



Fitz

Mick Cochrane (Illustrator)

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A father, a son, and a gun. This could make for an interesting day..

Sometimes Fitz would look at himself in the mirror, an expression of pathetic eagerness on his face. He was a dog in the pound, wanting to be adopted. He'd smile. What father wouldn't want this boy?

Fifteen-year-old Fitzgerald—Fitz, to his friends—has just learned that his father, whom he's never met, who supports him but is not a part of his life, is living nearby. Fitz begins to follow him, watch him, study him, and on an otherwise ordinary May morning, he executes a plan to force his father, at gunpoint, to be with him.

Over the course of one spring day, Fitz and his father become real to one another. Fitz learns about his father, why he's chosen to remain distant and what really happened between him and Fitz's mother. And his father learns what sort of boy his son has grown up to become.

Fitz Details

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Author : Mick Cochrane (Illustrator)
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From Reader Review Fitz for online ebook

Zola Melville says

The overall plot was very interesting however, the beginning was difficult to get into. I enjoyed the story and the anticipation to continue to read towards the end.

Abbie says

Video Review: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=49SZC...>

This book's plot was better than the actual execution for me. The whole aspect of this young teenage boy pulling a gun on his father that left when he was a baby seems super teen angsty and intriguing, especially with Fitz being a good kid. I felt like we were going to get some sort of big reveal with why the events had occurred, why his dad left, and without spoiling anything I just wanna say it was a major let down. The book itself didn't suck, I just feel like Cochrane had a good premise but didn't flesh it out practically at all and decided that was good enough. I think the plot had a lot of potential and just wasn't thought out thoroughly. The places they went (The zoo?) were pretty irrelevant and I found Fitz to be kind of unbelievable. I feel like he tried so hard to get you to like the side characters even though you saw them for maybe a total of like 20 pages through the whole book. I just felt very detached for all the characters and over all was not impressed.

Cassi aka Snow White Haggard says

3.5/5 stars

In writing you hear the mantra "show and don't tell" all the time. But sometimes, just occasionally, writers break that rule and it works. Fitz is an example of that. This is not the type of book where you go on a grand adventure with the main character, or follow his struggles for months and years. Instead the book takes place over the course of one day. Fitz (the main character as well as title) is searching for answers about his past. And while these stories may be told through dialogue, they're nonetheless compelling.

Fitz is a believable narrator. I instantly bought into the voice of this novel. Fitz is confused. He feels like he's missing something vital in life. But he's a good kid--makes good grades, doesn't get into trouble, treats his mom well. Except on this one day, that's not who Fitz wants to be. Like a costume, he puts on a thuggish persona and sets out to teach his father a lesson.

The thing is Fitz has never met his father. He's been this distant unknown, his mother not even willing to tell him his father's name. All of that only makes Fitz more curious. Instead of just listening to his mother's stories, Fitz takes matters into his own hands, finding out everything he can about his mysterious father.

While his father may send the monthly check, Fitz knows it's no replacement for a relationship. What Fitz wants is time and answers. His mother refuses to give him the answers and his father has never given him any time. Fitz decides to take what he wants, kidnapping his father to force some father/son bonding time.

The voice in this novel is perfect. Sometimes Fitz tries to sound mean and harsh, but you can tell that he doesn't even quite believe it himself. He's not much of a bad guy, even though he's kidnapping his father. Fitz may wave a gun around but the reader never believes he's really capable of shooting anyone. This creates a strange sympathy for Fitz. Yes he's doing something stupid, but as the reader you really don't want to see him punished for it.

While the story is small what it means for one boy's life isn't. Sometimes things that don't seem important to you might be all consuming to someone else. That's how Fitz feels about finding out why his father left. As far as problems go, it might seem fairly minor. Except for Fitz it's the most important question in the world.

The epilogue undermines the rest of this book. It feels tacked on, like the author didn't really know how to end the story. So while the rest of the book was understated and impactful, the epilogue was too clean and simple to match the realism of Fitz's story. It's a bad way to end an otherwise great book.

I received a review copy of this book from the publisher through Netgalley.

Marissa Montalvo says

Fitz, a fifteen year old boy that has never meet his father but he is determined to change that. But without the help of his mother he finds other means of getting the truth answers he's wanted his whole life, why has his father never contacted him? Why does his mom refuse to talk about it? And what exactly happened on the day his father just up left. Truthfully I really enjoyed this book and this is why the author is very good at making the characters have a certain type of life like complexity that makes you rethink the negative connotations and actions of the characters. And you see this amazing personal growth in Fitz from beginning to end he grows from a very confused person that is sick of living his life without closure so much so he goes out to abduct his father. But by the end of the day him and his father are chillin' out at fitz's house with his friends. But I do feel the ending was somewhat less developed than the rest of the book, in conclusion I do think this book is powerful and complex enough to really get you thinking.

