Lovereading Reader reviews of 
The Catalyst by Helena Coggan

Below are the complete reviews, written by Lovereading members.

Maggie Patterson

Helena Coggan wrote this at thirteen, and it is full of great world building, character development and plot twists.

‘The Catalyst’ was, first of all, a wonderful book. It takes place in a London sometime in the future, where the people are divided into those Gifted with magic and those not, in addition to Demons and Hybrids, creatures feared and hunted by the government. The Department, in charge of enforcing the laws, is run by our heroine’s father. Both Rose and her father have secrets to protect from their own Department, and when a runaway begins to blackmail her she must make the decision of whether to help him or risk her father’s life.

I was particularly impressed by the world building in this debut novel. Everything was made clear eventually and, while it is a world no one would want to live in, I had such a clear picture of it that it felt real while I was reading it. The character development and relationships were also really well done and I really did care about Rose, her father, and the others.

Keep reading to the end as there are surprising twists and turns. I am ready for a sequel. Helena Coggan’s bio says she wrote the first draft of this at thirteen, and I hope she continues writing about this exquisitely intricate world that she has created.

www.bookgasms.tumblr.com
Carly Lau

A fast paced story about a 15 year girl, her monstrous father and a futuristic war between angels and demons.

‘The Catalyst’ is a novel set in a futuristic London, years after war was fought between magical 'Gifted' humans and non-magical 'Ashkinds'. The story focuses on Rose, a 15 year old gifted child, and her father David, head of the magical government, the Department. This book fits nicely into the current trend of dystopian futures featured in novels such as ‘The Hunger Games’ and ‘Divergent’, and the book is written quite convincingly, setting the scene of post war troubles so well that when famous London landmarks appear, or well-known shops are used it’s quite unexpected. Rose is a headstrong character who is quite relatable, though she has a tendency to not think through her actions leading to a lot of the conflict within the book. I felt that there was an abundance of story lines and characters featured within the story that the reasons behind a lot of the action was vague and some characters were forgettable. The book was very action packed and fast paced, but more information on why the breach occurred in the first place and the history of the three factions would have made the book more enjoyable to read. Also maybe a touch more magic!

Edel Waugh

This is a dystopian story about a young woman called Rose and she lives in London sometime in the future. The world has changed into magical and non-magical people and Rose works for her dad in the police department , think Scotland Yard but more so, the policing now is more extreme in the future especially when magic is added in, it is more brutal and frightening then could be imagined, seriously the world building is really intriguing!

This is where Rose and her dad work. Their world is a scary place and there is a new threat of war.

From the beginning this was a very interesting read, I started it and read 400 pages then looked up and realised I had not moved, you get the idea...it’s gripping!

Rose and her dad were my favourite characters and I hope this is made into a series as I would love to know more about them, especially her dad! If you love a dystopian read check this out!
Lorraine Blencoe

My fourteen year old daughter is an avid reader of young adult/fantasy fiction so I was keen to read this novel, which is slightly out of my comfort zone, to experience some of her reading choices. When I started reading I knew nothing about the author but as I read I started to realise there was probably something about her that was not like the average novelist. The nature of the prose, being quite juvenile at times, made me google the author and I discovered that she is fifteen.

That fact presents a dilemma. Should I look at the book as being a great achievement by a young adult or as one that I would be expected to pay the same price for as any other novel on a bookshelf?

The premise of the story is an on-going conflict between Angels and Demons living in modern day London (a touch that strengthens the fantasy element) and the hierarchical structure that exists for doers of both good and evil. The story is centred around a fifteen year old ‘hybrid’ called Rose and her relationship with her father, who is a high-up figure in the good guy department which controls the use of magic.

I have no doubt that this novel will become a film and the future will be bright for the author. However, the unconvincing logistics and movement of people, places and time, I struggled with. Also the style of writing, particularly the constant use of adverbs and the narrative being explained through prose and dialogue was something that was irritating. But I wanted to read on, so that means something.

Tania

A good science fiction book that is a real page turner.

