

Tell Me Three Things by Julie Buxbaum

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Themes of Loss and Emotional Recovery

"I miss the way he used to kiss my shoulder whenever it was bare and he was nearby." This quote from the book epitomizes what the novel is about. *Tell Me Three Things* by Julie Buxbaum is a novel about coming to terms with the loss of a dear one. (Buxbaum, 2016) It's about leaving your friends behind and continuing with your life. From the quote, it is easy to understand that once a loved one passes away, it is hard to forget them. Or there are times when you have to leave your friends and family behind while relocating elsewhere. However, life does not end there.

Jessie Holmes and the Search for Purpose

You have to learn how to cope with the loss, move on, and try to find a purpose in your life. The novel is the story of Jessie Holmes, a girl whose father has remarried after her mother's death. His remarriage causes Jessie to leave behind her old life and relocate to Los Angeles. It is here Jessica struggles to find her identity, cope with loss, and deal with the issues that her new life brings. It is an exciting story about a teenage girl who is about to start a new life again.

Grief Family Change and Isolation

At the time of loss, the last thing a person needs is a drastic change. Jessica is still grieving about her mother's death, although she passed away almost two years ago. She is still finding a way to cope with her mother's death when her father drops a bombshell on her. Her father had met a wealthy woman online and had fled to marry her. It feels like a betrayal to Jessie Holmes. She is still reeling from the effects of her mother's loss, and now she has to cope with losing her father as well. Jessica is forced to relocate to Los Angeles and leave behind her friends and school. This leaves her distraught and hopeless (*"Not feeling like I belong anywhere has made me crave constant motion; standing still feels risky, like asking to be a target"*). In Los Angeles, she has to deal with her pretentious stepbrother as well as find her footing in the school. Her father is also coping with the loss of his wife in his own way. In contrast, her stepfamily is also mourning the life of a loved one. It shows how different people cope with loss in different ways.

Love as a Source of Healing

Love is a potent agent, and that's precisely what this book reflects. Love is what helps people get over and cope with the loss. It's the perfect medicine for leading a wonderful life. Despite having wishes to run back to Chicago, Jessie is starting to feel much better in her home. She has found love where she least expected. Jessie is starting to develop feelings for some boys. She has a crush on her English class partner, Ethan. Also, she feels attracted to a person called "Somebody Nobody." This person is anonymously emailing and texting Jessie constantly, and as a result, the two have developed a special bond. This special bond is what causes Jessie to develop an interest in him. There is another boy called Liam, who seems to be very interested in talking to Jessie all the time. The book perfectly highlights how love is sometimes the driving factor in building your life again,

Trust and Relationship Development

Trust is another theme that the book reflects throughout the story. Trust is what makes a relationship strong. After her mother's death, she had only her father to rely on. The only person who could help Jessie cope with her mother's death and help her to continue with her life was her father. However, she felt betrayed by the actions of her father. Her father chose to elope with a wealthy woman from Los Angeles, even though it had not been long since her mother's death. It caused Jessie to lose faith in her father. He made her relocate with him, as a result of which she had to leave behind her friends, especially Scarlett, her best friend (*"I hate that we are far apart in both space and time"*). She could not trust her new family either. She is enrolled in a private school, where she finds it even more difficult to cope. It is then she receives help from her secret admirer, a person who has offered to become her *"virtual spirit guide"* and help her through the abrupt changes in her life. The question on everyone's mind is whether or not she can trust this anonymous person (*"Somebody Nobody may be a prank"*). At times, trusting someone can end in tears, and sometimes, it can result in a happy ending. What is in store for Jessie is one of the mysteries of the book.

Jessie's Character Development

Jessie, the protagonist of the story, feels lost after the abrupt change in her life. She is self-centered after the death of her mother and the subsequent betrayal from her father. Jessie isn't particularly concerned about issues that do not involve her (*"Sometimes, when Scarlett says I'm strong, I think she really means I'm numb"*). The reason is that she feels betrayed by her father's decision to elope and marry a woman he met online. As a result, Jessie feels disinterested in everything and everyone around her. She is distrustful of her stepbrother as well as the people in her high school. After she receives an anonymous email, she does not know how to react. She finds it difficult to trust the person at the other end of the screen. Unlike many protagonists, Jessie does not feel like an alien. She is very similar to real-life people, and that is precisely what makes her the perfect protagonist. She is

very shy and uncomfortable and, at times, finds it difficult to say the exact words.

Evaluation and Recommendation of the Novel

I would recommend this book to everyone in my social circle. Unlike many novels, where the readers are unable to identify themselves with the protagonist, this is not the case with *Tell Me Three Things*. (Steinberg, 2001) The way this book is written and how it narrates the story of Jessie and the other characters coping with loss is really what captivated me to read it. It has a lot to do with the author experiencing the death of her mother at a very young age. She has been able to channel her experience perfectly through Jessie and the novel. The novel is a must-read for anyone who is coping with loss and trying to turn their lives over. The novel perfectly epitomizes teenage love and also the issues that adolescent life brings with it.

References

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<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/251299/tell-me-three-things-by-julie-buxbaum/>

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