



Field Notes on Love

Jennifer E. Smith

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Having just been dumped by his girlfriend, British-born Hugo is still determined to take his last-hurrah-before-college train trip across the United States. One snag: the companion ticket is already booked under the name of his ex, Margaret Campbell. Nontransferable, no exceptions.

Enter the new Margaret C. (Mae for short), an aspiring filmmaker with big dreams. After finding Hugo's spare ticket offer online, she's convinced it's the perfect opportunity to expand her horizons.

When the two meet, the attraction is undeniable, and both find more than they bargained for. As Mae pushes Hugo to explore his dreams for his future, he'll encourage her to channel a new, vulnerable side of her art. But when life off the train threatens the bubble they've created for themselves, will they manage to keep their love on track?

Field Notes on Love Details

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From Reader Review Field Notes on Love for online ebook

Katie (Lost in Pages) says

I just don't think anything can be better than Statistical Probability for me. I made the mistake of reading that one first, and the rest haven't been as good. I still did enjoy this story, it was cute and adventurous, and I liked seeing both Hugo and Mae's journeys.

Kristin says

Note: I received this book as an Advanced Reader Copy via Y'All Fest - a Young Adult Literature Festival held annually in Charleston, SC.

I read Smith's The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight in 2013 when it debuted and was immediately smitten, but I've never read any of Smith's later publications, so when I received an ARC of Field Notes on Love I was excited to fall back into a world of meet-cutes and love at first sight; however, the book didn't quite live up to my expectations.

The main characters, Hugo and Mae, are interesting and well-formed, but for a slim volume, the book is packed to the gills with familial arcs designed to incite character growth; however, any one of them would have been sufficient on its own.

The book's main premise centers on identity - both Hugo and Mae are seeking independence in the face of their college years, and they find it via an old-fashioned train trip, but instead of merely bumping into each other on a train, Hugo, recently dumped by his long-time girlfriend, places an ad online for "another Margaret Campbell" to take his ex-girlfriend's non-transferable tickets: enter Margaret Campbell deux - Mae for short.

This zany quest would be more than enough, but Smith decides both Hugo and Mae need family drama back home: Hugo is struggling to find his place among his brothers and sisters, six to be exact - he's a sextuplet, and Mae's Nana is recovering from cancer. The two briefly connect over shared bigotry regarding race (Hugo - who is African American) and homosexuality (Mae - whose parents are gay).

Any one of these threads would have been effective for character development and a relatable and interesting story in general, but in a book just shy of 300 pages, each plot point felt glossed over and barely developed before moving on to the next one.

The real star of the show, however, is Nana - Mae's grandmother, whose spark and wisdom and zest of life shown in her every line.

Overall, diehard fans of Smith will probably be pleased, but readers new to her work may be overwhelmed.

Lisa says

I was lucky enough to get an ARC of this book at Yallfest last week. I'm so glad I did because this book is so cute! It's a sweet little rom-com coming of age story set on a cross-country train trip. Not only has it now made me want to take a cross-country train trip, but it's also made me want to read more from this author and find out if all her characters are so quirky and lovable.

Ashley says

This was such a cute book! It made me want to take a train trip across the United States! Hugo is a British-born sextuplet that received a train trip as a gift from his now ex-girlfriend. The easy solution is to just take someone else or go by himself, but of course the tickets are in his ex-girlfriend's name and are nontransferable. Hugo still wants to go, so on the joking advice of one of his many siblings he decides to look for another Margaret Campbell. He finds Mae, an aspiring filmmaker who recently found out the film she was so proved of creating is not good enough to get into her dream film program. Mae thinks a cross-country train trip with a stranger is the perfect way to expand her horizons and inspire her next film.

This is a heart-warming story about two young individuals that learn to grow and that sometimes they must put themselves out there in order to accomplish their dreams.

I voluntarily read and reviewed an advanced copy of this book. All thoughts and opinions are my own. Thank you Netgalley and Delacorte Press for giving me the chance to read and review this book early!

Mandy says

Disclaimer: I received this ARC courtesy of Delacorte Press through advanced distribution at YALLFest. I am grateful for the opportunity to review an ARC for my readers, but this will not influence my final rating. All opinions expressed in this review are my own and based solely on the book.

