



A Thousand Rooms

Helen Jones

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You don't wake up expecting to die...

Katie is thirty-two, single, and used to work in advertising. She's also dead. A lost soul hitching rides with the dying, trying to find her way to... wherever she's supposed to be.

And whoever she's supposed to be with.

Heaven, it seems, has a thousand rooms. What will it take to find hers?

A Thousand Rooms Details

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Author : Helen Jones

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From Reader Review A Thousand Rooms for online ebook

D. Peach says

Keep a box of tissues at your elbow for this one! A Thousand Rooms had me red-eyed and snuffling. This is a character-driven book with a simple plot: Katie, newly dead and unfortunately overlooked in her transition from life, goes on a quest to find "her heaven" and travels through a series of manifestations (rooms) before she finds her own. Jones draws on a variety of mystical traditions and beliefs to design the experience of being dead and the concepts of heaven, soul mates, and reincarnation. These were interesting, but what I loved, loved, loved about his book was the incredibly touching and heartfelt expressions of human emotions, particularly grief and sorrow and, ultimately, of pure love.

Jones writes beautifully. Descriptions are rich, and the characters, even those on the periphery, are wonderfully developed. As the main character, Katie is thoroughly relatable with a wide range of emotions including some delightful sarcasm. I found her personal evolution compelling as her earthly concerns slip away and she discovers the essence of who she is and the point of her journey. Katie's realization of what it means to live a blessed life is uplifting and full of hope. Highly recommended for readers who love character-driven books and want to feel inspired.

Fay Keenan says

Katie is bumbling along nicely, thank you very much. She has a decent job, a nice flat, and, even if her love life leaves a bit to be desired, she's hopeful things will start looking up soon. Until a badly timed text message and one wrong step off the pavement puts an end to it all. Literally. In one of those so-random-it's-exquisite twists of fate, Katie gets hit by a car, and her life, as she knows it, comes to an end.

Her afterlife, though, is only just beginning.

A Thousand Rooms is a tragic, funny, bittersweet tale of what happens when no-one is expecting you to die, least of all yourself. It is a story about how to navigate your way through the great hereafter when there are no convenient angels there to guide you. Clad in the dress and the shoes she died in, Katie has to deal with the fact that there is no direct stairway to heaven, and that coming to terms with your own death when you feel very much alive is, to be honest, a harrowing experience.

Helen Jones has written a masterful and emotional novel in A Thousand Rooms. There were several scenes when I found myself laughing and crying as Katie tries to navigate her way through the afterlife. Jones doesn't shy away from confronting the very real effects of grief, describing in sensitive and emotional terms the after effects of Katie's death on those who love her, but at no point does this come across as mawkish or sentimental. She has a gift for touching the heart of the matter, and there is one particularly memorable scene in Katie's flat soon after her death that had me laughing in one paragraph and then welling up in the next. The whole book walks a bittersweet line beautifully.

The conceit, that heaven is made of the titular thousand rooms, and that Katie needs to find her own 'room' is a great one. She is caught between two worlds; the world she has left behind (a beautifully realised Sydney, which Jones describes so vividly, and her affection for the city and the country as a whole shines through the pages of the book, placing it firmly in its setting), and the worlds beyond the mortal realm. She visits many otherworldly 'rooms' in an attempt to find her own heaven, and Jones explores different spiritual perceptions of what might happen to a soul beyond the grave. Part philosophy, part speculative fiction, part

romance, this is intelligent commercial women's fiction at its best.

When Katie does get to grips with the hereafter, there are so many beautiful moments that Jones brings to life in her elegant and masterful prose. Her meetings with other souls, some of whom are searching like her and some of whom have found their 'room' are written sensitively and with a keen eye for human emotion. There are so many moments in this novel that set it apart from anything that's gone before it, and give the reader a tingle or a shiver or a smile. Helen Jones is a writer of great talent and accomplishment, and her storytelling is second to none. This novel would read well for readers who loved 'The Lovely Bones' and 'The Timetraveller's Wife' as its blend of magical realism, romance, humour, sadness and philosophy cannot fail to enthrall. A delight from start to finish, it's a novel that left me thinking long after I read the last page.

FNM says

Originally posted @<https://nzfnmblog.wordpress.com/categ...>

Okay so first things first this review will probably have more spoilers than I am intending as I have found it really hard to write this review without including any so be warned.

