



Some Dead Genius

Lenny Kleinfeld

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Different chapters about the same event written from the point of view of different characters help create a captivating plot progression.

Be absorbed into the world of art, murder, the mob, Chicago politics, and police detectives in Lenny Kleinfeld's *Some Dead Genius*. A strong novel of interest and manipulation, driving plot, and flawed characters make this a top-notch read.

Detective Mark Bergman is assigned a case about a murdered artist, which is followed by the murder of another artist, and he links them as possible serial murders. Years earlier, a loan shark stumbled onto the idea—after being repaid with a painting, by a former art dealer—of buying up the work of relatively unknown artists, killing them, and selling the art for a hefty profit. The loan shark then brings in the mob as investors, only to find himself pushed out. Bergman wonders where the murderer will strike next while unraveling the plans of the loan shark, art dealer, and mob.

Kleinfeld, a playwright, screenwriter, and columnist, has crafted a stellar novel, with interesting characters and a corkscrewing plot. The characters aren't too perfect and make choices from the heart as opposed to the brain, such as when Bergman decides to question his former lover, without being accompanied by his partner, and, as they say, old habits die hard. The plot, in the earlier sections of the book, bounces back and forth in time and between characters and continues to build in excitement.

Kleinfeld's writes with creative flair: "The seething troll is in his mobile cave gazing into his digital fire." Subtle but funny passages are sprinkled throughout: "His grand finale, pizza resistance or whatever." Kleinfeld can also capture the essence of a character, such as when he writes in a Russian accent (not just in the dialogue, but when the chapter is from a Russian assassin's point of view). As the assassin is hunting through the museum gallery looking for his prey: "All he spotted was Slobo looking at the fancy butcher tools with hungry grin, dreaming what he could do with one of those." This is most definitely a novel for adults, with strong language and adult themes.

Exquisite writing, subtle humor, and plenty of adventure in the art, mob, and criminal worlds, Kleinfeld's sophomore book will certainly entertain any reader who loves murder mysteries.

BETH VANHOUTEN (Fall 2014)

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