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Helen Fitzgerald

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Some people love goodbyes...

23-year-old Catherine is mainly interested in Facebook and flirting, but she reluctantly takes a job at a local care home after her mother puts her foot down - and soon discovers that her new workplace contains many secrets. One of the residents at the home, 82-year-old Rose, is convinced that something sinister is going on in Room 7 and that her own life is under threat. But Rose has dementia - so what does she actually know, and who would believe her anyway? As Catherine starts investigating Rose's allegations, terrible revelations surface about everyone involved. Can Catherine find out what's really going on?

The Exit Details

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From Reader Review The Exit for online ebook

Nuria says

Writing style - T E R R I B L E. So much of what was mentioned was just...unnecessary. Suspense went on and on to the point where it was just dreary and I felt like skipping ahead to the last 10 pages. Grammar and sentence structure was messy and I had to re-read sentences to understand what was implied.

Plot itself was horrific. Like, truly morbid. It made me want to cry for my own mum in case, God forbid, she ever became terminally ill herself, not to mention provided enough foundation for a sequence of horrible nightmares, that I'm sure will start tonight, now that I finished this book at 1:30am. Details of the events were really much more gruesome than needed to be and in my opinion, the storyline took a completely different direction to the one I thought it would take.

This is the first and last novel of Helen Fitzgerald I have/will read. I'm very glad I only spent a day on this book, although in hindsight, I wish I'd given up with it much earlier to save myself all this discomfort.

Rikke says

I can't even explain how bad this is, but I'm gonna try...

First of all: I do not understand how it can have so many stars - it's a really bad storyline, and if that wasn't enough, it's also very poorly written. I struggled to finish it, - and in case you do to, I will now give you a fast pitch of the story, so you don't have to go through the same painful experience as I did. (You're welcome)

I would like to think you are beginning to re-think your choice of book about the point where the ungrateful, selfish, arrogant, lead character Catherine, opens a door in the nursing home she reluctantly got a job at - and finds her own mum sitting in there.

She finds out that the mum have a very aggressive brain tumour and that things will move fast - so because it's the easiest (????!) the mum will now live at this nursing home until the tumour kills her. We also learn that the mum is the reason poor little Catherine got the job to start of with.

oh, and also that the mum don't want Catherine there when she dies, so in the final stage of death, Catherine is told to take some time of work (What the...?)

Then there is a lot of pointless in-between-stuff, - Catherine sleeps with her boss, the one she havn't stopped rolling her eyes at , the one she state she can't stand at all. She cries the whole time, and oddly enough neither herself or the annoying boss seems that weirded out about that.

We have sweet old dementia Rose re-living the scene when she was 10 and couldn't save her baby sister from her asthma attack. The baby sister died while Rose was looking for matches, so that's what Rose do the entire book. She look for matches, and tells everyone that "something is going on" at the nursing homes room 7 (3? 5? I cant remember, cause I never cared enough)

Noone believes her (surprise!), or seem to even want to hear her out...

She draws a lot of drawings of an evil Queen, and writes very badly poems to go with the drawings. One could wonder who the queen in the drawing is, - but since her creepy gay grandson Chris is around a lot, and

wants his grandma to have a tracking device on her at all time - well...I'd say we have crowned the queen pretty early on!

There's also a bit about some cryptic writing in notebooks, annoying boss pretending to write a Novel - and the findings that Jimmy on the nursing home is a child molester. (blabla bla...)

The mum dies, - and even though Cathrine has been told not to be present, she changes her mind just in the right moment (I mean, really...? We have to have the whole "I should be there!" moment...) and rush back to the home, where her mum is NOT in her bed as requested. (Whaaaaat! How could it be?)

She is found in the secret room, the room where dementia Rose has always claimed things are going down. (Wait what...could Rose be RIGHT?)

The mum is not dressed in her own clothes, and is wearing different makeup. It's all very shady.

Luckily Cathrine gets mummy back to her own room, where she dies holding her daughters hand (tissues, please..I mean the build up to that was so amazing...)

It all leads to a webpage that the boss is running for people who gets wicketly aroused and excited about death people. When Catherine discovers the page and what it's about - and what have been done to all the people after death in the nursing home, she needs help. And she grabs the phone she is normally only ever using for facebook and selfies, and calls - dada - drumroll: Creepy gay grandson Chris! (Oh no, Catherine, how could you!)

Cathrine is now a prisoner in the nursing home, an the webpage people, is gonna kill her while they film it for their webpage.

But then good old Rose saves the day - as she finally get to burn something with the matches she is forever trying to get her hands on! Hurrah for Rose! I knew the old woman had it in her...

The End.

I feel a bit proud for getting to the end - if I could give no stars, or star minus, I would.

