

POP CULTURE

'Are You There God?' book redesign has Judy Blume fans in an uproar



Randee Dawn
TODAY

30 minutes ago

Updating a young adult novel for new generations is tricky; updating Judy Blume's classic "**Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret**" for a social media generation — well, that's wading into shark-infested waters.

As it turns out, an updated cover of "Margaret," which was first released in 2014, has managed to irritate devoted fans of the book who are just finding it now.

ProPublica reporter Jessica Huseman ignited the latest discussion by featuring the offending cover, which suggests Margaret is texting God:





Jessica Huseman

@JessicaHuseman

What have they done to Judy Blume this book was copyrighted in 1970

12:48 PM - Mar 25, 2018

7,203 1,500 people are talking about this

Others chimed in quickly:



Geoff Johnson

@GeofftheJohnson

Replying to @JessicaHuseman

That is ridiculous. God is notorious for not responding to text messages. Cover art totally unbelievable.

1:17 PM - Mar 25, 2018

1,465 104 people are talking about this



Gary Patrick Brown

@gpb1979

Nooooooooooooo. I bloody loved Judy Blume books in my early teens. I guess this cover may appeal to today's youngsters but it just seems wrong. twitter.com/JessicaHuseman...

3:29 PM - Mar 25, 2018 · Amsterdam, The Netherlands

275 33 people are talking about this

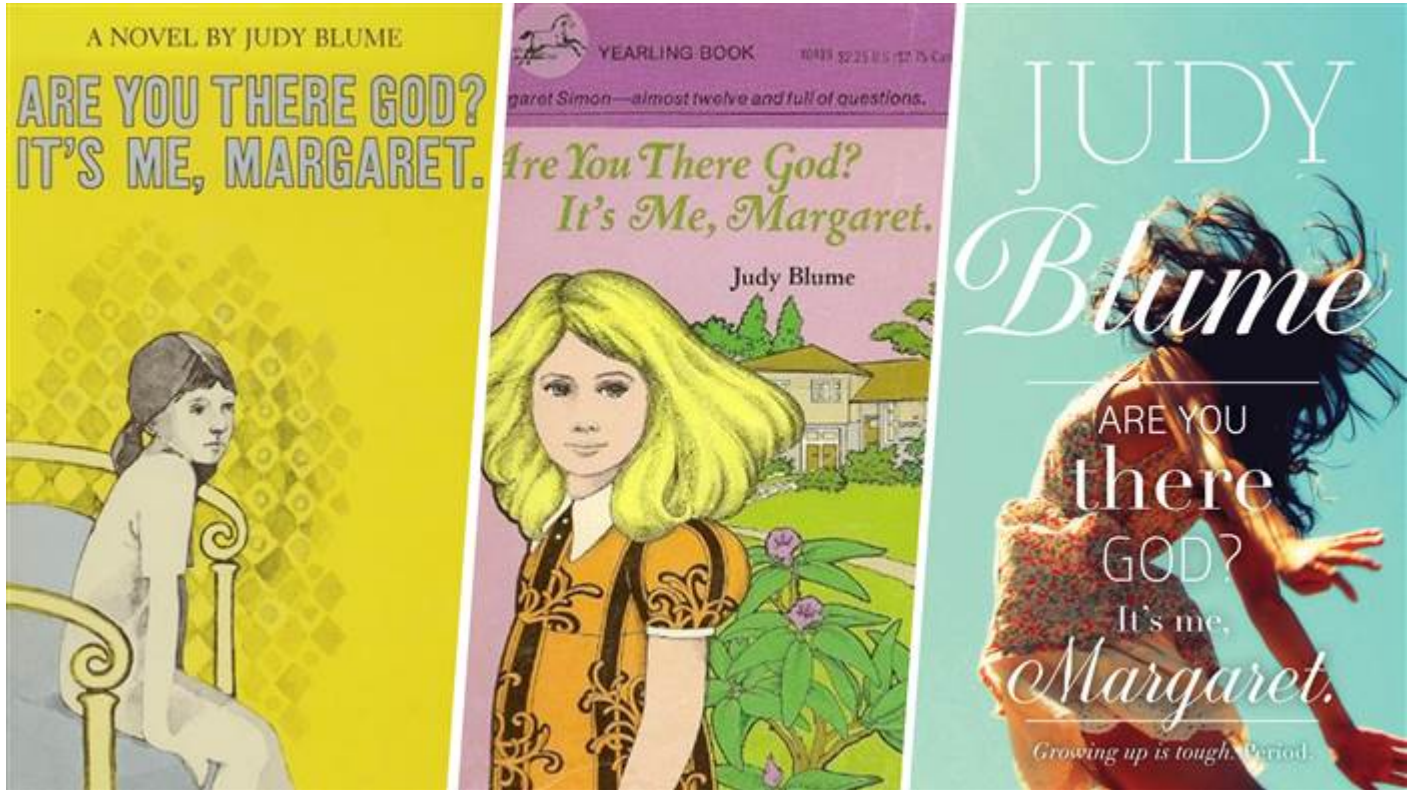
But back in 2014, the cover wasn't considered so controversial. Several editions of Blume books were redesigned that year for the next generation with simple, graphic, almost cartoonish illustrations.



