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CLARION REVIEW ★★★★☆ ROMANCE

Time to Retire

Jon Foyt
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This delightful look at the sinister side of retirement communities features an array of enticing characters.

A sleuthing journalist discovers that things aren't that sunny for the seniors at the Sunset Gardens retirement community. Jon Foyt shines a light on retirement issues and offers social commentary on the public attitude toward seniors in *Time to Retire*, a delightful mystery.

Sunset Gardens is suddenly not as bucolic a setting as it seems. When Heinrich Gossard is found hanging from a tree, *Sunrise Sentinel* journalist Willy Herbst, almost a senior himself, is tasked with writing a piece that focuses on the suicide. As Herbst investigates, he discovers that beneath the glamorous advertising, the apparent joy of the community members, and the propriety and altruism of the board, lies malaise and mischief that is tarnishing the golden years of many seniors in the community.

Foyt's array of enticing characters that serve on the Sunset Gardens board is diverse. They are all faced with unique situations that put them in need of a kickback from their position on the board. The narrative offers charming descriptions of the members' delusional rationalizing even when they, or their deeds, are quite dastardly. For example, Mark Worthington offers gate passes to the seniors, seemingly to cut down the time checking in at the gate. In fact, these stickers contain bar codes that track various data about the seniors, data he sells to research companies. "By advising corporations of seniors' buying habits, he was helping his fellow residents obtain products they needed. He was making life better for them both at the shopping mall and at the entry gate. Never mind that he was raking in a lot of money."

Foyt's observations of social values are cleverly woven into the story and reveal society's lack of interest in senior citizens, to the point of plotting their eradication by crop-dusting the garden areas of the senior centers. Also, more subtly, Gossard writes a letter to Herbst revealing the injustices occurring, appealing to the journalist to make these issues public. But instead of addressing the letter to "Herbst," it is addressed to "Hearst," perhaps hinting at a cry out to a greater media force.

Foyt offers some delicious descriptions, such as when he describes Herbst's writing: "His writing peculiarities, Willy felt, made his personality opaque, cloaking his mien in an enigmatic shroud." Overall, Foyt's writing is smooth and enticing, making it easy to move past minor hiccups, such as the overuse of parentheses in dialogue to convey characters' agreement: "(yes)." For example, when a resident asks Gossard's companion, Dominique about his suspicions about board members: "Did he think you or he would be in danger?" Dominique replies: "(Yes). Once he stated strongly that Board members were pursuing their own interests …"

Time to Retire is a charming and alluring look at the not-so-sunny aspects of the "golden years" of retirement.
MAYA FLEISCHMANN (December 12, 2013)

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