



Savage Lane

Jason Starr

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EVERY TOWN HAS ITS SECRETS

In *Savage Lane*, Jason Starr has crafted a searing tale of suspense that proves the adage: Love thy neighbor, but don't pull down your hedge. Karen Daily, recently divorced, lives with her two kids in a quaint suburb of New York City. She's teaching at a nearby elementary school, starting to date again, and for the first time in years has found joy in her life. Mark Berman, Karen's friend and neighbor, wants out of his unhappy marriage, and so does his wife, Deb, but they have stayed together for the sake of their children.

Unbeknownst to Karen, while Mark's marriage has deteriorated his obsession with her has grown. And as Mark's rich fantasy life takes on a more sinister edge, rumors begin to spread about Karen and a bigger secret is uncovered. And soon Karen finds that Mark is not the only one who has taken an undesired interest in her...

Jason Starr is one of our most accomplished writers of the darkness that lies within the human heart, and *Savage Lane* is his most riveting and intimate novel yet—a dark, domestic thriller and an honest, searing satire of a declining marriage, suburban life, and obsessive love.

Savage Lane Details

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Author : Jason Starr

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From Reader Review Savage Lane for online ebook

Matt says

I can't find any faults with it at all. Starr really doesn't miss a beat in this novel. Sometimes I read people's reviews of books, though, and they make comments like: "I didn't find the characters likeable. Two stars." Or some nonsense likes that. It's shameful. It's like giving Hee Haw a bad review for having too much country music in it. THAT IS WHAT HEE HAW IS. You're not supposed to like the characters., so if you read Savage Lane and decide you don't like the characters in it, that is because you are not supposed to; the author has achieved his goal, and you should commend him for it. Five stars!

Kurt Reichenbaugh says

I love books about delusional characters, probably because it's a reflection on real life. This novel is like that, but to an extreme that I'm wondering if it isn't meant as satire. Years ago I tried reading the novel Couples by John Updike, but tossed it aside because of the slathered overwritten prose. We get it, the suburbs are dotted versions of purgatory. So you know that already going in to Jason Starr's novel about a cast of delusional jerkoffs in a wealthy New York suburb. It's like they're all still in high school, only with nice homes and money to flaunt. Deb is married to Mark. They're both the perfect asshole self-absorbed couple that deserve each other. Of course, deserving each other doesn't mean they like each other. So they create grand fantasies to fill out each day. Mark's fantasy is Karen, the hot MILF who lives a few houses down the block. Karen is divorced and trying to raise her two children. What with her yoga and jogging, she seems completely oblivious to Mark's attention, which leads to a storm of trouble. Deb, not content to just accuse Mark of infidelity, lives out her own lie with an 18 year old kid who works at the country club. Now you've got the setup. So climb into that Tahoe, plug in that Blue Tooth, put Dave Mathews Band on the playlist and cruise on down to Savage Lane for the fun and games.

Jessica Sullivan says

If you're anything like me, sometimes you just need a mindless, fast-paced pageturner. I knew more or less what I was getting myself into when I picked this up, but I didn't expect it to be so...bad.

I often enjoy books that examine the dark underside of domestic suburban life - Tom Perrotta comes to mind - but this is like if you took a book like that and stripped it of anything intelligent or thought-provoking. Any semblance of attempted satire is obscured by its utter silliness.

The characters are one-dimensional cliches whose actions are so delusional and unbelievable that it's hard to keep reading. In fact, I'm not even sure why I stuck with it. Maybe for the same reason I'll sometimes get sucked into watching a Lifetime movie.

It's a fast, easy read, so it's hard to feel too resentful toward it, but I wouldn't recommend it.

#jasonstarr #bookreview #bookstagram #igbooks #fiction #currentlyreading #currentread #amreading #bibliophile #booksofinstagram #book

Karen says

If there was a prize for being the most deluded and obsessive male, then some of the characters in this book would surely win. I felt quite sorry for Karen Daily. Just by being an attractive divorcee she had become this object of obsession and fantasy by men in her neighbourhood and she unwittingly found that her life was subject to public discussion and comment.

Mark and Deb Berman have gone from a loving relationship to a toxic marriage. Deb is convinced that Mark is having an affair with Karen, after she saw Mark holding her hand during a dinner party. However, whilst berating Mark and publicly attacking Karen, Deb is hiding a secret of her own. In the meantime, Mark is planning his future life with Karen, even deciding where they would live once they were together.

