



TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them By J. K. Rowling Reviewed by Joshua Radford

Name: Joshua Radford

Grade: 12

Book Title: Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them

Author: J. K. Rowling

Number of Pages: 280

Rating (on a scale of 1-5): 4/5

Character List:

- **Newt Scamander** – Newt Scamander is a Magizoologist – one who keeps, studies, and works for the protection of magical creatures. He is the main character and, in the first edition of the book, is the penname for J.K. Rowling. In the story, Newt is a thin and quiet man, an interesting contrast to the suitcase of creatures that he carries.
- **Tina Goldstein** – Tina Goldstein works for MACUSA, the Magical Congress of the United States of America. She is quick to try to report Newt for bringing his creatures to the U.S. and allowing them to escape, but is rebuked by her superiors, embarrassing her. Perhaps her go-getter attitude is what motivates her ultimately to help Newt.
- **Jacob Kowalski** – Jacob Kowalski is a non-magical person who becomes involved with Newt and his creatures. Jacob dreams of opening a bakery and has just been turned down for a bank loan when he picks up one of Newt's creatures and accidentally mistakes Newt's suitcase for his own pastry filled case.
- **Queenie Goldstein** – Queenie Goldstein is Tina's sister. She can read minds and falls in love with Jacob.
- **Credence Barebone** – Credence Barebone, adopted by an abusive non-magical woman, suffers from a parasitic obscurus caused by years of containing his magical powers. Arguments with his mother trigger his obscurial fits of rage.

Review:

The story takes place in New York City when Newt arrives with his suitcase full of magical creatures. His goal is to study the obscurus that is reportedly loose in the city for the book he is writing about how to protect magical creatures. Soon after he arrives, a few of his creatures escape from the case. While trying to capture one, a Niffler who has darted into the bank, Newt gets involved with Jacob, a muggle or non-magical person who has just been turned down by the bank for a loan. Before Newt can erase Jacob's memory of everything magical he has witnessed, Tina, who works for the MACUSA, notices what has happened and tries to turn Newt in for violating magical law. While Newt is in her custody, they realize that Jacob and Newt have accidentally switched cases. Jacob in his apartment is coming to the same realization as more creatures escape from the case, one biting him on the neck. Newt and Tina find Jacob, now sick from

the bite. Together, Newt, Jacob, Tina, and Queenie, Tina's sister, work to get all the creatures back into Newt's case. In the process, they discover the real identity of the obscurus and try to save him from those who want to destroy him.

This book represents J.K. Rowling's first screenplay for which I think she did a great job. Within the first few pages, you lose yourself in the storyline as in any of her great Harry Potter books. Newt as a character is loyal and honest, yet slightly awkward, especially as set in the bustling New York City, making him likable and trustworthy. If Newt isn't your favorite, though, Rowling gives us many others, both good and not so good, magical and muggle, even a large assortment of creatures. She uses the character Queenie, who can read minds, to help us understand what the other characters are thinking and get to know them better, which is a great writing strategy.

I think that lovers of J.K. Rowling and Harry Potter will enjoy this story in its similarity. Its characters are unique and struggle with doing what's right, which teens in general can identify with.