The story didn't start off exactly how I imagined, yes Katie was dead pretty much straight away but I didn't really expect her to hang around much after that, from the title I kind of assumed she would be catapulted on to the next life where she would have to spend the next several chapters exploring, finding her place, accepting her death and what not. Katie however was in no rush to move on and unfortunately left with no instructions/guidance on what to do next leaving her in a sort of limbo land. Now in general I don't have any problem with that, in fact I love it when I'm completely surprised by a book, and Katie coming to terms with what has happened is done well although she does tend to materialize back into the same few places. My problem started to occur the longer Katie stayed in the Limbo world of her and after awhile it just became boring. Yes there was a few instances of her nearly moving on, finding a different part of heaven before being unceremoniously kicked out again but to be honest it wasn't enough to hold my attention for a prolonged period of time. At one point I generally nearly threw my Kindle across the room after I was so sure she had finally made it and was suddenly kicked back out. This was about 50 percent in.

However the last 50 percent had me hooked and built on all the aspects I had liked about the first half of the book. I guess this also might have had something to do with adding another 'main character' if you will as well as giving a lot of explanations as to how things worked, what would be happening next etc... I also like the idea of there being one person/soulmate for you and no matter what you will always be connected. Not even the insta-love annoyed me, they were soulmates after all! It also added in some reunions and a general happier tone to the entire book which made it easier to read and I managed to finish it shortly after. Overall I liked how the book tackled the issue of Katie's death, and general life processes, e.g death/birth and grief, I especially liked the use of colors and energy surrounding individuals. I would have liked a bit more to happen throughout the book but it still wasn't exactly a difficult read.

Thank you to NetGalley for providing me with a free copy in exchange for a honest review.

Rating: 3/5

Would I read again: No

Would I Recommend: Yes

Would I read another book from this author: Yes

Ashley says

A Thousand Rooms by Helen Jones begins with the end – the end of Katie’s life. When Katie accidentally steps off a curb while checking her text messages, she is hit by a car and killed. When she awakes, she finds her old body lying on the ground and her separated body and soul still dressed to kill or be killed, in her new, expensive and adorable red shoes. However, she seems to be stuck somewhere in oblivion, between this life and the next. Katie finds she can still wander around the city of Sydney, see her friends and family, and go home, but she can’t be seen, heard, or feel anything. She begins a quest to find her way to her afterlife while mourning the beauty of the life she left behind. Katie’s biggest challenge comes with finding a fellow “in-betweeners” to guide her to her own version of Heaven, one of the thousand rooms.

First of all, I’d like to thank Helen Jones and Netgalley for allowing me the chance to read and review this exceptionally unique and interesting novel. We love our Indie authors at 5171 Miles Book Blog, and I was glad to find someone new to promote through my reviews!

With human life comes death, something we inevitably will have to face and think about someday. We all wonder where we will go after our demise, and sometimes it is even fun to imagine what Heaven could be like. In A Thousand Rooms, Jones takes us to a fictional and fantastical version of Heaven. This is a mostly secular and fun look at the afterlife, without the heavy feel of religious bias. Though I am a Christian and believe Heaven will look different from the life after death represented, I enjoyed the fictionalized version in this book and applaud Helen’s ability to walk a fine line with her writing. This is a book readers of all religious and non-religious backgrounds alike can connect with and enjoy.

I was pleasantly surprised with the added aspect of romance in this story. As an avid romance reader, especially Indie Romance, I wasn’t expecting Katie to find a love interest, especially after her death. This was a unique and exciting twist in the story and made me enjoy the book all the more. I love to change up the genres I read frequently, but always fall back on hoping for the main characters to find a bit of love somewhere, no matter what genre I read. I especially love books like this one, as it doesn’t neatly fit in any one genre. It features a bit of everything and can only be counted as “different”. My only critique of this novel was the lack of structure at times. I felt it needed a little more organization, which would have resulted in a more exciting and purposeful plot. At times I was left wondering where the story could continue to go, which may be due to the tough topic the author chose to tackle. Where are we left to go after an untimely death anyway? It’s even hard for me to imagine an eternity of purpose!

Impressively, this novel did not feel emotionally overbearing or depressing, despite the constant topic of death. At certain moments, there was a sadness as Katie reflected upon her life, or the life her family would continue to lead without her presence. However, these touching and sad moments were followed up with a cheerfulness or a changing of gears to lighter topics. Occasionally I felt close to shedding a few tears, but managed to keep my cool, much to my delight since my husband is home for summer break. He always seems entertained by my crying over books and movies. ?