Rebecca says

the book that i had read was a bit criminal and loving. the audience was intended to be for young adults because its around that age with the father issues and the conflict is set up. fitz was abandoned y his father and his mom don't let him know why he had left or even what had happened. so he buys a gun skips school and kidnaps his father that hes has been stalking.

my opinion is that it was long and boreing there wasn't enough action. it was mainly just about his thoughts and things that had happened over the years and growing up. there wasn't enough talking with his father. also when the action did happen it was fast but it it would get you lie it would send a rush. i did like the ending because it was happy but kind of corny.

the reader i would predict to read this a paitent one because they will have a to wait for the action and have to put up with the really boring parts that makes want to pulll your hair out

Kate says

I read this ARC via Netgalley.

Fitz has always done what he's told, even though growing up with a single mom hasn't been easy. Until one day when he takes a gun and goes to where he's found out his father lives, and takes his father hostage for the day. He isn't sure exactly what he wants from his father. Can one day make up for a lifetime?

Fitz's conflicted feelings would ring true with any kid growing up in a single-parent household. I wondered a little bit at what would make Fitz decide to take this radical action in the first place, although he and his father quickly gained some trust between each other, making the gun unnecessary. While Fitz seemed a bit bland - he is a "good kid" after all - he did have an interest in music, which he shared with his father.

Tj Glowik says

I would not recommend this book if someone held me at gunpoint and told me to. This author's style is very straightforward and boring. No major events happened and the main character was impressively difficult to relate to. He's a villain without great motivation. His taste in music is simply terrible and for some reason every character seems to like it anyways. Why does everyone in this book like the blues so much? Also, some characters seem to change very suddenly and in strange ways. The characters are written fairly basically, and not one is likeable.

Mrs. Tongate says

Quick read, but not a fan. Fitz holds his Dad at gunpoint in the car, so he can find the answers he's been wanting to know all of his life. How about just making an appointment and talking with the guy...Just not realistic.

Kate says

I wanted to like this. I really, really wanted to. And I even started to reread it when I finished it, thinking I had just missed something.

The sentence structure is highly (a little annoyingly) predictable. I normally don't comment on stuff like that, because I usually don't notice it. But with this book I couldn't help it. The story itself is compelling as hell, and maybe it's written this way on purpose. Speaking of the story - no spoilers, but personally I was disappointed by the ending.

I read this as part of a book club with my middle school students, our school librarian, and the local public library. I am really looking forward to the other selected books, but this one just didn't do it for me.

Laura says

“A father, a son, and a gun.”

Everyone has a story to tell. But with two sides to every story, how do we know which side is the truth?

Fifteen-year-old Fitzgerald (Fitz) is determined to get the truth. He needs to know what happened between his parents and why his father doesn't want to be a part of his life. Fed up with getting no answers from his mother, Fitz sets out to kidnap his father at gunpoint and finally get his version no matter what. As Dinah Washington once crooned, “What a difference a day makes”...

Fitz, Fitz, Fitz—your big heart won me over from the get-go. A good kid with friends, school, chores, music in his heart, and a crush on a girl. With a mix of vulnerability and determination, Fitz's need to know why his father abandoned him pushes him to the point of desperation with powerful heart-on-your-sleeve emotion. The feelings this story pulled out of my heart truly surprised me. Tears stung my eyes and anger bubbled in my blood. At times, I even caught myself muttering—just tell him! Say it! Fitz's emotional confusion and battle between lashing out with anger and wanting to be loved was captured with such tenderness on the page. Like in this scene—Fitz's sweetness shines, blushes, and blooms in this diner scene with his Dad (Curtis):

“A second piece of pie, in a restaurant—it just never even occurred to Fitz as a possibility. It violates some iron law, some rule so fundamental and obvious and universally accepted that it never needs to be spelled out: *each diner may order one, and only one, dessert.* But today that rule doesn't apply. Today, all bets are off.”