This book is a jumble of genres, being a mixture of a domestic/psychological/crime thriller. Apart from Karen (who wasn't perfect by any means), I didn't find the characters particularly 'likeable' and I really struggled to find any sympathy for any of them but nevertheless they still evoked strong emotions in me – I'm not normally a violent person but there were one or two, (ok, maybe more than that) that I just wanted to slap however their awfulness adds to the creepy and compelling nature of the story.

At one stage, the plot takes an even darker and more sinister turn but even then there is a comical slant to the story and, like me, you may well find some actions amusing and just downright inept.

There are enough surprises and twists in the story to keep you interested and the characters are frighteningly believable (they could easily live in your neighbourhood, god forbid!). The story is told from different views and Jason Starr has a natural and straightforward style of writing; there are no flowery descriptions to slow the story down and it's a book that you can read quite quickly. I wasn't familiar with any of his work before reading Savage Lane but this dark story of suburban obsession will certainly keep you entertained.

Digital copy provided by publisher for review for blog tour

Bookread2day says

Review by www.ireadnovels.wordpress.com

PAPERBACK I would have given this paperback more than 5 stars if I could have done!

A must buy, must read. I just love reading a domestic thriller. Jason Starr is a star of an author he keeps his readers glued as he put something on every page, he has set no limits, he just takes every thought forward from page to page, to chapter to chapter right to the end. As I enjoyed every single page I just didn't want Savage Lane to end.

With affairs constant there are choices several central characters have to face. Deb Berman, sees her husband Mark holding hands with their best friend Karen at a party. Secretly Mark fancied divorcee Karen. Deb and Mark's teenagers were best friends with Karen's teenagers. Deb is sure her husband is sleeping with Karen. When Deb finds Mark sitting with Karen at the golf country club, Deb and Karen have a fight. Forty-four-year-old Debbie Berman lives in a four-bedroom house in Westchester with a successful, hard-working husband and two amazing kids. Now Deb wants a divorce as her husband seems over friendly with Karen, and Deb is sure they are having an affair. But for Deb her worst decision had been getting involved with an eighteen-year-old boy. When Deb goes missing the police interview Karen as she had a fight with Deb that witness see and people are talking saying Karen could have murdered Deb to be her husband. Karen thinks the police should look at Mark Berman as his wife wanted to divorce him. Or could there be a serial killer on

the loose?

Savage Lane is the first book that Jason Starr has written in six years, I do hope that Jason Starr writes another thriller soon.

Sophie says

3.5

Posted in full <http://www.reviewedthebook.co.uk/2015...>

Savage Lane is a dark thriller about a small neighbourhood fuelled by fantasy and obsession, observing how rumours and secrets can lead to grisly consequences. Mark is married to Deb but is put off by her constant boozing and is harbouring a pretty graphic obsession with his neighbour, Karen, who is recently divorced and constantly judged by the people around her. Deb is suspicious of Mark's intentions towards Karen, and Karen's intentions towards Mark, but she has her own secret to hide and her secret has their own secret and their secret has more secrets and basically every single difficult to like person of the questionably named Savage Lane has a secret – and I had to know every single one of them. Never have I read a book with such detestable characters and found it so utterly readable and unputdownable – getting through it quickly in less than 24 hours and feeling like I'd been taken on one heck of a seedy journey. No, I didn't like the characters nor the things they got up to. I could only sympathise with one of them and only just. But liking the characters doesn't always translate to liking a book because I did find this a very entertaining read.

Savage Lane is very character driven and there were two people in particular who fascinated me the most. One I won't name to avoid spoilers but the other main one was Mark, who was evidently creepy but interesting to read about all the same. He had a very obsessive personality though we later on discover he's not the only one. I cringed on Karen's behalf when he read into her words and body language so much, building up the only reason and picture he wanted in his mind – clearly Karen was in love with him too. I found it equally gross and compelling how far he envisaged things between them in his mind, how quickly the story of their fantasy relationship developed for him – so much so he almost had me convinced at one point. The mental state of most of the characters in this book was very dubious.

We do get a strong insight into each of the main characters, except one who was introduced quite late on, brought into the story almost like we were already meant to know their backstory, when we didn't. Other than that one, each character felt well defined and developed with very interesting motives and thought-processes (thought-processes from mostly senseless people admittedly). With every chapter, we were back with a different character and the story picked up from when we'd heard from them last which did mean that we got to hear the same story but through the eyes of different characters. Though that made sure not a twist was missed, it did feel a bit disjointed and repetitive to me at times as I would have liked the narrative to always be moving forwards rather than back and forth. Having said that, I did enjoy the mostly surprising twists that cropped up including one shocking twist that caught me off guard early on and changed the whole course of the story I was expecting.

