

Sandra Ottey talks with Carib News about her new book, *Runaway Comeback*

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Writers of fiction often create characters that easily possess traits of real people and put them through realistic situations. Novelist, Sandra Ottey has created such a character in her first book, *Jamerican Connection* – Rose Thorn. In her sequel, *Runaway Comeback*, this character returns to continue the second part of her journey of overcoming tragedy and starting anew.

In an interview with New York Carib News, Ms. Ottey talks about Rose's character development in *Runaway Comeback* and what she hopes readers will take away from her second novel.

In her first book, *Jamerican Connection*, Ms. Ottey created Rose Thorn to help tell a story that addresses how several people 'sweep spousal abuse under the rug.'

"In *Jamerican Connection*, Rose is a high school dropout, young mother and bride," explains Ms. Ottey. "She is determined to get back on track to realize the dreams and ambitions she had set for herself before she met her abusive husband, Donovan."

In this story, Rose is working her way back on a track towards a college degree. At this time she "endures blatant infidelity, emotional and physical spousal abuse and more."

Eventually though, this seemingly tragic hero perseveres and learns to fight her way to the freedom she needs. In turn, she improves both her own life and that of her daughter's. Ms. Ottey says:

"Rose escapes the matrimonial home and travels back and forth from Jamaica to Brooklyn with her young daughter to realize her educational ambitions and escape the abuse. But her husband relentlessly plants spiky hurdles in her way, both in Jamaica and in Brooklyn, determined to keep her subservient while his sordid lifestyle escalates."

At the end of *Jamerican Connection*, Rose receives everything she has worked hard for and is living her life. In *Runaway Comeback*, Rose comes to understand "that in order to move forward, she must take a step backward and go back to that place where trouble had first come and uprooted her."

Why make this tragic hero revisit the hardships she just escaped? What is happening to this character and why is her story important? Rose's creator talks about this character's development between the stories, *Jamerican Connection* and *Runaway Comeback*.

"Rose Thorn is calm and reserved, but as she faces situations of increasing difficulties over the years, she toughens up and becomes stronger," explains Ms. Ottey. "She can be impulsive and a bit fiery, depending on her situation."

"Rose also takes chances even with fear in her heart. She says and does what she believes in, even if she feels she may be unjustly punished [for her actions or decisions]. She has been through hell and she made it; and that emancipation and deliverance came at a price."

"I want readers to see how Rose has developed from a naïve high school dropout into a strong college-educated woman."

Although Rose might have transformed into a stronger and wiser woman, readers will start to question whether the protagonist has changed her ways where love is concerned. One of the more exciting moments in *Runaway Comeback* is the reunification between Rose and her soul mate, Calvin Jones.

"Rose and Calvin attended the same high school in Jamaica," explains Ms. Ottey. "Calvin had been searching for Rose ever since she got pregnant and dropped out. Calvin had migrated to Brooklyn after he graduated. Rose is reunited with him after she leaves her abusive husband for the last time."

"Despite the infidelity and abuse in the story, love is a beautiful thing. Rose found love with Calvin, so I felt the need to incorporate that into the sequel. Sometimes love is better the second time around. Also, Calvin is such a good man that Rose feels every woman deserves a Calvin."

A story of love through the eyes of a woman who has a newfound inner strength is what attracted readers to Ms. Ottey's books. The author claims, "Women have told me that they can totally relate to the storyline, and that they are completely engrossed into the story because they feel as if they are actually in the scenes themselves. They feel their five senses are completely engaged."

Aside from exciting readers with sizzling plot development and a courageous main character, writing fiction has also helped Ms. Ottey find her own voice and writing style. In addition, Ms. Ottey wrote these two novels as "inspiration to high school dropouts to pick themselves up and still go on to achieve whatever goals and aspiration they had initially set for themselves." Ms. Ottey adds:

"If this story helps at least one high school dropout, or even a college dropout, overcome life's various unpredictable hurdles in order to pursue his or her educational goals, then writing the story was well worth it. That would be very rewarding for me."

At the moment, Ms. Ottey is promoting *Runaway Comeback* and working on her third novel. The author is also working on a screenplay for both *Jamerican Connection* and *Runaway Comeback*. Autographed copies of *Runaway Comeback* can be purchased at [HYPERLINK "http://www.sandraottey.com"](http://www.sandraottey.com) www.sandraottey.com, or order them from [HYPERLINK "http://www.amazon.com"](http://www.amazon.com) www.amazon.com and [HYPERLINK "http://www.barnesandnoble.com"](http://www.barnesandnoble.com) www.barnesandnoble.com.