Overall, I found this to be an original story with some helpful reminders to readers to enjoy the life we have been given. We should enjoy the people around us and love them in the time we are together here on Earth instead of taking ourselves so seriously. I am eager to check out more of Helen Jones’s work in the future and hope you will consider supporting another Indie author’s work! All of her books are free for Kindle Unlimited subscribers. A Thousand Rooms is a great place to start... or end, in this case.

Karen Germain says

Thank you to NetGalley and author Helen Jones for providing me with a copy of A Thousand Rooms in exchange for an honest review.

PLOT- Katie has just died and she finds herself at the scene of her death without anyone to greet her or further instructions. When she thinks of something, such as the store where she purchased the snazzy new red heels that she was wearing when a car hit her, she is transported to that place. Katie begins to get the hang of transporting herself and travels to see her family and friends as they deal with her death, but she is still left wondering, if this is all there is?

Katie get an idea to travel to a convalescent hospital to be near another human when they die and she discovers that the afterlife is different for everyone. Katie learns that she can travel to different afterlife realms and soon she is gathering pieces of the puzzle to understand the meaning of her own death.

LIKE- Jones fills A Thousand Rooms with so much creativity that I kept turning the page to see what was coming next. I couldn't anticipate where Jones was taking her story, which kept it compelling. She weaves folklore and concepts from various religions into the different rooms/realms that Katie visits. I love the idea that the afterlife can be such an individualized experience. One of my favorite small twists is when Katie thinks she is witnessing a death, but it turns out to be a conception. It's a joyful moment. Also joyful, are the scenes when Katie is reconnecting with her grandfather in their heaven. It's a wonderful balance after the somber scenes of Katie watching her family on earth grieving.

DISLIKE- Katie felt flat. I could easily go along with her story because it was so unexpected, but I had difficulty both imagining her physically and going along with her emotional journey. When I felt emotion, it was situational, rather than because I was connected to the protagonist. For example, having experienced profound grief, I felt emotions while reading about her parents and friends in grief, but not for the loss of Katie specifically. When Katie connects with Jason, I didn't feel the emotions. I like the concept of their relationship and how they are kept apart, but I didn't bond with either character.

RECOMMEND- Maybe. A Thousand Rooms is a quick read and I liked the concept of Jones' story. My lack of connection to the characters hold me back from fully recommending A Thousand Rooms.

Like my review? Check out my blog!

Lois R. Gross says

This book from Down Under is derivative, at worst, but readable at its best. Katie is texting while walking on her way to work when she is hit by a car and killed. This is an unexpected death, a death ahead of its time, and Katie cannot find her way to heaven so spends uncalculated time wandering to her old "haunts" (sic) and following dead people of different ethnicities and traditions to their heavens never finding the right place for herself.

There are elements of the movie "Bedazzled" (Katie thinks of a place and there she is without saying "Julie Andrews"), "Our Town" (a somewhat maudlin chapter could be rewritten as Emily's "One more look. Oh, World, you are so wonderful."), and several other movies that explore what Heaven might be like. As in

Albert Brooks' "Defending Your Life," food tastes great and you can eat as much as you want without gaining weight. Katie doesn't visit all thousand rooms, but she does establish that all versions of Heaven are legitimate despite the religious tradition.

Ultimately, Katie's Heaven ends up being with her soul mate, Jason, whom she has met in many other lives (can we say Shirley MacLaine?) but missed on this go round. They spend some time in their parallel heavens, each building a space that is ideal to them, only to be snatched away and sent back to Earth to relive and experience life again with each other.

I had a real problem with Katie's grandparents dying, finding each other in a perfect Heaven with the thought that eventually they would be torn apart again and sent
After awhile, wouldn't they be allowed to stay put?

I think the author would have benefited from being a bit less ecumenical and settling on one concept of Heaven and the hereafter although I must say that Katie's absolutely perfect closet is probably my idea of heaven.

Stephanie says

I received this book from Hidden Gems in exchange for an honest review.

I don't want to give anything away, so I will keep this brief. I enjoyed Katie's story of how she found her own heaven. There were, admittedly, a few tears shed on my part during various sections of the book. I grew to like Katie and was rooting for her!

This is not a deep, philosophical book, but it offers some insight into death and what could happen. I enjoyed the trips through different eternities.

Why did I deduct a star? The beginning, where Katie was trying to figure everything out, ran a little long in places. I understand that she was confused and upset, so it would take her a little while to figure out what was happening, but the pace of the book was slower here.