Frankly, most of the characters in this book were ruled by a body part that wasn't their brain and it became a bit samey when sex appeared to be the only thing on all the characters' minds. With the narrative relying on its characters to lead it, I wondered how I would feel if I didn't take to any of the characters and I didn't – there was nothing good I wanted to see happen to them. But it was the extreme fantasies and lengths they would stretch to that had me immersed in the story and I laughed my way through some of the obscure

moments and ideas the characters came up with. There was humour in their absurdity and in their desperation, as well as in the actions of a very closed in town where everybody knew, or thought they knew, everybody else's business.

Most of the appeal of this book for me was that at the beginning, the characters seemed to be relatively normal people just a little bit carried away with the stories their minds kept on coming up with and then as the book progresses, you see how layer upon layer of fantasy can work its way into a complete comprehensible life in your own mind – how if anybody thinks about something unobtainable for long enough it no longer feels that way, only pure and real and when the characters in this book allowed reality to hit, the consequences were screwed up and horrific. I wasn't sure any of the characters had it in them to learn from their mistakes, but I had fun finding out. Though it may appear a bit like an over-the-top soap opera, the carnage is very much gripping, disturbing and completely enthralling. It's impossible to not get caught up in life in Savage Lane as things spiral out of control.

(review copy)

Rachel says

Absolutely awful. The. Worst. I want my money back.

Nicigirl85 says

Titel: Mehr los als in der Wisteria Lane...

Weil sich der Klappentext des Buches so sehr nach Desperate Houswives anhörte, war direkt meine Neugierde geweckt, doch was ich geboten bekam, war so viel besser.

In der Geschichte geht es um die Savage Lane, eine ruhige Straße mit ungescholteten und zufriedenen Bürgern. Doch der Schein trügt. Hinter jeder Hausfassade steckt ein Drama. Doch wo brodelt es am meisten? Und wer wird dafür die Konsequenzen tragen?

Jason Starr ist ungemein geschickt im Schreiben, denn er führt seinen Leser immer mal wieder an der Nase herum. Zunächst einmal bekommen wir in jedes Haus der Straße einen Einblick und erleben die einzelnen Bewohner. Bereits zu Beginn der Handlung merkt man, dass es unterschwellig überall zu brodeln scheint.

Tja und je mehr man liest, desto mehr erfährt man, wer mit wem ein Verhältnis hat. Dabei lässt der Autor wirklich rein gar nichts aus. Selbst der nach außen hin schwer verliebte Ehemann entpuppt sich im Verlauf der Geschichte als homosexuell, steht eben nur nicht dazu.

Das Besondere an der Geschichte für mich war, dass offenbar jeder der Protagonisten nur glauben und sehen will, was er sich selbst einredet. Da können noch so viele Beweise dagegen sprechen, man glaubt nicht der Realität. Zwischenzeitlich habe ich mich wirklich gefragt, ob alle in der Straße verrückt geworden sind? Aber wahrscheinlich war genau das die Absicht des Autors, dass er uns in die Abgründe einer jeden Seele blicken lässt.

Ich habe mit vielen der Protagonisten sympatisiert, aber im Verlauf der Geschichte bekommt man so seine Zweifel, wem man noch glauben kann und wem nicht.

Je näher man dem Ende kam, umso spannender wurde es und ich konnte einfach nicht mehr mit dem Lesen aufhören. Für mich war das Buch eine komplette Überraschung, denn nie hatte ich damit gerechnet, was da auf mich zukommt.

Fazit: Unglaublich spannende Unterhaltung, die teilweise mehr was von einem Thriller als von einem Roman hat. In jedem Fall ein echter Pageturner, dem ich nur jeden ans Herz legen kann, der spannende Unterhaltung mag. Stoff, der auch zum Verfilmen geeignet wäre.

Michelle says

It is atmospheric, dark, and a page-turner. One for the beach or a journey when you want something easy to get absorbed in quickly. And with the caveat that the book I read before this ('A Gentleman in Moscow') was charming and gentle and my take on 'Savage Lane' may have suffered a little as a result.