Getty Images

Judy Blume in New York in 2015.

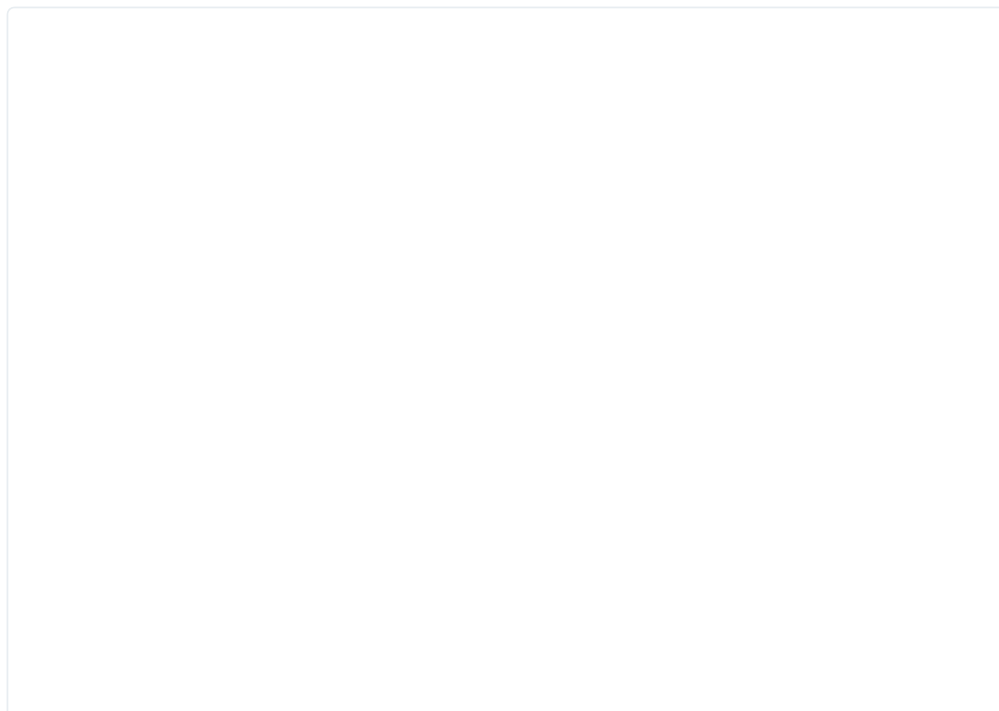
At the time, **Justin Chanda, vice president and publisher of Simon & Schuster's Atheneum Books for Young Readers** told **TODAY**, "We desperately wanted the kids to bring themselves to the story, because that's what Judy has heard time and time again — that readers wanted to put themselves in the story. They didn't want to see what Margaret looks like. They want to envision what Margaret looks like for herself."



Three iterations of "Are You There, God?" through the years.

Vox called in a "smart, graceful update" in an interview with illustrator Debbie Ohi and Chanda, who said Blume was involved in the revamp process. "It's funny, of course, because there are no cellphones in the book, but Judy has also said that if it was written today, Margaret would be a texter!" he said.

In addition, the cover has its defenders:



JUDY BLUME

are you there god?



Ryan North
@ryanqnorth

I've never seen an update to a book's cover executed so perfectly: amzn.to/2prj77T

11:43 AM - May 8, 2017

11.4K 4,078 people are talking about this



Zoe Finkel
@zoefinkel

The update on this cover is blowing my mind.

pic.twitter.com/clbAjc3VWW

9:24 PM - May 31, 2015

382 292 people are talking about this



Shiny Umbreon
@eerian_sadow

Replying to @zoefinkel

[@zoefinkel](https://twitter.com/zoefinkel) [@judyblume](https://twitter.com/judyblume) what a great cover update! :D This book has so much to say, but kids tend to ignore "boring" or "same-y" book covers.

