



Finding Mrs. Ford

Deborah Goodrich Royce

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Deborah Goodrich Royce's gripping and relatable literary suspense novel *Finding Mrs. Ford* unravels the decades-old secret behind an otherwise perfect life.

In 1979, Susan, who feels hopelessly square, meets and is drawn to Annie, a wild beauty whose disarming vulnerability is irresistible. The women couldn't be more different: Susan is responsible, a good student and employee, and growing into a cultured young woman. Annie, on the other hand, is outrageous, moving "in staccato, fluttery bursts, like she wasn't fully in control of her own trajectory." The women take jobs at a seedy Detroit night club where cocaine and disco flow freely and are soon swept into an inescapable crisis.

Thirty-five years later, Susan lives a life that could have been clipped from an issue of *Martha Stewart Living*. When her past—and the FBI—come looking for her, she has to reconcile the choices she made in order to attain her picture-perfect life.

Finding Mrs. Ford is an enthralling novel that alternates episodes from the past and present, flipping between 1979 and 2014. It is packed with gritty characters, including Chaldean and Italian mafiosos, thin-lipped FBI agents, an aging cocktail waitress, a couple of bad boyfriends, and a warmhearted grandma. These supporting "types" are dimensionless in comparison to Annie and Susan, whose heartfelt connection the novel builds upon. Their friendship is noncompetitive and mutually supportive, and they are a pair of perfect foils.

The novel's payoff is a thrilling twist that comes late in the book. As Susan accepts that the truth will cost her everything she's known, her memories of 1979 become more vibrant, violent, and graphic. The real thrill of *Finding Mrs. Ford* comes from reconciling the person Susan says she is with the girl she used to be.

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