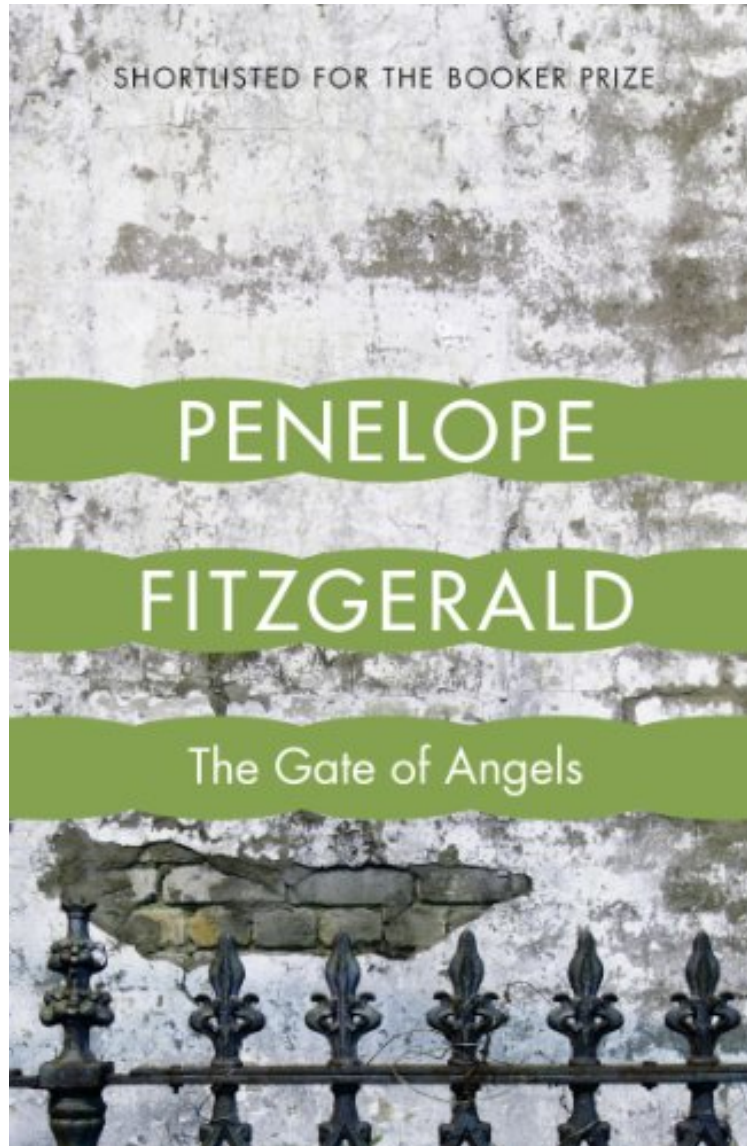


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The Gate of Angels

Von Penelope Fitzgerald

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Von Penelope Fitzgerald : The Gate of Angels before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gate of Angels:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The most Jane Austen-like late Fitzgerald novelVon Stephen O. MurrayThis seems to me the Fitzgerald novel that is most akin to Jane Austen. The reader wants the right pair to couple (I'm not convinced the couple in *_Innocence_* is the right pair; in many other Fitzgerald novels there is no right pair, and the one here is open to question). The irony and syntax

seem Austenian, though the epistemological status of atomic physics is not directly addressed in anything by Jane Austen. Certainly, there are unaffluent clergymen aplenty in Austen, and damsels who don't recognize the match the reader recognizes. In Austen there are also plenty of unmarried males who are also slow to recognize their appropriate partner. Daisy is not socially appropriate (if they wed, he'll be marrying down), but Fred Fairly is certain he must have her. There is a plot, including a court case (also a ghost story), so *The Gate of Angels* is more like *The Bookshop* than the other three late Fitzgerald novels (the four not seemingly based to some extent on her experience of particular times and places). Fitzgerald had a phenomenal gift for sketching characters. She was able to develop characters more fully than she did any in *The Gate of Angels*. I'd like to know how Fred's sisters got on, for instance. Or something of the "private life" of Professor Flowerdew. Sometimes less is not more! Even for someone who was a genius of concision.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. There are more things in heaven and earth... Von Wayne Symes This is a lovely book. Penelope Fitzgerald was a subtle writer. She had a marvellous gift for conveying character and setting with the minimum of fuss. Consequently, her novels are quite short and easy to read. *The Gate of Angels* gives us England at the beginning of the 20th Century. The advances of Rutherford and Mach (among others) were being disseminated. Scientific rationalism was to the fore. This is chiefly represented in Fitzgerald's central character, Fred Fairly, a junior fellow at a Cambridge College. However, his chance meeting with Daisy Saunders begins to challenge his view. While Fitzgerald never explicitly says so, the implication is clear: even in a world where science is thought to explain everything, there are some aspects of that world which will not bow. Some may find the lack of resolution frustrating. However, enough has been said to reasonably leave any further consequences to the readers' imagination.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A small miracle Von Ein Kunde Penelope Fitzgerald is truly amazing. This novel is short, easy to read, and often very funny; at the end, you think "How charming!" and put it down. But it keeps echoing in your mind: no detail in the book is insignificant, and everything is subtly linked together to support its central themes. (Compare Pope Benedict's grace, the inscription on Aunt Effie's ring, and the angels on the college gate; or consider Fred's mother and sisters against Professor Matthews' seemingly irrelevant ghost story. And note Professor Flowerdew's qualms about the new atomic theory, which relies on the "unobservable" ...) The book is far more moving than most novels five times its length, and leaves an indelible impression on the reader.