The writing....wait, hold up. *review skids to a halt* I have to sidetrack beg here for a second. Music plays a big part of Fitz's life and day. But as the story unfolded, I found myself wishing for more and more music scenes. The language, emotion, and words Mr. Cochrane puts together on the page to describe music, beats, and voices left me speechless and in complete I-am-not-worthy awe! Listen to the way Fitz describes bluesman Jimmy Reed's music—“It was like Jimmy knew all about having a hole at the center of yourself.”

Or here when Fitz talks about Nora's (aka the crush) vocals—“He didn't tell her that whenever he heard her sing, no matter what it was—could be a spiritual, could be a corny show tune—he felt something. Her voice seemed to know things—there were secrets in it.”

sigh Sooooo this is where I crawl and beg for more. Please, Mr. Cochrane write a story focused on and alive with music! These few lines alone made my heart beat very happy, so a full book with your words centered on music would be heaven! Okay...Sorry back on track. Never hurts to throw a beg in the suggestion box. :D

Now on to my bump in the journey. The heartfelt message I took from Fitz's story and my one disappointment are actually intertwined here. For me, communication is the key to this tale. Both Fitz and his father needed to express the life-long, pent up anger, guilt, faults, and wishes to each other. Get it out. Ask the questions. Say the words. Words and emotions left unsaid hurt and sting just as much as words spoken out loud. That is why the ending—something Fitz does near the end—disappointed my heart. After all they

had been through, shared, and talked about over the day, that one action robbed me of the message's impact. The importance of communication. I'm trying my hardest here not to spoil anything. Haha...Just read it and see for yourself. :D The message is still there, but just not as clear as I would have liked at the end.

With strong, likeable characters and powerful emotions simmering underneath every move, question, and detail—this book pulled me in by the heartstrings. My heart ached for Fitz and his father. Both father and son begin to share, reveal the past, and admit their mistakes. But will they ask for more from each other? Regrets. Life can fill up pretty fast with regrets if we let fear rule our hearts. Don't let one of your regrets be not saying how much you care. Say it!

I highly recommend this powerful read for young readers.

Thank you Netgalley. I am off to hunt down more Mick Cochrane books.

Quotes taken from uncorrected advance reader's copy.

Anna (Curiosity comes before Kay) Partrick says

Fitz is fifteen, living with his Mom in a rundown neighborhood. He has never met his Dad, but that's about to change. Today he's going to spend the day with his Dad, holding him at gunpoint, and trying to get the answers that he's always wanted. Why didn't his Dad stay with his Mom? Why hasn't he been in Fitz's life, other than sending child support? This sounded like a book that is very different from my usual read. I decided to give it a try and had mixed feelings when it was over. On a basic level I can understand wanting the answers to those questions so badly that you'd do anything for them. But also, I could never imagine holding someone at gunpoint, especially my estranged Father, to get them. I felt like Fitz's thoughts, actions and feelings read as being a lot younger than fifteen. It almost read as though he was mentally ill or had a serious disability. I know that wasn't the case, but the fact that he seems to have absolutely zero normal range reasoning skills left me wondering. Plus, taking his Dad to the zoo? How old is he, five? I just was not a fan of this particular "gritty" piece of fiction (I use quotes because I feel like it acted more gritty than it was). I felt like the ending was a major cop-out. Fitz spends the entire book with his Dad at gunpoint and all of a sudden, they're all playing happy families at the end, with visitation and everything. Highly unrealistic in every sense of the word. If you want gritty fiction go read a book by Ellen Hopkins. I would recommend skipping this one unless you can relate to it on some deeper level, in which case please find a good therapist!

VERDICT: 2/5 Stars

I received an Advanced Reading E-book Copy from the publisher, via NetGalley. No money or favors were exchanged for this review. This book was published November 13th, 2012.

Isamlq says

“Fifteen year old Fitz kidnaps the father he has never known, taking him from at gun point, in an attempt to address his bewildering mix of resentment and yearning.”

Intriguing as that sounds, I had this slight fear that I would get a boy too wrapped up in his own thing, too self absorbed and too aware of what he didn't have. *He was and he wasn't*. It was that start and the end that got me to react the strongest, but the in-between was totally different. Fitz put it best with his '**what's after hate?**' It was exactly that question that had me continuing. Frankly, my feelings went from intrigued and curious then settled on my usual "so-what- now feelings" mode that I've been on for the longest time, but I really wanted to know what would follow that volatile beginning.

Once done, my usual middle feelings of *ok* came around, but the longer I considered it the more I liked it. Though "like" might not be the right word.

