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California Dreamers

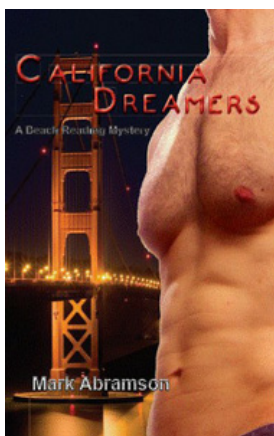
by Daniel Scheffler
EDGE Contributor
Wednesday May 30, 2012

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"California Dreamers" is the sixth installment of Mark Abramson's self-named beach reading series. Unpretentious and completely earnest about its lack of Pulitzer or serious literary merit, Abramson dishes out the lightest possible read, that yes is apparently only for the beach.

Summer reading brings visions of bright sunlight, squinting eyes and the smell of coconut to most people's standard fantasy. The Pines on Fire Island has the cheeky wandering eye scanning for new men included in the beach cliché. "California Dreamers", and Abramson's previous five novels, fit perfectly into this summer's beach bag and will slightly tingle readers with its over-simplified, zealous about everything style. If you haven't read the previous five, do not fear as the writer alludes to enough for readers to fill in the gaps - soap opera style.

Tim Snow, the old chestnut, is the proverbial hero figure in the novels. His primary work is as a waiter in the Castro area of San Francisco and his other job, as he calls it, is to be a parent to the dog of his boyfriend, innovatively the boyfriend is named Nick. As Tim wants to do something good for humanity he enrolls himself along with some other HIV patients to experiment with the AIDS drug, "Neutriva". The drug surprisingly has psychedelic effects on Tim and in the mind-altered state the group of testers can foretell, and so prevent, suicides from the Golden Gate Bridge - a perfect birthday gift to the Golden Gate Bridge age 75 this year.

The author crafts a hardly compelling novel that will serve its purpose if the gay version of the Jersey Shore cast was searching for a not-too-complicated novel to read this summer.

The story takes a completely surprising and immediate sinister twist and the characters are involved in some supernatural and unlawful concerns. With a fortune-teller named Malvina and an aunt named Ruth, the plot clots as it loses its focus as a beach read and becomes a gay Nancy Drew/Scooby Doo debacle.

With hundreds of celebrity references, brand names and an almost too accurate account of the city of San Francisco the novel provides a rather stereotypical view of the supposedly quintessential gay San Francisco male. The lead characters spend too much of their time fussing about immateriality and not actually doing anything productive.

The cover shamelessly parades a torso of some conventional view of what gay men's bodies should look like and perhaps even promotes the stereotype. The author crafts a hardly compelling novel that will serve its purpose if the gay version of the Jersey Shore cast was searching for a not-too-complicated novel to read this summer.

"California Dreamers"
Mark Abramson
Lethe Press Books

\$10.99

by Mark Abramson

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