Clarion Review

General

Sagaponic Lane
Marion S. Freed
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978-0-9760437-2-0
Four Stars (out of Five)

Sagaponic Lane peeks beneath the personal emptiness of the Hamptons' adulterous idlers and the summering arts crowd. Driven by efficient dialogue filtered through a largely sympathetic character this insiders' revelation of frailty and insecurity mocks the absurd milieu even while meshing with it. Prose this clear is a delight to read.

The story begins after the debut novel of protagonist Paula Gaines hits the New York Times bestseller list. Invitations to elite parties ensue. Paula's husband Dan who has three non-selling novels to his credit reacts with green envy tacking his wife's success up to dumb luck. The painter Jack Laughton embodies the dominant jaded-chic etiquette. Upon meeting Paula he asks "…what has your huge success done to your fucking?" Because Paula has long thought of herself as physically unfortunate she excuses the rude question and agrees to model for a one-of-a-kind portrait.

The Gaines' best friends Steve and Miranda are another Hamptons / Manhattan couple dealing with a massive fame imbalance. Miranda is an A-list model and Steve is a usually-unemployed actor. Their relationship though not entirely free of childish neediness is based on mutual appreciation. Miranda comes down with a debilitating auto-immune disease at the same time Steve finally rises to a career-making performance in a hit Broadway play. The medical condition threatens to end the age of six-figure paydays. Miranda hasn't thought of the repercussions saying "'I don't give a damn about money.'" To which Paula replies "'You say that now but wait until you don't have any.'"

Paula's second novel is too easily written. She moves from word-one/draft-one to publisher-ready in two months time scheduled heavily with evening parties portrait modeling tennis trysting and providing compassionate help to her ailing supermodel friend. Only Stephen King could make that deadline with those few available hours. She tends to succeed with less

effort reinforcing a view that random chance determines a good part of individuals' fates.

Marion S. Freed also known professionally as Marion Segal has five produced screenplays working hand-in-glove with director husband Herb Freed on features like *Paradise Lost* and *Subterfuge.* Beginning with 1973's *Badlands* the acclaimed Charles Starkweather mood piece Freed worked with top directors including Robert Altman and Terence Malick as a Film Editor and Producer. Also a Story Editor for CBS Television she contributed as an Editor for the publisher Dell. *Sagaponic Lane* her first novel follows *Sideswiped* a set of short stories.

Decades after the Flapper days of Jay Gatsby incredible self-absorption and vapid anomie are still endemic in the trendy Lawn Gyland getaway destinations. Life there appears an inch deep but Freed reveals the vulnerability of plastic people the precariousness of the pinnacle. She makes a mark on yet another field of storycraft based more on talent than uniqueness of material. This one is good accompaniment to the beach if you can get there or can help pass the commute to work if you aren't so lucky. Just don't read and drive.