Anthea says

To be honest I don't even know why I decided to read this book... Having read The Cry before, I HATED IT. Thought this might be different. Yes it was, in a bad way. Worse.

It started off really good and captivating. There were two narratives, Catherine and Rose. Rose has dementia which causes her to be confused and not taken seriously by the people around her. Catherine is a narcissistic shallow little girl whom I despised right from the beginning.

Everything was sinister and strange. Why is there a specific "schedule" in which most of the elderly die? What is it in room 7 that make Rose so edgy and constantly warning the people about?

Things took a weird turn 3/4 through the book. It was too far-fetched and unrealistic and just plain clusterfuckery.

Won't ever read from this author ever again.

Lainy says

Time taken to read - 3 days

Publisher - Faber & Faber

Pages - 297

Blurb from Goodreads

Some people love goodbyes...

23-year-old Catherine is mainly interested in Facebook and flirting, but she reluctantly takes a job at a local care home after her mother puts her foot down - and soon discovers that her new workplace contains many secrets. One of the residents at the home, 82-year-old Rose, is convinced that something sinister is going on in Room 7 and that her own life is under threat. But Rose has dementia - so what does she actually know, and who would believe her anyway? As Catherine starts investigating Rose's allegations, terrible revelations surface about everyone involved. Can Catherine find out what's really going on?

My Review

We have two main characters, Catherine who is 23, self obsessed and all about her Facebook status and what she can get out of life. Rose is 82, successful author of children's books, lives at Dear Green Care Home and has dementia. She flits between present day and being cognitively aware to reverting to her 10 year old self and reliving an event over and over. Catherine gets a job in the care home, at the push of her mother and undertakes a journey of self discovery and personal growth. She forms a relationship with Rose and becomes endeared to the elderly lady, however as Rose becomes more adamant, in her lucid moments, that something is going on Catherine's interest is piqued. As she starts to nose around she finds some clues that maybe Rose is onto something with room 7 and her curiosity may lead her to more trouble and danger than she could have imagined.

I do like Fitzgerald, you never truly know what your going to get when you pick up one of her books as, I feel, they are very different. This one, we know from early on Catherine is ageist, not a particularly nice individual and does some questionable things. However, Rose is quirky and fabulous and I think she gets under Catherine's skin which starts the journey Catherine goes on. There is a lot more to this story and it is hard to go into without spoilers which I never do and generally hate. Needless to say, there are twists and turns that I didn't see coming, whilst some of the book gets really dark and some readers may find uncomfortable, there is some humour within it and I can't state enough how much I liked Rose.

The book also has some sexual content, abuse is also a factor although it is not throughout and when it does appear I found it was relevant to the story rather than just put in for effect. The book I could have read in one sitting however, life did not permit it so I had to steal moments when I could. 4/5 for me this time, I have read Fitzgerald before and absolutely will again, if you like a book that has some tough content, humour and grips you then this book is for you. the Exit is newly released and as good a place as any to start with this author if you haven't read her before.

Jayne Catherine pinkett says

I really enjoy the writing style of Helen Fitzgerald. I think this book could have been so much more. I would have liked more indepth coverage on the important topics(list below) and it would easily have been another of her 5* for me.

Catherine the main protagonist is hateful, ageist, bigoted and lazy!!.. She goes to work in a care home specialising in end of life care. She has been raised by her single professional mother who she takes advantage of. She meets Rose an elderly lady with Alzheimer's who keeps reliving grief from the loss of her sister, and when lucid tries to convince Catherine all is not what it seems at the home!

It is a very engaging book after the first third is over so don't give up on it as I nearly did because I was annoyed with Catherine.

The topics it covers which I felt needed more time and development were

Private care provision, Alzheimer s/dementia, terminal illness, internet predators. Abuse of vulnerable adults These subjects are still an important part of the plot and still have an emotional impact. Though I personally found them hard to read at times. Having lost my Mum earlier this year with a terminal illness, some of the content left me a little raw so beware.

Excellent ending with a twist but trigger alert.

Victoria Goldman says

I loved this book and read it in a couple of hours in just one sitting.

The Exit is an unusual story and very well written. It begins as a fairly straightforward easy read, but then develops into a brilliant sick and twisted plot, as the layers build up and more characters are introduced.

I took an instant dislike to Catherine, who is incredibly immature at the beginning and, as described by Rose, is rather dull. However, my views gradually changed throughout the course of the book; her personality grows with the story as circumstances force her to take on more responsibility in her life.

Rose was a brilliant character - a spunky 82 year old with plenty of attitude who doesn't stand for any nonsense. She drifts between moments of total lucidity and moments of regression back to her 10-year-old self. Sadly, due to her dementia, no one believes most of what she has to say - yet she actually holds the key to what is going on in Dear Green nursing home.

