



# This is Not Forgiveness

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[Val Randall](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is a three-handed narrative. Rob, Caro and Jamie each give their versions of a story of love, violence, betrayal and loss. Jamie's brother Rob has returned from fighting in Afghanistan a broken man, physically and emotionally. Full of despair at the loss of his role as a crack sniper, frustration at the banality of civilian life and fear of his impending isolation as his Army friends prepare to return to the war zone, he seeks to ease his pain with drink, drugs, brawling ? and Caro. She, in turn, recognises and responds to his damage from a deep well of her own. Her affiliation with a group of political anarchists leads her to see Rob as 'the perfect instrument' to spearhead the assassination of a prominent politician who is visiting a local school.

Thus, the stage is set, the wheels beginning to grind into motion when Caro meets Jamie, Rob's younger brother and, despite her determination to use him purely as a sexual distraction, begins to fall in love with his emotional warmth, his naivety, his uncomplicated love for her. When Rob's plans for the assassination take on a far more sinister tone, it is her time with Jamie which ultimately makes her realise that she can and must save innocent lives by sacrificing herself. The three narrative voices are entirely credible and emotions are meticulously explored and exposed. The plot coils tightly, shocking with its emotional revelations and authentic in its concerns about the impact of war and of fractured families on an increasingly large and disparate group. This is Celia Rees at her best ? weaving, probing and unpredictable.

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