Linda says

A big thank you to Helen Jones and NetGalley for this book. It was a very memorable and intriguing book. It is a story about a young woman, Katie who dies after being hit by a car and finds herself watching the accident scene and then wandering around her old life trying to figure out what's next. There is no one there to help her to accompany her way through heaven, there isn't any bright shiny light to walk into, no guardian angel to explain heaven. Katie is forced to drift about the earth alone in search of her individual heaven, the meaning of her life, and any other souls who can help her and that coming to terms with her death when she still feels alive. She tries to figure out how to get to Heaven but realizes that there are many different versions of Heaven and she has to find her room in Heaven.

Helen Jones has written a sensitive novel in A Thousand Rooms. There were several scenes when I found myself laughing and crying as Katie tries to navigate her way through Heaven. Ms. Jones writes about the grief of Katie's death on those who love her; family, friends, and even her co-workers. The whole book is written beautifully. The writing is sharp, funny and poignant. This was my first book that I have read of

Helen Jones. But it will not be my last. I am looking forward to reading more from her.

Julia says

Ein wundervolles Buch!

Katie wacht auf und hat eine "Out-of-body" Erfahrung, nur das es keine Erfahrung ist. Sie wurde tatsächlich bei einem Autounfall getötet. Doch, da ist kein weißes Licht in das sie gehen kann. Da ist nur Katie - in ihrem chicen Outfit, mit den neuen roten Schuhen -, sie sieht alles, kann an verschiedene Orte reisen, aber niemand kann sie sehen. Jetzt durchwandert Katie die "Räume" ihres Lebens und besucht die Menschen, die ihr am Herzen liegen, um ihre Version des Himmels zu finden.

Das Buch ist nicht religiös und es überrascht mit traurigen wie auch aufmunternden Momenten. Da ist sogar eine Liebesgeschichte, mit der ich nicht gerechnet hätte.

Anne Wolfe says

A big thank you to Helen Jones and NetGalley for this book. It was so enjoyable and thought-provoking.

Most people wonder what happens after we die. Surely no one knows since no one has ever returned to tell us. Does everything end in a dreamless sleep or is there something to the theory that energy is never lost, only recycled. Helen Jones presents an interesting take.

Katie does not know that she has just been killed by a car as she stepped off a curb while trying to read a text. It's only when she sees herself lying in the street with her new red shoes lying nearby that she begins to realize what has happened. There is no light to go toward, no guardian angel to direct her. She is all alone, without guidance. And those shoes! She had just bought them. They were still on her feet as she hovered above.

Horrors! A pedestrian walks right through her and it feels awful. But she can go wherever she thinks about: her office, her apartment, the shoe store, to observe her family, and later, her to her own funeral. Another plus, she can fly. Sort of. She is desperate to find where she needs to go now and just as she thinks she sees a light and welcoming arms, she seethes that her red shoes have been marked down to half-price. Poof! The light disappears. This is only one of the really funny moments, and there are more.

Katie tries to follow people at the moment of their deaths in order to follow them...wherever. This doesn't work out (but don't miss the trip to Valhalla. It's a hoot.) By no means is it all funny. Those of us who have lost someone we love will cry when she visits her parents. They can't see her but somehow feel her presence.

Is there a heaven (heavens)? Do you believe in reincarnation? Does it matter? Aside from being unable to put this book down, you will think about Helen Jones' interesting premise.

Mad says

3.5/5*

Opinião completa em breve | Full review soon

Alexandra says

Helen Jones has crafted an imaginative page-turner - I could hardly put down *A Thousand Rooms*. I don't often read fantasy books, so I wasn't quite sure what to expect with this book. But the premise was enticing, and the story delivered. With warmth and imagination, Jones tells the story of the afterlife of Katie, a thirtysomething young professional in Sydney who passed away in a traffic accident. Grappling with her demise in a Purgatory-like state, Katie tries to understand moments in her life, and process the grief she feels at losing it alongside the loved ones whom her specter visits. Jones treats death, loss, and grief with a real depth of feeling. And through Katie's journey to find her own personal Heaven, Jones clues us in to the ways love and inter-subjectivity endow our lives - and afterlives - with meaning. Written conversationally and creatively, this book blends pathos and humor and makes for an enjoyable read.

My thanks to NetGalley, the author, and the publisher for a copy of this book.

Jolie says

I have read a few books where the character has died and finds herself/himself in a sort of purgatory or in Heaven. While I did enjoy reading most of those books, I felt that something was lacking. So when I saw that *A Thousand Rooms* was available to read on NetGalley (which means I didn't have to request it), I jumped on it. Mainly because I was curious about how *A Thousand Rooms* would be and I needed a break from the usual genre's that I have read.

