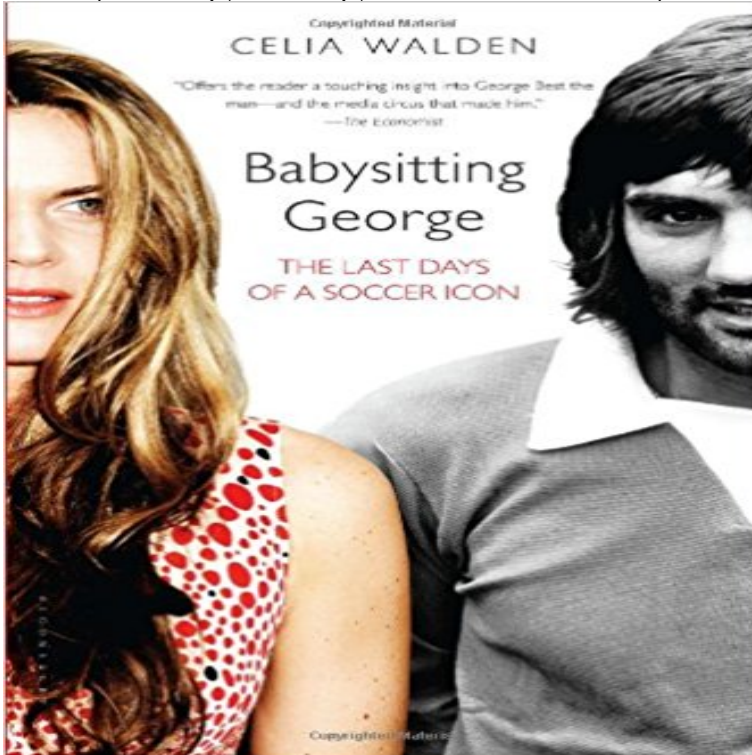


Babysitting George: The Last Days of a Soccer Icon



As a young reporter, Celia Walden receives an unusual assignment: track down a global superstar and keep him away from all other journalists. That man is soccer player George Best, who made his debut for Manchester United at age seventeen and was the star of a star team throughout the 1960s. Enormously skilled and ruggedly handsome, idolized by men and women alike, he was referred to as the fifth Beatle, and still holds a firm place among the worlds all-time best players. But in 2004, George Best is nearing sixty and deteriorating like a much older man. A notorious alcoholic and philanderer, he has just received a liver transplant and has Antabuse tablets sewn into his stomach lining. His wife has left him again. When Celia finds him in a bar in Malta, he isn't exactly delighted to see her. He's been chased by journalists all his life. Yet as Celia's assignment to babysit George around the clock stretches out over months, an unlikely sort of friendship develops, and she gets to know George as a funny, volatile, and complex human being, an avid reader and member of MENSAs, ravaged by alcohol and gradually withering under the constant glare of the spotlight. *Babysitting George* is a tender account of a unique relationship between a young journalist and a dying star. It questions the exploitative nature of tabloid journalism; the terrifying, all-consuming nature of addiction; and the implausible meetings that can change one's life.

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