This is about how Fitz wants what he doesn't have. It's also about how he finds why that's the case. It wasn't what I was expecting and it certainly wasn't what he was expecting. Because the story he unearthed with him holding that gun could be described as a little "everyday." In fact, even him taking his father at gunpoint, was something I thought would go off with a bit more volatility, urgency; something that would grab by my gut, I suppose. But here? I skated through it given how everything was happening so quietly, so ordinarily *so quietly ordinary*(?). Even his back story that's discovered, felt commonplace. So commonplace, in fact, that it's what made Fitz's story sadder... more sad than merited.

The reactions he got out of the other were both obvious and not-so obvious because Curtis was afraid and resigned then later even ballsy in getting things done. Overall, however, the progression I can only describe as a little mundane... almost as if it's everyday that someone (a) takes another at gunpoint and (b) that the other taken at gunpoint. But it's Curtis side of the story that was less than obvious, it's what niggled at me. Never mind the may be slightly imbalanced boy with the gun. Never mind the same boy's propensity towards picturing his thoughts real and wanting his daddy. It was CURTIS's revelations that were equal parts sad and selfish. There's an honesty to the guy in admitting he came up short. But admitting something and doing something about it are two wholly different things. (view spoiler)

So their actions, even if extreme, were understandable, but still selfish and misguided. This is true both for his mother (with her idea of each doing what's best for all,) and for his father (with being satisfied in doing what he'd been doing for forever -or not doing as was his case.) And yes even for Fitz, this slightly imbalanced boy with a wanting that's so big that he acts to the extreme.

The start of his story was intriguing, but the progression from there put an emphasis on events that were a bit 'every day.' And I may sound contrary, but that end still had me feeling shortchanged. I expected something more. Why that's the case is a wonder even to me because only in the beginning were things volatile... then thereafter things went quietly, ordinarily by. (yes, I am not blind to my overuse of adverbs in this one.)

While not my favorite, this was definitely interesting.

THANK YOU NETGALLEY!

2??? or 3??? of 5

Rose says

Initial thoughts: I thought that "Fitz" was an excellent coming of age story with appropriate amounts of

tension. It's about a teenage boy on the edge of breaking without having a father figure in his life. Desperate, Fitz buys a gun, finds his father and holds him at gunpoint, while suggesting that they spend some "quality time" together. What happens from that point is something that neither of them expect - they learn more about each other than they bargained for.

Full review:

I'm incredibly belated with writing the review on Mick Cochrane's "Fitz", partially because I read the book so far before its respective release date as an ARC (I read it in March of 2012, but it wasn't released until late 2012). Yet, when I consider it now, there's so much about this novel that I remembered and loved. The story revolves around an angry boy named Fitzgerald, or simply called Fitz for short. He has a love for jazz and singing, he earns good grades. While you would think on the surface this was a normal kid, inside, Fitz has hit his boiling point and feels angry with the state of things in his life. He hides a gun, and while searching for answers in the broken relationship between his mother and father, he decides to search out his father - whom he has never met - and demand answers from him as to why the man isn't in his life.

I loved Fitz's narrative voice in this book, and the flow of the writing was so easy in transition from one point to the next, keeping the tension front and center as well as illuminating the relationships between the characters. It's a coming to terms story as well as incorporates other elements to center around Fitz's experiences and discoveries. Although this entire story is a glimpse into Fitz's life for one day when he takes his particularly jarring act of desperation, it provides so much into the eye of the character that I couldn't draw myself away from it. One of the best things that I took from in this particular work was the fact the author showed Fitz's internal conflict to a tee - showing the difference between his displayed actions, which engage the push for answers no matter what, and his internal dialogue, which shows he has a stronger moral compass than what his actions would lend.

I think the one thing that I could say that I didn't completely love was the way the ending came across in comparison to the rest of the novel - I think it tried to tie things off in a conclusive way, but it felt a bit different from the tone of the narrative flow up until that point, which is a shame because the setup and execution through the duration of the novel was very strong and had a darker coloring that didn't match really how the ending tried to thread those ties together. I think it could've been more plausible and more realistic than what it was. I think if that had been a better tie, this would've easily been one of my favorite overall picks of the year.

Suffice to say, I did enjoy this novel and appreciated it as a character driven story with a strong narrative voice. It had some bumps in the road, but it was worth following through.

Overall score: 4/5

Note: I received this as an ARC from NetGalley, from the publisher Random House BFYR.

Sarah says

The bond between a father and son has never been more important for Fitz than today. Fantastic recommendation for reluctant teens for the summer.

Josiah says

Review to come closer to release date.