The Exit is very creepy, with humour and horror thrown into the mix. Helen Fitzgerald is a very talented author.

I received an Advanced Reader Copy from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Figgy says

23-year-old Catherine is cute:

He hired me because I'm cute. I don't have a problem admitting I'm cute. I hate people who

say 'Oh, I'm ugly', or 'I'm so fat', when they're clearly not. I'm slim and athletic. I have blonde hair, blue eyes, and I'm cute as a button, damnit. Ask the seven boyfriends I was with for less than six weeks; they'll agree. Don't ask the three I stayed with longer (never more than three months); they'll tell you I'm a vacuous narcissist.

She hates old people:

I didn't want to see old people unless someone was paying me for it. I didn't like them. They jumped the line to get on buses, they drove slowly, walked slowly, packed groceries slowly, paid for groceries slowly, infected us with their miserable faces, had trouble paying gas bills, told boring stories, smelt of wee, took up space. I was ageist, so shoot my firm optimistic face.

And she's just gotten herself a job at the local care home.

Her mother worries that she has no real plans for her life, has a lot of debt, and makes a lot of bad choices.

The rest of this review can be found [here!](#)

Wilde Sky says

A young woman starts working in a care home but not everything is as it seems.

The big reveal at the end was obvious about a third of the way through the book. The writing / pace were reasonable but the story was a bit thin plus the main young character and many of the 'villains' were a bit one dimensional. Some of the basic plot points didn't ring true.

Anni says

Rose, a feisty 82 year old struggling with dementia, is convinced that something sinister is going on in room 7 of her care home. Catherine is the self-obsessed young care aide that Rose must convince to take action, before they are both in danger of a fate not only worse than death, but horrifyingly deadly. This chilling but compulsive mix of psychological suspense, horror and black humour leads to a shocking climax that will leave you stunned.

Reviewed for Whichbook.net

Leslie says

The heroine who narrates most of the book is supposed to be 23, but she makes more sense if you read her as

a teenager. In the end, this turned into a pretty queasy mix of jokey teenage angst and perverse sexual nastiness (which is more than borderline homophobic, too).

Amanda Jane says

The first 30 pages or so were nothing special and I could not stand the main character but things change very quickly and it continues with lots of twists and turns. It is written from two very different characters views which I don't always like but in this instance it worked very well.

The Exit is a page turner! It is a true thriller, which I enjoyed immensely but it would not be everyone's cup of tea. It is a mystery novel but it's no Agatha Christie...it is macabre.

WARNING: It is extremely dark, creepy and disturbing. It is not for the faint hearted.

Trish says

I just want to start this review by saying I did my Masters dissertation on Serial Killers, so I'm used to grotesque and outside the box information information. However, this book has left me slightly stunned, and if that doesn't give you an indication of the book, then I suggest you read it yourself and make up your own mind.

Catherine gets a job at Dear Green Care Home, where she meets Rose. Rose has dementia. As the book goes on we know that Rose suspects that something is happening in the care home, although because she is an old lady of 82 no one believed her, that is no one except for Catherine who promises to help find out what is going on.

As time goes on you start to root for Catherine hoping she will find out the truth, facing her own trials through out the book (I will not tell you what) and you fall in love with Rose who is not as batty as people think she is; she goes back to her 10 year old self when something happened to her (again I won't tell you).

As the books starts off it says 'four weeks prior to death' which makes you automatically think oh its X has died, however, there are lots of twists and turns and its not all what you think and all is not as it seems....

The ending of the book is where thing start to unravel with Catherine doing her own investigation, trusting people who shouldn't be trusted and finding out that people are not who they say they are.

I found this book hard to get into at first but by 30 pages I was hooked and I read most of it today, you could easily sit down with this book and read it in a day. The writing is good, very easy to read, the chapters are perfect length so if you think you'll just read one more you don't have to stop half way through a chapter (one of my pet peeves, I hate doing this), but if you have to there are some good places to stop.

I have never read any of Helen Fitzgerald's books before but I may give the others a try after this. Because

I'm still a bit shocked and I found it hard to get into to begin with;

4 stars

Bill Kupersmith says

When you have an author who likes to begin in familiar & mundane settings & then suddenly veers into a world that's totally off-the-wall, you can't expect that all of her books are going to work for you. That's true of Helen Fitzgerald & me: I loved *The Cry, Dead Lovely, & The Devil's Staircase*, whilst *The Donor* & *Amelia O'Donohue is So Not a Virgin* didn't quite float my boat & *Deviant* was a DNF. Too much suspension of disbelief is required in this one. I had two problems with *The Exit*. The Alzheimer's pt seemed too alert & vigorous when the plot required - dementia pts are capable of strong bursts of physical activity, but not as well-directed & co-ordinated as in the denouement here. And tho' I can indeed imagine things and people as el-yucho as what's going on @ *Dear Green*, what they're into shouldn't prove all that exciting even for very sick puppies & I couldn't believe they'd have or pay what would be required to float the care home & this operation. I shouldn't recommend you not read this book - I enjoyed trying to figure it out - but it's not quite worth my time.

