



# Welcome to the Departure Lounge: Adventures in Mothering Mother

*Meg Federico*

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The adventure begins when Meg's mother, Addie, vacationing in Florida, takes a spill. At the hospital, Addie bolts upright on her gurney and yells "I demand an autopsy!" before passing out cold.

"One minute, she is unconscious, the next, she's nuts," observes Meg Federico in this hilarious and poignant memoir of taking care of eighty-year-old Addie and her relatively new (and equally old) husband, Walter, in their not-so-golden years.

Addie's accident is a portent of things to come over the next two years as Meg oversees her mother's home care in the Departure Lounge, the nickname Meg gives Addie and Walter's house in suburban New Jersey. It is a place of odd behaviors and clashing caregivers, where chaos and confusion reign supreme.

Meg had expected that Addie and Walter would settle into a Rockwellian dotage of docile dependency. Instead the pair regress into terrible teens. Meg watches from the sidelines in disbelief as her mother and stepfather, forbidden by doctors to drink, conspire to order cases of scotch by phone; as Addie's attendant accuses the evening staff of midnight voodoo; as the increasingly demented Walter's sex drive becomes unbridled and mail-order sex aids are delivered to the front door. Meg jumps in to cope with the pandemonium—even as she struggles to manage her own family back in Nova Scotia.

With a fresh voice and a keen eye for the absurd, Meg Federico writes a story that will resonate with the generation now caring for their parents. *Welcome to the Departure Lounge* is a moving and madcap chronicle of a family—their moments of joy, the memories they'd rather forget, and the just plain loopiness of their situation. "How's life at the Departure Lounge?" Meg's brother asks. Meg doesn't know where to start. "Let's just say the drinks are outrageous, and they never run out of nuts."

*From the Hardcover edition.*

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