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Clarion Review ★★★★☆ GENERAL FICTION

Arrivals and Departures from Normal

Lana Jean Rose
iUniverse (Oct 22, 2015)
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This candid view of the art world from the perspective of an ambitious woman will enthrall, and perhaps frighten, creative audiences.

A gifted artist faced with formidable obstacles exceeds expectations in this mesmerizing, true-to-life story. *Arrivals and Departures from Normal* by Lana Jean Rose captivates and inspires, allowing an intimate look at what it takes to succeed in a competitive profession.

A freethinking, sensitive, and intellectual heroine aptly named Airstream embarks on an arduous journey into the depths of her soul. In the 1960s, she is rejected by her parents as an idealist with socialist leanings—a commie pinko. Right out of high school, she is forced into independent living. She relies on friends and her street smarts as she adapts. Air fluctuates between highs and lows that send her from the gates of a heavenly existence to the pits of a hellish ordeal.

When faced with homelessness, Airstream reacts as any young adult would: “Air’s mind began to deconstruct. She felt as though she could not breathe. She thought she was dying. Perhaps that might not be such a bad idea.”

The behaviors of the eccentric characters in this provocative novel are ripe for analysis. They are inconsistent and unpredictable, fascinating yet disturbing at times, too. The contrasting environments that Air contends with are as varied as a tertiary color palette.

Depicted with empathy and knowledge, this candid view of the art world from the perspective of an ambitious woman with innate talent will enthrall, and perhaps frighten, creative audiences. It pursues “only if” scenarios with courage. This heartfelt work avoids the temptation to pass judgment on the dangerous roads to artistic success. Instead, the pursuit of success takes precedence over the destination. Air is passionate and ambitious, yet insecure, which may be typical of many artistic personalities pulled in multiple directions.

Rose portrays her protagonist as a complex woman with a personal agenda—a vibrant individual in need of acceptance and love. Air’s accomplishments are integrated into a plot that concerns itself with daily living, interaction with people, and healing wounds of the past. Her romances, letdowns, and anxieties manifest in a natural progression of events. There’s no contrived outline imposed upon the story, allowing authenticity and realism to be the guiding forces behind Air’s actions.

Rose is an internationally acclaimed environmental artist. Her novel is infused with details gleaned from a lifetime of experience. *Arrivals and Departures from Normal* delves into the complicated realm of self-expression for public consumption. This is art as the driving force in the human spirit.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (February 4, 2016)

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