



Nobody Knows: What We Sweep under the Carpet

Larry Schneiderman

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Nobody Knows is a faith-focused novel concerning the mistakes and accomplishments within an eventful life.

In Larry Schneiderman's generational drama *Nobody Knows*, a conflicted family man deals with love affairs, illness, and his demons as he considers a life committed to God.

Jake has business smarts and a weakness for women. Sales in carpet and flooring—presented as a high-stakes world—proves the perfect pace for his entrepreneurial side. He starts to make plans related to his job and girlfriend.

But then Jake's questionable choices bring about big changes. This becomes a cycle in his life, as family fights, surprise losses, and terminal illnesses test Jake's resolve. He has a religious experience and dedicates himself to God. With his faith to guide him, Jake navigates unpredictable changes.

Presented as smart and capable, Jake's business acumen is developed through tense scenes of negotiation challenges and entertaining banter. His entitlement shows up in his controversial financial decisions and treatment of women, both of which result in suspenseful turns, while his sensitive inner monologue analyzes the body language and tones of others, who are understood most in terms of their emotional impacts on him. His vulnerable insights into his own psychology are stronger.

Jake's transition toward faith is hastily introduced, but he follows through with religious research and genuine enthusiasm, and faith becomes an important part of his evolution. He grapples with his vices and other challenges in an empathetic way, and his illness is portrayed in authentic terms.

Complicated relationships with others are conveyed realistically. Conversations are emotional, and flashbacks provide context. The large cast is imbued with personality and history, though its characters move in and out of Jake's life. Most are seen to struggle with unique issues, and the people closest to Jake confront mortality and forgiveness.

Much of the story takes place in and around Jake's hometown, and the setting plays an important role. Old enemies and old lovers emerge throughout. The houses and office buildings become sites of nostalgia and opportunities for Jake to sharpen his ability to interpret environments.

Between the book's two parts, a long stretch of time passes, and the sections are disconnected from one another, with only old habits and recurring characters serving to bridge the gap. Many chapters end with hints of new secrets or conflicts, though, and much of the book is unpredictable. Jake's story is not extraordinary, but it reflects crises and chaos with pragmatism. The novel feels too long toward its end, but its resolution is a satisfying, balanced wrap up.

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DELIA STANLEY (January 29, 2020)

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