I received this book at the Get Underlined tarot card reading session during Yallfest, and I don't think I read my future right. We were allowed to pick 2 books out of the 4 that was there, and I immediately snatched up *Come Find Me* by Megan Miranda 'cause we know I'm Miranda trash. However, I flopped over the other 3 on what to pick, and I finally went with this one because the cover was really cute. I didn't put it together until much later that it was by Jennifer E. Smith, whose *The Statistical Probability of Love* I really enjoyed.

This book was...I just...it was just so MEH? There was not much to it. It was just...fluff? filler? fluffy filler? I'm 200% down for fluff, but it has to have actual things behind the fluff. I felt like this book just sat there the entire time, and I just looked at the words, and they tried to make some sense, but they just fell so flat.

The entire plot was Hugo and Mae on a train. Mae was trying to find who she was after she was rejected from film school for a film that wasn't her. Hugo was trying to escape the life of being forever surrounded by his famous sextuplet family. They find their paths colliding after Hugo puts out a request for a Margaret Campbell online, since his train trip across the United States required one after his Margaret Campbell drops out.

There was a LOT of potential. I mean, a LOT. I love me some travel stories, some fluffy romance, some emotional depth and reflection. I mean, this characters were going on a JOURNEY - both physically and

mentally and emotionally and I was down! I down was down for the train ride.

However, every chance this book got it, it just...stalled. The train never started on the track. It just sat there, and I was the car that was needed to get on the other side, and it blocked my way and even looping around it DID NOTHING.

The characters were blah. Hugo and Mae were both extremely bland. I didn't connect with either. I had hopes for the family, but I felt like Hugo's family just blended together into one big blob. I did like Mae's dads and her grandmother, but I also felt like Mae's grandmother became into a bit of a cliché? I had hopes AGAIN that maybe they would run into some cool eccentric characters on their train ride that would be fun and quirky, but everyone felt like the next one. I don't even remember Mae's best friend's name.

The romance was...well, it was there. They were...I just...THEY WERE SO EH. I never felt any tension between them. It was very fast and abrupt and SO FAST. I will admit that I can get behind instalove occasionally if done right, but this was just...they were trusting each other fully on the first night and feeling deep feels. I just.

And the romance felt like really the only plot? I mean, they were focused on Hugo setting off on his own and Mae doing movie things, but they didn't do much to me. There were all the parts together, but I never really connected with them. The best part was the premise of Hugo trying to find Mae, and that only lasted like 40 pages. There was a plot twist was entirely predictable, and I was just 200% done with it at that point that it made zero impact.

Just...I...I don't even know. The cover is really cute, though?

This book gets 1 crown from me and a Merida rating. I don't hate it with a fiery passion, and there wasn't anything extremely wrong or problematic with it. It just...it just sat there. It would sat there, and I would look at the cover, and that was at least goodness. But it just didn't have a flow or deep connection for anything.

Brittany says

This was a delightful throwback to a classic romantic comedy. You have two characters who are meeting under unlikely circumstances and setting out on an adventure. It is only natural that they may fall in love along the way! This was a quick, fun read and I really enjoyed it.

Emily Gilbow says

Perhaps the best part of reading this book was reading it on a road trip. As they looked out their train car to see the views of America, I, too, looked out my window. This was such a simple and sweet read. Adorable and something that made you long for a nice, long train ride.

Gaby says

I knew I'd love this book (as I love all of Jen's books!) but I think I fell for this one the fastest. Hugo and

Mae are so wonderful and earnest, so relatable and genuine from page one. Plus, there's just something about the prose that reminds me of the rhythm of a train - dependable, soothing, and consistently wonderful. If you love contemporary YA, sweet love stories, and big (but not particularly loud or dramatic) journeys full of heart, this is the book for you.

FloeticFlo says

This book did not disappoint. I was impressed with how well Jennifer got Hugo and his Briticisms down. He remained consistent throughout. I was happy that I really enjoyed both Hugo and Mae. Jennifer E. Smith is the queen of capturing all the excitement, fear, anxiety, and anticipation of high school seniors about to head off to college. Field Notes on Love is no exception.

I always love travel stories. I think you can learn so much about yourself by taking yourself outside of your normal environment. For Hugo, this was especially true. Additionally, I just love seeing new places with new eyes -- I really enjoy seeing characters' reactions to places I have seen and wish to see.

