



Hotel World

By Ali Smith

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Hotel World By Ali Smith

Wooooooooo-hoooooooo.

Five people: four are living; three are strangers; two are sisters; one, a teenage hotel chambermaid, has fallen to her death in a dumbwaiter. But her spirit lingers in the world, straining to recall things she never knew. And one night all five women find themselves in the smooth plush environs of the Global Hotel, where the intersection of their very different fates make for this playful, defiant, and richly inventive novel.

Forget room service: this is a riotous elegy, a deadpan celebration of colliding worlds, and a spirited defense of love. Blending incisive wit with surprising compassion, **Hotel World** is a wonderfully invigorating, life-affirming book.

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Hotel World By Ali Smith Bibliography

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Five disparate voices inhabit Ali Smith's dreamlike, mesmerizing *Hotel World*, set in the luxurious anonymity of the Global Hotel, in an unnamed northern English city. The disembodied yet interconnected characters include Sara, a 19-year-old chambermaid who has recently died at the hotel; her bereaved sister, Clare, who visits the scene of Sara's death; Penny, an advertising copywriter who is staying in the room opposite; Lise, the Global's depressed receptionist; and the homeless Else, who begs on the street outside. Smith's ambitious prose explores all facets of language and its uses. Sara takes us through the moment of her exit from the world and beyond; in her desperate, fading grip on words and senses she gropes to impart the meaning of her death in what she terms "the lift for dishes," then comes a flash of clarity: "That's the name for it, the name for it; that's it; dumb waiter dumb waiter dumb waiter."

Hotel World is not an easy read: disturbing and witty by turns, with stream-of-consciousness narrators reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, its deceptively rambling language is underpinned by a formal construction. Exploring the "big themes" of love, death, and millennial capitalism, it takes as its starting point Muriel Spark's *Memento Mori* ("Remember you must die") and counteracts this axiom with a resolute "Remember you must live." Ali Smith's novel is a daring, compelling, and frankly spooky read. --Catherine Taylor, *Amazon.co.uk*

From Publishers Weekly

When it was published in the U.K. earlier this year, the latest offering from Scottish writer Smith (Free Love) was made an Orange Prize finalist and shortlisted for the prestigious Booker Prize. Featured are five women whose lives (and a death) overlap at the Global Hotel, a generic establishment in an unnamed city in England. The novel begins with Sara, a chambermaid who plummeted to her death in one of the hotel's dumbwaiters, as her ghost tries to recollect what it was like to be alive. Else, a homeless woman who sits on the concrete in front of the hotel, is invited by Lise, the receptionist, to stay for a free night. Penny, a freelance travel journalist thrown into the mix, looks for ways to curb her boredom and unwittingly helps Sara's sister, Clare, in her search for Sara's spirit. Smith expertly fuses humor and pathos throughout the novel. When Sara's ghost visits her corpse in the grave, it's none too happy to see her; when it won't answer her questions, she harasses it by singing songs from West End musicals. And when the disgruntled Lise lets Else into the hotel, she contemplates throwing in a free breakfast, as an extra snub to her employers. Smith's narrative style varies with each character and is generally exciting and quite successful, although some readers will find the acrobatics tiring. The connections she makes between the characters across class lines and even across the line between life and death are driven home in a beautifully lyrical coda. National advertising. (Jan. 15)Forecast: Although it probably won't create the kind of stir in the States that it did in England, *Hotel World* should do well if it scores a few prominent enthusiastic reviews.

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From Library Journal

A heartfelt and introspective ghost story, *Hotel World* begins at the end and works backward and then meanders some in between. Readers first witness the accidental death of Sara Wilby, a hotel chambermaid who is also the narrator of the story. In an attempt to make sense of her demise, she comes back as an apparition at her own funeral and relives earlier events. While Sara's parents enter a catatonic state, her sister Clare is propelled by her grief into finding answers and reconciliation. She stakes out a spot near the hotel

where she can sit daily and observe the commerce going on in the hotel and the nearby shops. So, too, does a homeless woman, Else, who begs for spare change. These and other characters come together in a tender, moving story of innocence, love, and kindness. This first novel was short-listed for the 2001 Orange Prize. Smith's beautiful, unpretentious writing mesmerizes. Highly recommended. Lisa Nussbaum, Dauphin Cty. Lib. Syst., Harrisburg, PA
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Avis Zeiger:

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