

The Life and Loves of Lena Gaunt

Tracy Farr

Aardvark Bureau (May 10, 2016)

Softcover \$14.95 (304pp)

978-1-910709-05-4

Lena Gaunt, former professional musician, octogenarian, and heroin addict, lives in the suburbs of Perth. Once a renowned theremin player, she is given the chance to play at an electronic music festival, ending her retirement and recapturing a forgotten part of herself. Filmmaker Mo Patterson listens to her captivating performance and soon asks to make a documentary film about her eclectic life and career, leading to a journey of discovery for both that culminates in fresh insights, the unearthing of bittersweet memories, and a final peace.

The setup of the novel is clever, allowing for a slow discovery of the life of Lena seen in retrospect. At the same time, Lena's emotional life is not all in the past—the figure of Mo Patterson allows her a fresh chance at vulnerability. Lena is a captivating narrator who provides a window into a world where some of life's deepest questions can only be answered through art. *The Life and Loves of Lena Gaunt* is filled with deep reflection and symbolism, and even the instrument Lena herself plays is packed with meaning: the theremin was the first electronic musical instrument invented, and requires players' hands to hover over—but never touch—the instrument. From reflections on technology and art, to questions of addiction and control, the novel moves expertly from a portrait of Lena's life to an analysis of its broader, deeper themes.

The Life and Loves of Lena Gaunt is a reflective, quiet, but beautifully written tale perfect for those interested in the intersection of music, literature, and film.

STEPHANIE BUCKLIN (Summer 2016)

Disclosure: This article is not an endorsement, but a review. The publisher of this book provided free copies of the book to have their book reviewed by a professional reviewer. No fee was paid by the publisher for this review. Foreword Reviews only recommends books that we love. Foreword Magazine, Inc. is disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255.