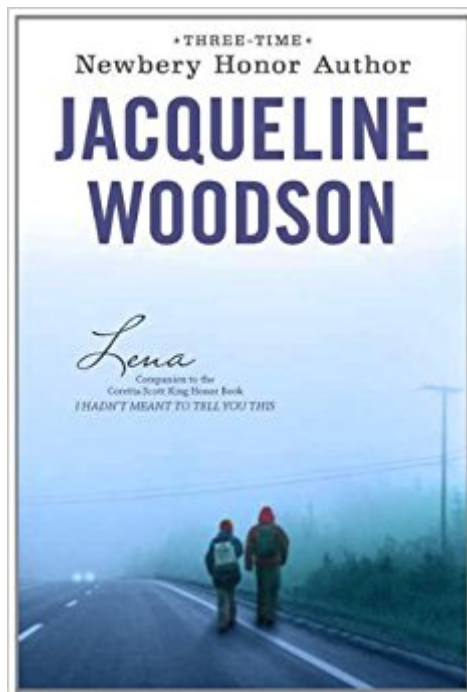


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# Lena



## Synopsis

A compelling story of survival from a three-time Newbery Honor winning authorAt the end of *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, Lena and her younger sister, Dion, set off on their own, desperate to escape their abusive father. Disguised as boys, they hitchhike along, traveling in search of their mother's relatives. They don't know what they will find, or who they can trust along the way, but they do know that they can't afford to make even one single mistake. Dramatic and moving, this is a heart-wrenching story of two young girls in search of a place to call home.

## Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Rendered as eloquently as *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*, this sequel follows 13-year-old Lena and her precocious little sister, Dion, as they run away from their sexually abusive father. Lena plans to take Dion to Pine Mountain, Ky., the birthplace of their late mother, but hitchhiking in the dead of winter, wondering what dangers and obstacles lie ahead, takes its toll: "I knew what the sun looked like now.... I knew the way the ending day faded the road to blue then black then made it disappear. And the way the cold could come in and turn the whole world winter-brown." Writing in Lena's voice, striking for its balance of tough-mindedness and tenderness, Woodson conveys the love that the protective heroine feels for her sister as well as the compassion of strangers: the truck driver who gives them money, the waitress who understands their situation all too well, and

grandmotherly Miz Lily, who opens her arms as well as her door to the travelers. Soulful, wise and sometimes wrenching, this taut story never loses its grip on the reader. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 6 Up-Like thousands of their real-life counterparts, 13-year-old Lena and her younger sister, Dion, run away from home because of their father's sexual abuse. Disguised as boys and carrying only a few necessities, the girls hitchhike from Ohio to their deceased mother's hometown in Kentucky on the vague and unrealistic hope that some unknown relative might take them in. Readers of *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This* (Delacorte, 1994) will recognize Lena as the poor, white girl who skips town in the final chapters of Woodson's heartwrenching and brilliant novel of interracial friendship. Here the story continues, this time in Lena's rough voice, a voice that betrays years of developmental neglect yet still speaks eloquently for the tenacity of the human spirit. With aching honesty, Lena expresses the conflicts many abused children face. "My daddy was really messed up but he was all we had," she admits. Readers who long for a happy ending for these heroic children will not be disappointed. Halfway through the book, they are picked up by a kindly woman who takes them in. Miss Lily's nurturing thaws Lena's defenses and she reaches out to the one friend who can truly bring her home. That her friend Marie's father, an African-American college professor, must overcome his own racial attitudes to help the girls, adds to the novel's richness. Once again, Woodson writes with excruciating clarity about difficult issues of childhood and leaves readers encouraged by humanity's potential for insight, compassion, and hope. Carolyn Lehman, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was a decent read. A little too sappy for my tastes, especially when it's main character and narrator has been sexually abused by her father for years. It's a middle-grade story that takes a very middle-grade approach to talking about abuse, living on the streets, and such. I'm not saying it was bad, just that it wasn't particularly stand-out for me. Decent writing, decent characters, just a little too devoid of conflict and emotional depth for such a dark topic.

Lena is a continuation of "I Hadn't meant to tell you this". It takes up where Lena and her sister Dion runaway from their sexually abusive father. The books discusses the various journey through the cities and towns and the characters who pick them up. This book made me very sad it felt so real and that is why I gave it five stars. It tears at the heartstring. I felt better knowing that the children

journey through the various towns were not in vain. A great inspirational book about facing odds and overcoming them even though the characters were very young.

In *Lena*, Jacqueline Woodson continues the story of Lena and Dion Bright, the two sisters who leave Chauncey, Ohio, to escape the clutches of their abusive father in *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*. Woodson allows the reader to travel with Lena and Dion through Ohio and Kentucky in an effort to find a place called home. Lena and Dion hitch hiking leads to them meeting several people, the final person being an African-American woman "Miz Lily," who is perceptive enough to realize that the girls are homeless. This is a must read for all who read Woodson's *I Hadn't Meant to Tell You This*.

Jacqueline Woodson's book, *Lena*, was a very adventurous and exciting book to read. This book would appeal to students of any age. It is about two sisters, Lena and Dion, who run away from their abusive father shortly after their mother died. The book later goes on to explain their troubles and many adventures on their way to find their mother's relatives. Lena and Dion can not afford to make one wrong move. Will they ever make it to find Mama's relatives? Find out in this unforgettable tale of Lena and Dion as they travel the trail to make their dream come true.

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