Kurzbeschreibung From the Booker Prize-winning author of *Offshore* and *the Blue Flower* - this Booker Prize-shortlisted novel centres on Cambridge Fellow Fred Fairly's search for a rational riposte to love. In 1912 Fred Fairly is a Junior Fellow at the college of St Angelicus in Cambridge, where for centuries no female, not even a pussy cat, has been allowed to set foot ("though the starlings couldn't altogether be regulated"). Fred lectures in physics and the questionable nature of matter and worries about the universal problem known in Cambridge at the time as the absurdity of the Mind-Body Relationship. To Fred this is tormenting rather than absurd. The young woman beside him when he wakes up one evening in the Wrayburns spare bedroom might help resolve it, but how can he tell if she is quite what she seems? Fred is a scientist. To him the truth should be everything, and indeed he thinks it is. But scientists make mistakes. *The Gate of Angels* is a funny, touching and inspiring look at male-female relationships and the problems caused by thinking just a little too much.

de Penelope Fitzgerald wanted to call her 1990 novel *Mistakes Made by Scientists*. On the other hand, she laughingly likened it to a Harlequin doctor-nurse romance. The truth about *The Gate of Angels* is somewhere in between. The doctor, Fred Fairly, is indeed a young Cambridge scientist, and the nurse, Daisy Saunders, has been ejected from a London hospital. If Fred is to win her love, he must make an appropriately melodramatic sacrifice--leaving the academic sanctum of St. Angelicus, a college where all females, even pussycats, are banished ("though the starlings couldn't altogether be regulated"). Daisy, however, suffers from a very non-Harlequin malady, the sort found only in Fitzgerald: "All her life she had been at a great disadvantage in finding it so much more easy to give than to take. Hating to see anyone in want, she would part without a thought with money or possessions, but she could accept only with the caution of a half-tamed animal." Self-protection is certainly not this young woman's strong suit, but we admire her endurance. At one moment, Fred points out that "women like to live on their imagination." Daisy's response? "It's all they can afford, most of them." Set in Cambridge and London in 1912, *The Gate of Angels*, then, is a love story and a novel of ideas. Fred, a rector's son, has abandoned religion for observable truths, whereas the undereducated Daisy is a Christian for whom the truth is entirely relative. The novel's strengths lie in what we have come to expect from Fitzgerald: a blend of the hilarious, the out-of-kilter, and the intellectually and emotionally provocative. She confronts her characters with chaos (theoretical and magical), women's suffrage, and seemingly impossible choices, and we can by no means be assured of a happy outcome. "They looked at each other in despair, and now there seemed to be another law or regulation by which they were obliged to say to each other what they did not mean and to attack what they wished to defend." Fitzgerald's novel also records the onslaught of the modern on traditions and beliefs it will fail to obliterate entirely: women as second-class citizens and a class-ridden society in which the poor suffer deep financial and moral humiliation. The author sees the present pleasures--

Cambridge jousts in which debaters must argue not what they believe but its exact opposite--and is often charmed by them. But under the light surface, she proffers an elegant meditation on body and soul, science and imagination, choice and chance. Her characters, as ever, are originals, and even the minor players are memorable: one of Fred's fellows, the deeply incompetent Skippey, is "loved for his anxiety," because he makes others feel comparatively calm. Fitzgerald fills all of her period novels with odd, charming, and disturbing facts and descriptions. Some, like the catalog of killing medicines Daisy administers, are strictly researched and wittily conveyed: "Over-prescriptions brought drama to the patients' tedious day. Too much antimony made them faint, too much quinine caused buzzing in the ears, too much salicylic acid brought on delirium..." Others are the product of microscopic observation, that is, imagination. Fred's family home is in hyperfertile Blow Halt, a place where no one thinks to buy vegetables, so free are they for the taking. But within this paradise, his mother and sisters are sewing banners for women's suffrage, and nature launches a quiet threat: "Twigs snapped and dropped from above, sticky threads drifted across from nowhere, there seemed to be something like an assassination, on a small scale, taking place in the tranquil heart of summer." -- Kerry Fried Pressestimmen "A singular accomplishment." Boston Globe "Powerfully bewitching" The Los Angeles Times "Funny, touching, wise." The Washington Post