



Five Things They Never Told Me

Books Reviewed:

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[Andrea Rayner](#) [3]

~~Not a choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

It is just before the summer holidays, but Erin is fed up. It is forty-one days since her mum left, and she feels that neither of her parents wanted her after they split up. Nobody listens to her; they just tell her what to do. But Erin has plans to make her parents take notice. Early one morning, Erin goes on a clandestine shopping trip. She 'borrows' lots of cash from her dad's account and buys a computer. He is angry and horrified. He takes away the computer, and as a punishment, Erin has to spend the summer holidays helping out at Oak Hill Home for the Elderly where her dad works.

Martha is also fed up. She does not want to be stuck in Oak Hill, but has no choice. Her body is old and frail but her spirit is young and free. She remembers the vitality of her youth and the passion of her past ?

At first, Erin is angry, resentful and bored at Oak Hill. But then an unlikely friendship begins between her and Martha. They are two very different people ? one just starting out in life and one at the end of it. It is a summer of new experiences for Erin, and a summer of acceptance and reconciliation for Martha. As the summer draws to an end, Erin learns a very important lesson: if you can't find a happy ending, then find a new beginning.

This is an emotionally perceptive and extremely moving story. It is told from two perspectives: one of a twelve-year-old girl; the other of a woman born in 1929. Rebecca Westcott completely captures the disaffected voice of a twelve-year-old girl, on the cusp of growing up, but at the centre of a family that has fallen apart. She also brings a certain mischief to the voice of Martha. The story is narrated in the first person, and this gives it a clarity and a poignancy so strong that it is almost painful. The themes of growing up, growing old and the importance of friendship are conveyed convincingly and with great empathy.

Rebecca Westcott has previously been nominated for the CILIP Carnegie Medal for **Dandelion Clocks**, and **Five Things They Never Told Me** is yet another great novel from a very talented author.

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