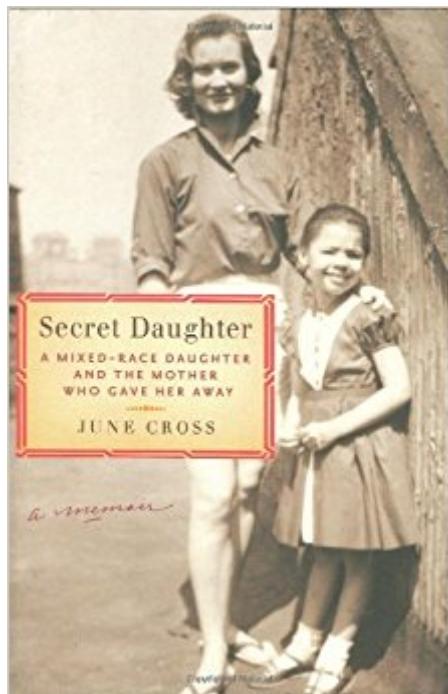


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# Secret Daughter: A Mixed-Race Daughter And The Mother Who Gave Her Away



## Synopsis

A powerful memoir about the complicated but ultimately loving relationship between a black daughter and her white mother. *Secret Daughter* is a deftly drawn and moving portrait of a childhood spent in two very different worlds: one white, one black. In 1957, when June Cross was four years old, she was sent by her white mother to live with a black family in Atlantic City. Her mother, Norma, had left June's abusive father, a comic in the well-known black vaudeville duo Stump and Stumpy, and gave June up when it became clear that her dark-skinned, kinky-haired child could no longer "pass." Within her adopted family, June struggled with her identity as the black radicalism of the times collided head on with her family's more traditional ideals. Summer vacations were spent with her mother, now in Hollywood and married to *F Troop* TV actor Larry Storch. For many years, Norma, afraid that Larry's career would suffer if anyone discovered the truth about her illegitimate daughter, told friends and reporters that June was adopted. *Secret Daughter*, which grew out of Cross's Emmy Award-winning documentary, traces this thorny story with poignancy and skill. It is both a vivid snapshot of race relations in America and an inspiring journey of understanding between a mother and daughter.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In 1997 June Cross, a journalist, produced a documentary, *Secret Daughter*, with PBS *Frontline* about her life as a biracial daughter of a white woman and a black comedian. This was a poignant, difficult undertaking as Cross revealed how her mother, Norma Booth, for fear of jeopardizing her

white husband's show business career coupled with her own insecurities about June's appearance, gave her daughter away to be raised by a middle-class black couple. This allowed June to be raised among "her people" in a safe, nurturing environment and kept Norma's former life a secret. Now in a revealing memoir, *Secret Daughter: A Mixed-Race Daughter and the Mother Who Gave Her Away*, Cross chronicles in detail the circumstances surrounding her complex journey. June Cross was born in 1954 to Norma, an aspiring actress and James Cross, a comedian of *Stumpy & Stumpy* fame. When Norma left June with Aunt Peggy and Uncle Paul, June assumed it was just for a short visit; it became an extended visit, an informal adoption for the childless couple. Even though she visited her mother in New York and later Los Angeles, she always returned to Aunt Peggy in Atlantic City, New Jersey. June's visits with her mother were of a schizophrenic nature; she was told to pose either as a niece, an adopted daughter, or a friend but never as Norma's birth daughter. Norma was ever fearful that if she were to reveal she had a black daughter, Larry Storch, her husband and a star of the television series, *F Troop*, and several movies, would lose roles. June was always in a state of confusion about her mother's denial of her existence. Aunt Peggy, a school teacher, was close friends with the formidable Gregory family, a picture-perfect postcard for the Talented Tenth that Dubois endorsed.

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