



Cross Dressing

Bill Fitzhugh

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Big-shot ad exec Dan Steele feels entitled to the best life has to offer -- even if he has to live way beyond his means to acquire it. But there's hope on the horizon. Dan has just stolen what's sure to be an award-winning idea for a multimillion-dollar account. If he can keep the creditors at bay long enough, he'll get the keys to the executive restroom and all his problems will be solved.

Unfortunately, that's when his brother, a Catholic priest, shows up at Dan's door in need of a loan to pay for some essential medical attention. Being both financially and morally challenged, Dan hands over his insurance card instead of his credit card. But it's too late. After running up a bill for \$300,000, Father Michael goes the way of all flesh.

Now Dan has a choice: go to prison for insurance fraud or take a vow of poverty and become a man of the cloth. Before he can say "God bless," Dan finds himself pursued by a relentless insurance investigator, the psychopathic copywriter whose idea he stole, and a deadly killer from his brother's mysterious past. And, as if that wasn't enough, Dan finds himself falling in love with a gun-toting nun. Let us pray.

Cross Dressing Details

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Author : Bill Fitzhugh

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From Reader Review Cross Dressing for online ebook

Jerrie says

Definitely different than the Louise Penney books I was reading.
It seemed to take a while to get interesting to me, but eventually
I got towards the end of the book and really wanted to see what happened.
I don't know if I want to read more Bill Fitzhugh or not.

Christopher says

An advertising exec (Dan) steals an ad campaign from an intern who then tries to kill him but can't kill him because he already died but he didn't actually die because it was his identical twin brother who died but then Dan has to assume his twin brother's identity because otherwise he will be convicted for insurance fraud but he might get convicted anyway because the fraud inspector saw him on tv when he was being interviewed about the nun in a coma who wasn't actually in a coma but had to pretend she was in order to save the homeless shelter.

There's one percent of this book.

This book sounds ridiculous because it is. Fitzhugh takes every unlikely event, every impossible circumstance, every "oh no our hero is screwed but wait he's saved in the nick of time" moment and he smooshes them together into a mess that is preposterous and unbelievable and wonderful and perfect. The good guys always win, the bad guys always get exactly what's coming to them, the plot has 9 gazillion things going on at once but every single one of them make perfect sense, and we walk away with a funny, well written story about how to live life well and about figuring out what's really important. For all of the lame, preachy, unfunny books (and movies, for that matter) with dumb jokes, slapstick comedy, and convoluted plots just for their own sake (effectively summing up Martin Lawrence's, Pauly Shore's, and the latter half of Eddie Murphy's careers), we occasionally get the Happy Gilmores and the Billy Madisons. This book is that. Fitzhugh is funny without trying too hard, he's moralizing without hitting you over the head with it, and he just plain tells a good story. Stop reading this review. Go read this book.

Aynge says

I didn't laugh once, and though I'm not Catholic, I was actually offended several times. Talk about sacrilegious. Want to read a funny book? Pick up Chris Moore's Lamb.

Carol Jean says

They don't come any more bitter and cynical than this book! The advertising business and the Catholic church collide, and the explosion is devastating.

I love Fitzhugh's turn of phrase. Favorites in this book: "His most prominent feature (was) a look of sweaty disappointment" and, speaking of the residents of an old age home, "living vicariously better lives through

television." The latter would be a great slogan for something...perhaps our culture in general?

Howard says

A deft, funny, caper novel, incorporating gleefully savage attacks on the Church, the advertising industry, and the charity industry; occasionally heartfelt characters; and an inspired marketing gimmick.

While often compared to Hiassen, Fitzhugh is fast creating his own dark and funny category. In this third outing, amoral adman Dan Steele, up to his neck in debt and smug consumerism, is fish-out-of-watered when he steals the best idea of his career ("More is more") from an unstable copywriter, just as Dan's twin brother Michael, an excommunicated do-gooder priest, returns from Africa, ill. Registered at the hospital as Dan for insurance coverage, Michael succumbs to tetanus, and, on the run from legal problems, insurance investigators and his now homicidal ex-colleague, Dan dons Michael's collar. As Father Michael, Dan goes to work at Sister Peg's Care Center, where he falls for Peg (fortunately, no more a nun than he is a priest). Predictably, Dan finds redemption caring for others, and he'll obviously save the financially teetering facility with his advertising savvy. Fitzhugh commits sins of inclusion, as well: There are two hookers with hearts of gold; no less than four gunmen converging for the climax; not content to harpoon his satirical targets, Fitzhugh levels them with assault weapons and then jumps up and down on their heads. There's always a bit too much of everything, but the author's having so much fun that we do, too. To top it off, he claims a product placement deal--the first ever for a novel--with Seagram's, and you can hear him chortling through the ad-speak whenever Dan is glowingly described sipping scotch.

Smart, fast and funny. Fitzhugh is a dangerous man.

Sylvia says

Absolutely loved it. This book hit all the marks ... the most improbable characters were utterly believable (a reformed hooker masquerading as a nun and an ad-man with hellhounds on his trail taking cover in a collar?) , AND managed to illuminate an un-heavenly host of contemporary problems on every level from neighborhood to national to international AND do it with equal measures of empathy, hilarity, insight and indignation. Bill Fitzhugh is rapidly becoming one of my favorite authors.

Steven Brandt (Audiobook-Heaven) says

Dan Steele wants the best life has to offer: the best beachfront property, the best car, the best stereo, the best clothes. Unfortunately, he is only a mediocre advertising executive. So to keep up with his own expensive tastes, he has to rack up a huge amount of debt. But Dan always has his eye out for a chance to get ahead and when one of his fellow ad-execs comes up with a winning campaign for a hundred million dollar account, Dan wastes no time stealing it and presenting it as his own work, and framing the guy as a drug user in the bargain. For one shining moment, things seem to finally be going the way Dan wants them to.

