

Starman After Midnight

Scott Semegran

Mutt Press

9798218415945 \$14.99 Paperback/\$4.99 eBook

<https://bookshop.org/a/152/9798218415945>

Starman After Midnight: A Novel-in-stories is a literary collection of small-town characters and situations. At their nexus are the lives of neighbors Seff and Big Dave, opposites who are attracted by the mysteries and puzzles that permeate both of their lives.

Their very different worldviews lead to meteoric clashes over diverse approaches to life and their own small pieces of it, creating an atmosphere of inquiry and discovery. This will especially attract readers interested in surrealistic settings, dark influences, and intriguing solutions to threats and possibilities.

The first attribute to note about Scott Semegran's approach is his immersive language. He captures these vignettes of daily challenges through dialogues that are astute and packed with interest:

"How did you come up with something like that?" I said.

He finished the last of his beer. "Fox News. Beer me."

I finished my beer and put a new beer in his outstretched hand. "Fox News isn't news," I told him.

"What do you mean it ain't news? It's in the title. Fox News."

"That's ridiculous."

"Is it? It ain't no more ridiculous than a naked bear in the woods flashing its pecker at a choir of gophers."

"Huh?"

"You heard me. A spy, dammit. A gosh-dern-naked Russian-voting-system spy. Son of a biscuit."

The scenarios which contribute to the greater whole and crux of the story aren't what you'd anticipate from a pair of beer-guzzling buddies who hold such disparate attitudes about the evidence and circumstances that revolve around them.

Indeed, elements of psychological and social surprise that are woven into each tale create milieus which both stand nicely alone in individual chapters, yet are indicative of the strong outcome of these entwined experiences and mysteries.

Throughout them all, Semegran's language ties together these oddballs and oddities in a manner that will especially please creative writing teachers seeking modern examples of powerful character-building devices:

The next afternoon, I was hot-to-trot in the writing department and finished a pivotal chapter in my zombie family novel, one where the father questions his existence and begins to wonder if he's actually living his "afterlife" rather than his "real life."

Humor juxtaposes nicely with serious reflection about community and individual involvements as the story unfolds in a series of picture-in-picture moments.

The tale is, quite simply, utterly compelling, fun, and attractive. *Starman After Midnight* will reach audiences interested in humor, puzzles, interpersonal relationship quandaries, and community challenges. It will also delight libraries looking for accessible, modern literary works that sizzle with originality and delightful surprises.