12:00 PM - Jun 4, 2015

1 See Shiny Umbreon's other Tweets

And even Huseman eventually doubled back to note she was just having a little fun with the original tweet:



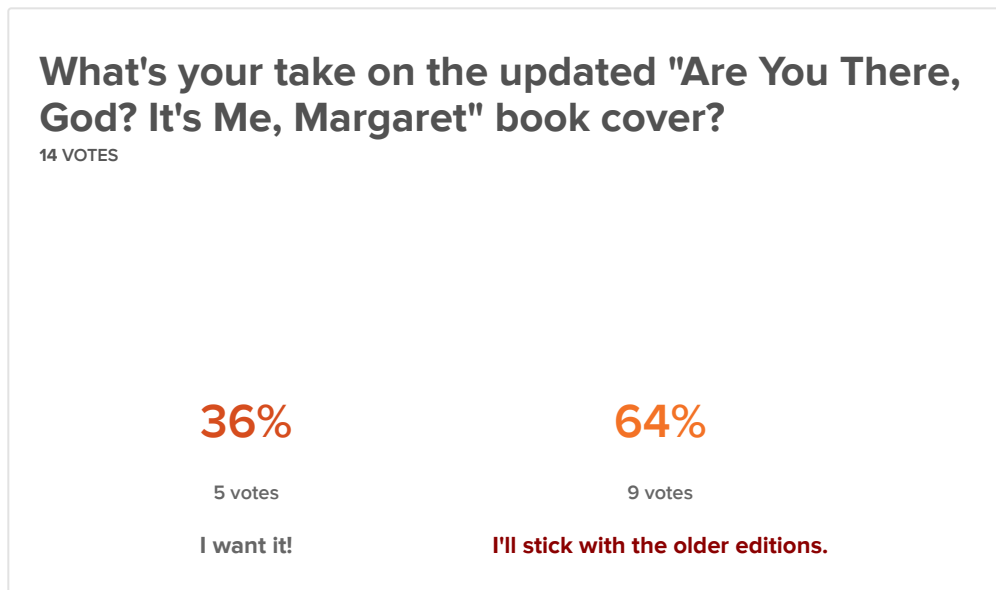
Jessica Huseman
@JessicaHuseman

Replying to @JessicaHuseman
(Guys this is mostly a joke I know we gotta update things to keep the young ones reading it's fine)
1:43 PM - Mar 25, 2018 · Manhattan, NY

468 34 people are talking about this

The cover change wasn't the first update "Margaret" ever got. The story centers around an adolescent girl's achieving puberty, and her feelings about menstruation for the first time, and in 1998 **Blume updated the actual book**, so that Margaret uses a disposable pads, not a sanitary belt.

So what do you think of it? Let us know in our TODAY poll!



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Husband gives away wife's beloved Judy Blume book, begs for help

PLAY VIDEO - 1:57

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1:03



Dakota Fanning talks about her new thriller series, 'The Alienist'

3:45



Netflix's 'The Crown' star Claire Foy speaks out about being paid less

0:43

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by Taboola

POP CULTURE

Christina Aguilera goes makeup-free for Paper magazine



Gina Vivinetto
TODAY

15 hours ago

Christina Aguilera looks positively "Beautiful" after a dramatic *makeunder*.

The pop singer, who normally sports dark black eyeliner and bright red lipstick, posed for a gorgeous **makeup-free** photo shoot for **Paper magazine**.



papermagazine

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papermagazine Christina Aguilera is back with a new [#Transformation](#) ✨
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19 HOURS AGO

her lovely pale blue eyes.

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Christina Aguilera barely recognizable in beautiful, makeup-free photos

PLAY VIDEO - 2:09



PAPER Magazine @papermagazine

19h

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pic.twitter.com/J0M66uM4Hr

2:03 PM - Mar 26, 2018



6,984 2,075 people are talking about this

Inside the magazine's pages, the Grammy winner appears in more stunning photos — and opens up about how "liberating" it feels to ditch the makeup.



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19h

Replying to @papermagazine

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pic.twitter.com/J0M66uM4Hr



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pic.twitter.com/HaVJdiPh7T

2:03 PM - Mar 26, 2018



6,807 1,710 people are talking about this

"I've always been someone that obviously loves to experiment, loves theatrics, loves to create a storyline and play a character in a video or through stage," Aguilera said.

"I'm a performer, that's who I am by nature. But I'm at the place, even musically, where it's a liberating feeling to be able to strip it all back and appreciate who you are and your raw beauty."

Of course, fans know you can't pin down the ever-changing Aguilera, who last week **rocked a giant pink wig** when she served as guest judge on the Season 10 premiere of "RuPaul's Drag Race."



xtina

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#xtinaPAPER

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18 HOURS AGO

So, it's no surprise the Paper shoot *a/so* includes photos of the singer with thick mascara on her lashes and smudged blood-red lips.

"I mean, I'm a girl that likes a beat face, let's not get it twisted," the singer quipped.

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