Then Dan's twin brother Michael shows up. Michael is a Catholic priest who just returned from a rather harrowing mission trip to Africa. He is suffering from a poorly treated wound he received while in Africa and has nowhere to turn but his brother Dan. Naturally Dan doesn't have any money to get his brother

medical treatment, so he comes up with a scheme to have his brother pose as him so that they can use Dan's health insurance. The plan works reasonably well, until Michael dies. So the upshot is that Michael is dead and Dan must now pretend to be Michael to avoid an insurance fraud lawsuit.

Now Dan must live the life of a priest, while the homicidal ad-exec that he cheated tries to kill him, insurance investigators hunt him, and bank examiners try to shut down Michael's care center, now being run by Dan. Whew! Sounds a little like an episode of *Friends*.

Cross Dressing was kind of up and down for me. Early on in the story I was a bit put off by Dan's amoral behavior, I mean seriously amoral, and Sister Peg really threw me for a loop. I mean, here's nun who blackmails and steals to keep her care center going, and hires prostitutes in the bargain. I was close to giving up on this book altogether but I decided to stick with it a little bit longer. I understand that Bill Fitzhugh was poking fun at Christians and that's okay; I can take a joke as well as anyone. So I kept listening and after a while I began to sense a certain pattern emerging.

After Dan's brother, the priest, dies and Dan is sort of forced to take his place I began to have hope. Dan goes to work at Sister Peg's shelter and it seems that a previously unknown side of Dan begins to emerge. He almost immediately connects with a little girl at the shelter named Alyssa, who is there because of an abusive father. Fitzhugh drops a few clues that Dan's own troubled childhood helps him to relate to Alyssa. Then Dan actually begins working on the shelter: cooking, cleaning, even doing repair work around the place. The pattern I was beginning to see, and hope for, was one we've all seen before: the greedy old scrooge type gets a look at how the other half live and decides to change his ways. And for all I know, that may be where Fitzhugh was headed with this. Unfortunately I didn't make it to the end. There was a particular part of the story where Dan has come up with a brilliant idea to spark some funding for the shelter. It involved an ad campaign featuring Jesus hanging on the cross, bloody and broken, but then Jesus lifts his head, smiles and winks at the camera, and begins the sales pitch. That was too much for me, so I quit right there, about three-quarters of the way through the book.

Narrator Colby Elliott did a fine job as usual. At first I felt his pace was a little too fast, but once I became acclimated, it seemed okay. I think Elliott reads with a certain amount of enthusiasm that really adds something to the story.

Fitzhugh is a clever writer and can be downright funny at times, but **Cross Dressing** didn't suit my own personal tastes. I think this is a book that a lot of people will enjoy, however.

Steven Brandt @ Audiobook-Heaven

D. Norman says

Best one so far.

Neil Pittman says

Bill Fitzhugh delivers a well-tied knot of a book, reminiscent of Christopher Moore. You have to flex your suspension of disbelief, but the ride is worth it. This isn't his best book, but the LA setting and the Catholic backdrop makes it worth the time.

Steve says

Well-written and funny, the author clearly cares about the issues discussed in the book. While it's almost as fashionable today to bash the Church as it was in 2000 when the book was originally published, the gentle rebukes of certain portions of Catholic doctrine are all the more powerful because he concedes that the Church is full of driven, motivated people seeking to make the world a better place and that the institution is a global force for good and most individuals that are members (or pretend to be members) of the clergy are good people trying to do good things. Honestly, it's a refreshing take that you rarely see on TV shows, movies, or in the news. I'd recommend it to Catholic friends looking for a funny book to read.

Mindy Brewer says

I found it very funny and unexpected turns except for the ending when I pieced everything together myself. Light reading, good laugh.

Susan says

This guy just gets better with every book. This is his third. Dan Steele is at the top of his game - the ad game. His twin brother, the priest, is hitting some career snags himself. Yes, 'twin' is the operable word there. Fitzhugh is a pretty funny guy in word and plot.

Marc Gerstein says

Lover of satire that I am, I'm starting to get hooked on Bill Fitzhugh. Like another of my favorites, Christopher Buckley, Fitzhugh is a contemporary practitioner of the art although Fitzhugh's humor tends to be a bit darker and his plots have more of a mystery=thriller angle. Nevertheless, "Cross Dressing" is a hoot, and plays especially well as a listen-as-you-exercise audio.

Dan Steele is an ethically-challenged ad exec who tries to help his twin brother Michael, a priest who apparently picked up a bad disease while trying to good work in Africa. Unfortunately, Michael dies in the hospital (this is not a spoiler, it's part of the setup). More unfortunately, he dies with Dan's identity (and insurance) since the brothers did a name switch; Michael had no insurance and they had no idea his health issues were major, much less fatal. So suddenly, Dan can't be Dan and must be Michael. Now, as readers, we're ready to take on the ad industry, the church, street gangs, insurance fraud investigators, and a homicidal ex ad guy turned electronics salesman. It's a fun ride, and it's pretty much impossible to anticipate what's coming. And by the way, make sure you read the Epilogue, but don't peek ahead. Really. :-)

Jeff Thomas says

Clever, funny, a quick, but engaging read.

Cory says

While I liked this book, I did feel a bit hit over the head by the author from time to time. I get it! The Catholic church is bad! Consumerism is bad! Poverty could be fixed if only people weren't so selfish!! Sheesh!

On a side note, this author wrote a very enjoyable book many years ago called "Pest Control." The sequel to that is coming out soon, and I'm very excited!
