



# Unexpected Stories

*Octavia E. Butler*

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**An NPR Books Great Read of 2014: Two never-before-published stories from the archives of one of science fiction's all-time masters**

The novella “A Necessary Being” showcases Octavia E. Butler’s ability to create alien yet fully believable “others.” Tahneh’s father was a Hao, one of a dwindling race whose leadership abilities render them so valuable that their members are captured and forced to govern. When her father dies, Tahneh steps into his place, both chief and prisoner, and for twenty years has ruled without ever meeting another of her kind. She bears her loneliness privately until the day that a Hao youth is spotted wandering into her territory. As her warriors sharpen their weapons, Tahneh must choose between imprisoning the newcomer—and living the rest of her life alone.

The second story in this volume, “Childfinder,” was commissioned by Harlan Ellison for his legendary (and never-published) anthology *The Last Dangerous Visions*<sup>TM</sup>. A disaffected telepath connects with a young girl in a desperate attempt to help her harness her growing powers. But in the richly evocative fiction of Octavia E. Butler, mentorship is a rocky path, and every lesson comes at a price.

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