‘The Catalyst’ by Helena Coggan is a science fiction book about a young girl Rose and her father that live in a futuristic setting. Eighteen years ago, the sky split open and the Angels were let in. These Angels are not what we expect. After a long war, the world became divided between the magically Gifted and the non-magical Ashkind with the Angels at the top. Demons and Hybrid live away from society. They have to hide as they are hunted by the Department. The Department is an organisation run by the Gifted to control the Ashkind. It is an enforcement agency.
Rose who is fifteen years old works with her father who is the operation head of the Department. But Rose has a secret but so does her father. If the Department finds out Rose's secret; not only will she be in trouble but so will her father. Rose does not know anything about her father's past. As the plot unfolds Rose’s father’s past resurfaces when an old enemy reappears and threatens to start a war. There is an uprising against the Angels and the Department. Rose is stuck in a vicious circle. Does she protect her secret or her father and his job at the department?

Megan Abbott

A cracking read!

‘The Catalyst’ by Helena Coggan is about 15 year old, Rose Elmsworth living in a world that has been divided into magically Gifted and the non-magical Ashkind. But Rose's identity is far more dangerous. She has earned herself a place alongside her father in the Department, a brutal law-enforcement organisation run by the Gifted to control the Ashkind. But now an old enemy is threatening to start a catastrophic war, and Rose faces a challenging test of her loyalties.

I did enjoy reading this book but I did find it quite hard to get into and the plot to be quite confusing at times. However, I would recommend this to anyone that loves fast paced thrillers in a dystopian world. I did like the contrast between chapters as one point Rose would be in a life threatening situation and the other, she would be doing normal teenage tasks, as it shows that she is only young. I do hope there is a sequel and I would definitely read it again.

Clíona McKeown-Bittles

‘The Catalyst’ was a highly interesting story with an excellent plot. I thoroughly enjoyed it and highly recommend this book!

The Veilbreak triggered The War of Angels that caused horrendous devastation throughout the world. The souls of angels and demons fused with that of the humans creating the magical Gifted and the non-magical Ashkind.

Rose, 18 years after the Veilbreak along with her father David, works in the Department to help maintain the peace and deal with problems. However events soon start to unfold that make Rose question what is right. Can still protect her dangerous secret while living the life she wants to? And when the impossible comes to light she questions if she really knows anything about those
closest to her.

‘The Catalyst’ was such a good read with a really strong, sound story line. The characterisation of Rose was one of my favourite things as she is so willing to help, strong and brave yet so clueless about things right in front of her. The strong characters in general throughout the book helped it flow incredibly well and built up to a great ending.

I can’t praise this book enough! It was just really, really good! I need another one!

Lorraine Baker

Rose Elmsworth has a secret. For eighteen years, the world has been divided into the magically Gifted and the non-magical Ashkind, but Rose's identity is far more dangerous. At fifteen, she has earned herself a place alongside her father in the Department, a brutal law-enforcement organisation run by the Gifted to control the Ashkind. But now an old enemy is threatening to start a catastrophic war, and Rose faces a challenging test of her loyalties. How much does she really know about her father’s past? How far is the Department willing to go to keep the peace? And, if the time comes, will Rose choose to protect her secret, or the people she loves?

A wonderful book that I devoured in two sittings. This book was originally first drafted when the author was thirteen—if this is the story she can come up with at that age bring on her future books.

A brilliant book that is worth more than five stars.

Thank you to Lovereading for allowing me an advance copy.

Chloe Shortall

Rose has been trained in magic and fighting since she was very young, now, as a teenager, she helps her father in his workplace, the Department, where all crime investigations take place. Rose hopes to someday work here, and is planning her further education around getting that job. She just has to pass the test first. Oh, and she also has to make sure no one finds out her secret. A secret she could be killed for.

I really enjoyed this novel. The world building was fantastic and I liked the characters. The plot was fast paced and exciting. I’d recommend this book for lovers of ‘The Hunger Games’ and
‘Divergent’.

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