Field Notes on Love comes out March 5, 2019 and if you want a shot of adorable, then I'd suggest you scoop this one up!

Read the full review on Book Nerds Across America: <http://www.booknerdsacrossamerica.com....>

Emma says

Didn't really fill me with warm, fuzzy feelings, but it was a solid (if a little short) story. I'd say it's in my top four JES books.

Jen Ryland says

lol this is actually something that happened a few years back - I remember reading the story online and thinking "that would make a great rom com."

Monica Fumarolo says

A longtime fan of Jennifer E. Smith, I was eager for her latest novel, a return to the kind of travel story that made me initially fall in love with her writing (I adore *The Statistical Probability of Love at First Sight*!). Hugo is a sextuplet, recently dumped, and supposed to be going on a trans-continental train trip from New York to California with said ex-girlfriend. Problem is, she made all of the nonrefundable, nontransferable reservations in her name. Enter Mae, a New York aspiring film maker with the same name and a desire to live more after more than a few people imply her films are lacking that certain *thing* (including USC film school).

I inhaled this novel, starting one evening and finishing the following morning. Though I had a hard time getting into the sextuplet aspects of the story, I eventually accepted it and enjoyed the unique bond (and sometimes, necessary lack thereof) Hugo has with his siblings. Mae's chapters were similarly insightful, striving for so much and yet hard on herself while also unable to understand the criticisms of others. At times I would have enjoyed a bit more from the supporting cast (I LOVED Mae's grandma, and would have liked similar attention given to other secondary characters), but the two protagonists at the heart of the story hold the narrative together. This pulled at my heart strings and had a tear or two trickling down my cheek towards the end. I think my 8th grade girls especially will adore this!

Makenna Fournier says

This ended up being a very middle of the road book for me. I didn't really have any strong feelings of super enjoying it, but I also didn't really dislike it, I was just eh.

The biggest downfall as to why I don't think I ended up enjoying it was I just had trouble connecting to it. One of the things I could not connect to was both of the main characters. I don't know what it was, but nothing really drew me in. I definitely did enjoy Hugos family, I thought they were interesting, but as far as Hugo himself and the other main character Mae, I just couldn't bring myself to be invested enough to care about whether or not they got what they wanted. Also, I really just wasn't invested in them for a relationship. It was not exactly instalove, but by the time romance was brought into the story, I felt nothing for it, which goes back to me just not being invested and connecting to them as characters in general.

The other thing I couldn't connect with was the plot in general, the journey. I love the idea of traveling across the U.S. , but this story didn't really focus that much on the road trip aspect, it was more about Mae and Hugo discovering things about themselves and what they want to do with life and college. Quick side note, but when I read Jennifer's other book Hello, Goodbye, and Everything In between, it was at a time where I was in the exact same spot as the characters and it made the connection with them and the story stronger, and that is why it ended up being so impactful at the time and why it was a favorite of mine. That was something I needed to enjoy this book, and I just didn't have it. I think there are going to be people to do connect with that aspect of the book, and I think those people can really like this book.

TLDR: Not one of Jennifer's books that is going to stick with me, but it wasn't a bad book and I would still recommend it to people.

Huge thanks to Netgalley for providing an eARC of this book in exchange for an honest review!

Ashley G says

This story was so sweet! I loved the characters, the families, the back stories / reasons for travel, and the chemistry between Hugo and Mae. It was a very PG love story, but with a bigger message of finding your self and travelling the path that is right for you. I read this book in between some heavier, darker books and it was a breath of fresh air. The parents in the story are also loving and supportive, and that is nice to see instead of the normal "demon parents who don't know anything because I'm a brilliant teenager" trope. Simply heartwarming and refreshing.

**I received this ARC at YALLFest in 2018.

Carol says

A fun and heartfelt novel that explores what happens when two teens who have spent their whole lives in their hometowns finally get out to see the world. Immediately before starting college. Spending an entire week together on a train. In the same compartment. And oh yeah--they're total strangers.

This hit a lot of favorite notes for me, but if I'm honest I'm even more excited to read each of Hugo's siblings' stories. Maybe someday, Jennifer E. Smith? ?

I received an advance copy from the publisher via Netgalley for review consideration.
