

Unexpected Findings

Jenifer Rowe

Foothills Press

978-1-7360880-2-9

\$15.00 paper/5.99 Kindle

<https://www.amazon.com/Unexpected-Findings-Jenifer-Rowe/dp/1736088025>

The unlikely friendship between a young foster girl who has suffered abuse and neglect and an antisocial 85-year-old widower is the focus of *Unexpected Findings*, a poignant literary work that at first seems directed to young adults (protagonist La'Teesha Baxter is a teenager).

However, it would be a shame to limit the audience of this compelling piece to teens alone, because its story of homelessness, connections, assault, trust, and recovery explore very adult themes that will appeal widely, from mature young adults into adult circles.

Tess is determined to solve the gaps and mysteries her amnesia has left in her life, but she can't do it without help...and without trusting those around her: *"Shit! Who's left that I can trust? She remembered Janelle telling her that she couldn't invite Tess in because she had a visitor. Janelle had also claimed not to remember Antwon's last name. That had to have been a lie. Tess felt confused, angry, double-crossed. She was also frightened. If Janelle was part of the reason her mother was missing, what would she do once she knew that Tess was on to her? What would Antwon do?"*

As the story shifts between issues of danger, discovery, and trust, readers receive a compelling saga that follows Tess as she navigates uncertain situations, pursues the truth, and develops an odd friendship with the elderly Irv who also has many reasons to fear the outside world.

Jenifer Rowe follows Tess's growth in a compelling manner that juxtaposes past and present, the influences she uncovers on her choices, and their consequences: *"She had always disliked this sticky, humid time of year. The damp made it almost impossible for her to brush her hair, which was always a challenge anyways. Braids were the answer, said her Gram. Mama used to tell her to be proud of her hair, and to let her curls fly free. She'd never been sure which voice to listen to, since she loved them both. Now, though, she knew what she heard. It was her own voice that spoke the loudest to her, telling her what she must do."*

Under Rowe's hand, Tess becomes a vivid, believable, likeable character whose search for answers embraces some of the foundations of character-building and change.

Unexpected Findings is a compelling story especially recommended for mature teens to adults. This audience will ideally look for stories that go beyond mystery or problem-solving, examining the kinds of relationships that lead to building determined survivors who rise above their circumstances as outsiders in life to become mutually beneficial to one another in unexpectedly supportive new ways.

Those who like their stories poignant, realistic, and complex will relish the encounters between Tess and Irv and the unexpected resolution which joins them and redefines their disparate life challenges.