she must love to write about a main character that wants an andventure. This book was one I would definitely write an excellent review for. This book was about a girl about 16 named Ivy. She was brought up in a family of lawyers because thats what almost everyone in the family was. Except her mother. Her mother was a social worker for a big company named New York’s Department of social services. But her mom died when she was about 6 years old. Ivy to me is a very adventurous but a little secretive about her true feelings of being a lawyer. Insted of being a lawyer she wants to be a Historian. The setting in this book starts when she is at her home and ends when she is at home. But in the middle she is very far away from home. Through the book she is set out to find a long lost aunt, Aunt Josphine. Her aunt didn’t want to be a lawyer either. Her aunt had always liked birds. No one in the family ever talked about her much, just a few words here and there. When family members discribed Ivy they would say "Just like Josephine". Ivy of course didn’t know a lot about her just that being compared to Josephine wasn’t meant to be a compliment. I like the way Joan Bauer writes this story because it’s about a girl with an unusual problem. Not a problem that many people would have to deal with in their everyday life. One thing that I didn’t like about the book was how you would read one section but have to go back and read it again to understand it to the fullest. I would categorize this book in the adventure

section. I would do that because of all the problems the main character faces. Also way Ivy deals with the problems. The story was full of adventures. I would defiitely recommend this book to someone that likes an adventurous story. It seemed the pages just kept turning as you read. I plan on reading other stories that Joan Bauer has written like "Rules of the Road."

Ivy Breedlove is sixteen and she has made up her mind that she will become a historian, despite what her family wants. The Breedloves have been lawyers for generations. Only one aunt broke the mold, that aunt knew, like Ivy, that she couldn't become a lawyer, and she knew it wasn't fair of her family to force her to do so. Backwater teaches lessons, about family, history, life, and expectations. Backwater is also really exciting and suspenseful. All the characters in Backwater, are realistic and each have unique traits that make the book more interesting.Ivy feels no one in her family understands her, and she may be right, her family is full of characters, but none quite understand her. Her father, a lawyer with an ego, strongly believes, and preaches that law is the only acceptable profession. His brother Archie is also a lawyer, and they enjoy debating which of them is the best. Neither Ivy's father nor his brother have any interest in history, but Fiona, Archie's wife is the worst. She thinks that history is a waste of time, and that family histories should be short, videotaped, and unhistorical. Ivy's cousins are no different; they all want to be lawyers and couldn't care less about the past. Ivy feels quite alone and misunderstood, even her best friend thinks history is a waste of time. One day over Christmas break, Ivy is doing research in the family graveyard and notice wreaths on the Breedlove family graves. An old family friend tells Ivy it was her aunt that decorated the graves. Ivy knows what she has to do.Ivy is going on a hunt, a suspenseful quest. She must find her aunt. One suspenseful part was when Ivy consults the town records. Ivy flips through the names to "B", the aunt she is looking for is not registered. But "Backwater" catches her eye because it is an old family saying. The address is in the mountains and because of the snow, the difficult hike, and the wild animals, Ivy will need a guide to find the aunt she's never met. She does all to complete the family history. The guide, Mountain Mama, plans on writing a book about her adventurous hikes. Mountain Mama never yet had lost a hiker and didn't plan to lose one now. Ivy began her hike she meets another hiker, Jack, who is training to become a park ranger. When Mountain Mama and Ivy finally reach Ivy's aunt, Mountain Mama goes off hiking and plans to return two days latter to pick Ivy up. Perhaps the most exciting part was when Ivy meets her aunt Josephine who is a hermit, she lives alone because that's how she likes it. She cares for birds that are injured or sick, she has a pet wolf that was raised in captivity and couldn't be returned to the wild. Every six months she hikes down for supplies and food. She changed her last

name to Backwater when she moved because of the way her family treated her.Ivy learns a lot from her aunt. She learns to enjoy nature. She learns that her father is a very kind man, and that he enjoys law because he likes protecting the innocent. She learns he loves to fish. One night during a fierce blizzard a tree falls on Josephine's cabin, it goes through the roof and crushes Josephine's leg! Ivy uses a first aid book and learns the wound must be treated in a hospital because it can be fatal. Ivy learns a lot about herself while crossing the frozen lake while pulling her aunt on a sleigh. The ice begins to crack, and she learns a lot about bravery. Jack the park ranger in training and Mountain Mama help her from the shore, but all they can do is offer reassurance.A helicopter comes to rescue Josephine and Ivy, who becomes unconscious. They are both in the hospital, but both come out alive. Over a school break some of Ivy's cousins, aunts, and uncles, Ivy, and Ivy's dad go up to help Josephine rebuild her cabin. Ivy learns a lot of lessons about herself, her family, and history. She goes through some suspenseful parts and meets some interesting characters, in addition to those in her own family. Ivy is very glad to have met Josephine and now knows she can be different then her family. She ends up falling in love with Jack the park ranger in training. Over all it was okay, but a little to unrealistic. I recommend this book to boys or girls, looking for a quick read. Backwater would be best for ages 13-15.-C.GOGGINS

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