Side Note: I quite agree that 'I'm sorry for your loss' is really a stupid expression & I wish I never had to use it. The trouble is that like referring to relative who just died as 'a loved one' - there's not really a suitable idiomatic way to say it. (Sort of like referring to a mature male who enjoys all the pleasures of matrimony without the responsibilities as a 'boyfriend'! There's no other term even tho' he's neither a boy nor just a friend.)

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

A disturbing novel of psychological suspense, *The Exit* is Helen Fitzgerald's eleventh book.

The narrative alternates between the perspectives of 23-year-old Catherine, an unemployed, arrogant party girl, and Rose, an 82-year-old children's book author and illustrator suffering from dementia, whose hold on the present is tenuous. Rose is a resident of *Dear Green*, a small private care home in Glasgow, Scotland, and the two meet when Catherine, at her mother's insistence, reluctantly accepts a job in the private facility as an aide.

Of the handful of residents, Catherine is least repulsed by Rose, and when the old woman offers her £1000 to deliver a message she is happy to humour Rose's ravings about 'truth' and 'Room 7'. Catherine is thinking only of escaping to Ibiza to work on her tan when she discovers some creepy entries in the care log and she begins to suspect that Rose might be right, something is very wrong at *Dear Green*.

There are several unexpected twists and turns in *The Exit* which eventually exposes a dark and perverted secret but not before Catherine and Rose almost become victims of their suspicions. I was slow to warm to Catherine, who seems determined to live up to the stereotype of Gen Y, while Rose's dementia, and tragic past, inspires a mix of pity and admiration, but I found myself anxious for the welfare of both women as the

story unfolded.

There was a major element of the story, involving Catherine's mother, that didn't really work for me. I can't reveal too much without risking spoilers but I felt it was an odd addition to the plot. In addition the conclusion was more ambiguous than I would prefer.

The story feels a little slow to start as Fitzgerald establishes character but the pace picks up, and *The Exit* is a quick read. What I didn't really expect was the vein of humour that occasionally leavens the horror.

The Exit is an unsettling thriller, though I didn't grip me the way *The Cry* did, I did enjoy it.

Cleo Bannister says

Catherine, a lover of social media, unemployed and drifting is finally driven to get a job as a way of avoiding another unpleasant evening meeting with her Mum where she would be presented with her failure following items for discussion, and quite possibly, a list!

The first of Catherine's lists appeared when she was aged five:

1. Make three new friends at school and ask them if they'd like to come over to play some time
2. Write a story for me.
3. Put your dirty clothes in the washing basket in the utility room (This, Catherine, is something I would like you to do from now on)
4. Make your own breakfast – cereal and milk. (This is also something I'd like you to do from now on.)
5. Do at least three kind things for others.

and they continued every Sunday until she left school.

The job Catherine managed to bag was at Dear Green nursing home where the most appealing of the residents is 82-year-old Rose. Rose has dementia and appears to be thrown back to an event that occurred when she was 10 and an evacuee with her sister at a farm. Rose is also a famous author and illustrator with a series of books to her name which features a brave little girl called Tilly, books the young Catherine had loved.

The early scenes of the book are very engaging, while Catherine is young and thoughtless she has some good qualities and the obvious mystery is what Rose is re-enacting when she is gripped by the memory from childhood, but also she is desperate to bring attention to the home, Room 7 is locked and Rose alludes to danger but is unable to articulate in words what she is so frightened of.

As more characters are introduced and then layered with individual characteristics, I was charmed by the captivating dialogue between Catherine and some of the residents, and slowly she appears to alter her opinion on her previously frivolous life and become more measured in her approach to her work, but this soon runs in tandem to something altogether darker and more disturbing.

I loved *The Cry*, despite the fact that it made me feel very uncomfortable, and had half-expected another scenario where all the characters had varying degrees of unpleasantness, but Helen Fitzgerald is clearly not a

one-trick pony. I can't tell you any more about the plot without spoiling the story for others, but I am able to confirm that the characterisation is excellent with my opinion on some, particularly Catherine's mother, swayed by the revelations that the author timed perfectly. Along with this the author has an expert touch cleverly building the tension while still keeping the overall feel of the story intact and the plot, well that was hole free!

Another winner from this talented author and I want to say a big thank you to the publishers Faber and Faber for allowing me to read this book prior to the publication date of 5 February 2015
