



Girl, 16: Five-Star Fiasco

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Media type:

Book

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Jess Jordan is a well-meaning but highly disorganized teenage girl. She and her boyfriend Fred Parsons decide to stage a Valentine's Day dinner dance to raise money for Oxfam. As the date of the party approaches they have failed to organize certain necessary items, such as food, music and lighting. Before the party Jess and Fred are invited to spend a weekend in the country. Jess's friend Flora has a boyfriend from a wealthy Dorset background. At this boyfriend's house one of the weekend's main activities, it transpires, is for the boyfriend's posh mates to torment the life out of Fred.

Fred decides to flee, and to pull out of the Valentine's Day project, leaving Jess to try to make a go of the party on her own. Will the project simply collapse? Will Jess ever be reunited with Fred?

Some writers opt for a narrative outcome that makes for a happy closure. Alternatively ? and more challengingly ? the writer may choose to deliver a different ending, one that shows how deeply the preceding events have shaped the character and expectations of the protagonist. Limb chooses this more demanding option. This sophisticated narrative strategy sometimes seems at odds with the pacy, colloquial tone of this book with Limb's trademark humour but this is a daring piece of literary craftsmanship.

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