I thought the plotline was a very original one. Instead of being sent to Purgatory, people who have just died either are met by someone as soon as they pass or they are shown how to find their own personal Heaven. Again, I thought that was a very original idea. I loved the idea that people could create a Heaven that suits them. I also like that there were, for lack of a better term, Heavens were truly selfless people go. The whole chapter with Valhalla and the Valkyries made my heart hurt.

I didn't like Kate at first, going, to be honest here. I thought she was very immature. I mean, she was truly upset that her favorite pair of shoes kept going down in price for the first few chapters and she was upset when her mother, sister, and bestie arrived to clean out her apartment. But there was a gradual change, which started when she hitched a ride with a couple that was reunited after death and kept on going until the end of the book.

There is a slight Christian undertone throughout the book but it wasn't preachy. If anything, the author explored different religions and concepts about life after death and what happens. The turning point in the book was when Katie stumbled upon a Hindu (I believe, it wasn't stated outright) funeral and befriended the girl who just died. What that girl's Guardian said to her set the pace for the rest of the book.

I love that soul mates, reincarnation and past lives were all brought out in the book and in explained in such a way that I couldn't help but think "Well, what if...". Jason's explanation of why he wasn't in Katie's life this time around was sad but he said that he watched over her for her entire life. When she finally got together with Jason, she started remembering her past lives with him. Jason also explained that they are all reincarnated but it is up to the Guardians as to when, where and who they will be reincarnated as.

If I had a complaint about this book it would be that I wish more information was given about the Guardians. Jason's explanation to Katie, that they were angel like beings, was good but I wanted to know more. It was with a Guardian's help that Katie was able to make peace with her life and move onto her own Heaven.

I thought the end of the book was very sweet and it made my heart happy to read what happened.

How many stars will I give A Thousand Rooms: 4

Why: This is a book that will make you ugly cry throughout it. It has great characters, a great plotline and was over all a good read.

Will I reread: Yes

Will I recommend to family and friends: Yes

Age range: Adult

Why: Sexual situations and language

****I received a free copy of this book and volunteered to review it****

Jennifer Olivas says

When I read the description of this book, I wasn't sure if I would like it or not. Well, it turns out that I loved this book. Once I started, I couldn't put it down. I was hungry to find out what Katie was going to experience next, and if she would ever make it to heaven. I loved all of the characters that she came in contact with. I was ecstatic when she found Jason. It was at that point that she started getting some of the answers to all of her questions. She had to learn some important things before she is ready to move forward. There are so many important life lessons in this book, and it really made me examine the way that I view things in my own life. I recommend keeping a box of tissues nearby, because this book does make the waterworks flow. I was very satisfied with the way the book ended. I did receive a free copy of this book to review, and this is my honest opinion. Give this book a chance. You're going to love it!

Katherine Sunderland says

In A Thousand Rooms the main character, Katie, aged 32, finds herself watching her own death one morning and is then trapped, wandering around in the truest sense of a lost soul, trying to find her way to wherever it is she is supposed to be.

"You don't wake up expecting to die."

Especially not in your brand new shoes that are now ruined! Katie's narrative voice is informal, colloquial and reads as if you are in a long conversation with a good friend. There is plenty of humour, frustration, disbelief and "freaking out" as she realises the finality of her situation and the strangeness of what is happening to her. As if watching your own death isn't confusing enough, Katie then finds she can kind of teleport herself around to places and memories just by thinking of them and then has to bear the uncomfortableness and weirdness of watching everyone find out about her death.

Through this the reader learns more about Katie and the life she has now left behind. There is a lightness and chatty style to Jones' writing but that does not mean it is without sadness, poignancy or a serious exploration of grief. It is always an intriguing premise for a main character to be able to watch people's reaction to their own death and wonder about the meaning of what they had and what they achieved; it is an idea that has of course been done before, but Jones' version still feels original.

The bulk of the novel recounts Katie's journey to find her way to 'heaven', or some kind of resting place, and I found this journey much less conventional than in things I've read or seen before. There is an element of fantasy (obviously) but in the style of the novel as well as the theme. There is some very good writing and the prose is imaginative. There is some romance and this novel was had a few unexpected moments and events as Katie continued on her journey which made the story feel fresh, quirky and engaging. Jones has a creative mind.

No spoilers (I hope) but the ending is heartwarming and despite the topic and the necessity to reflect on death, grief and tragedy, Jones keeps an upbeat atmosphere through the novel because of Katie's honest, real and often sarcastic turn of phrase. She is a likeable character and I was happy to go along with her on a search for what she might discover in her life after a sudden death.
