



UNBECOMING

By Jenny Downham

SUMMARY

Katie is seventeen and longs to be brave and to know herself. Caroline, Katie's mother, is strict and fears the past. Mary, Katie's grandmother, suffers from Alzheimer's. Suddenly, three generations of women are living in the same house, fighting an inner battle to find who they are. When Katie begins to care for her grandmother, she writes Mary's stories in a memory book. With each story, Mary unravels the secrets of the past. Through the fog of Mary's memories, Katie learns to live and dares to risk what it takes to no longer deny who she is. She is like her vibrant, daring, and charismatic grandmother. She is like her uptight, reliable, and fearful mother. But she is so much more. She is unbecoming the person everyone sees and becoming the brave young woman she always wanted to be.

Courage
Finding Yourself
Acceptance
Family
Power of Fear
Forgiveness

LOVE is love

Be yourself

THEMES

GRADES
9-12

REVIEW

Unbecoming is a funny, heartbreaking, and beautiful story about family and the relationships between mother and daughter. Downham's extraordinary writing reveals the tenderness, fury, passion, strength, and courage mothers show in loving their daughters. She shows how ferocious love can be misunderstood. Katie's, Caroline's, and Mary's stories reveal the power of secrets to destroy this love. I 100 percent recommend this novel to everyone. Especially to those who feel that they aren't enough. To those who fear what people will think if they reveal their true selves. To those who don't believe in their own inner strength and beauty. To those who need hope to see past their current struggles. This is the book for them and everyone who wants to understand someone like them.

“ Stop being weird.
Stop being a
coward. Stop
being neurotic.”

“ Some secrets
are bad for
your health.”