Darcy says

Yeah, this one didn't work for me. I hated how self involved everyone was. You had Mark, who was in a unhappy marriage, but doesn't want to leave because of the kids. He lusts over neighbor, Karen, in fact imagines that a divorce would happen and he could move in with Karen and everything would be all right. Karen is clueless about Mark's feelings, she believes their friends. While Mark's wife Deb, now she is a piece of work, is a closet drunk, has been screwing an 18 year old kid for the last 2 years. Then Deb has the balls to give Mark crap about his friendship with Karen, screams that she knows he is cheating on her. Lastly we have Deb's boy toy who doesn't want to live at home any more because his stepfather beats him, hopes that Deb's marriage ends so that he could just move in with her and bring their relationship out in the open. It was at this point that I couldn't take it any more, this is a train wreck and I didn't really care. In the end this one just wasn't for me.

Benoit Lelièvre says

I shouldn't have enjoyed this novel as much as I did. It's vile, crass and has little to no faith in human nature.

And yet, I found myself gravitating towards these characters because they're so cartoonish and removed from reality that I didn't feel appalled by the shortcomings of their warped reality. Sure, it suck living in the burbs and everybody is artificial as hell, but in Jason Starr's world, characters assume their artificial nature like they do in a Coen brothers movie.

Greatly enjoyable although I slightly hate myself for it.

Dita says

Man, this book is so wrong in all of the right ways.

It is crammed chock full of hideous, self-absorbed people doing awful things, self-righteously justifying their

nasty choices while judging others viciously.

It has at least one psychopath, arguably two, who are just Coo Coo for Cocoa Puffs and it is so darkly funny and absurd that I found myself laughing out loud several different times.

Bear in mind that this is a psychological thriller.

It was berserk and I loved it.

Katy Noyes says

I had no idea what to expect with this, but I soon found myself riveted to this gradually escalating tale of obsession in domestic suburbia. Multiple perspectives from all angles give it an all-round look at what 'love' can mean to different people.

It all centres on Karen. She's a divorcee, dating on the internet, an attractive mum and special needs teacher who all the husbands gossip over at their golf game. Her best friend, unbeknown to her is also madly in love with her, and feels sure that Karen reciprocates his attachment. Mark's marriage is failing already, and his wife Deb can plainly see his feelings and is sure her husband and his 'friend' are already having an affair.

At first, we think it is Mark who fantasises and dreams his life into another. But it might not just be him... To delve further would be to spoil the book. I really was kept glued to the pages by each new revelation. It seems in suburbia, nobody is content. Everybody has dreams that may or may not be grounded in reality, some dangerously so.

A very dark story but also incredibly funny at times, screwball comedy elements appear at moments with several subplots all revolving round our central trio and a few real surprises along the way. I'll be recommending this to those who like black comedy, domestic dramas and contemporary satire, because this has elements of them all.

Mark is a fantastic obsessive, you want to smack him in the head and wake him up from his fantasy world, and see the family falling to pieces around him. Karen is, not a blank slate, but an everywoman grounded in reality and a counterpoint to the madness we see in almost everyone around her. Deb, well... you'll have to see for yourself.

Let's hope this doesn't have as much to say about first world modern living as it seems to, it's much too frightening a prospect – you'll never trust your neighbours again.

This builds up from early on to be a stonkingly exciting and hilarious read. Would love to see it filmed. A great discussion piece for book groups.

Brian says

This was probably one of the worst books that I've ever read, and it was an absolute trainwreck to read. The book is about a couple and their various stalkers. Mark is married to Deb but he has eyes for Karen. Deb suspects Mark is having an affair and she flips out..but she's having an affair of her own, with an 18 year old

who she met when he was 16. He was underage when she met him and she acknowledges that she was a serial rapist. The dialogue is outlandish and ridiculous. They use the term "GF" as a an actual part of the dialogue. Every single character in this book is shady and has no moral redeeming factors whatsoever. The plot takes some very bizarre and stupid twists, and I saw them coming a mile away. There are some lines I would have loved to quote but I don't want to ruin it for those who decide to read this. Stay FAR FAR FAR away from this!

Josh says

Jason Starr gets inside the crawl space of the minds of his characters in similar fashion to suburban noir authors James M Cain and Megan Abbott as he weaves a seductively good tale infused with satire, secrets, and murder.

The suburbs are a breeding ground for gossip, and it's this gossip that leads to a very public accusation of murder and a fallout which destroys long time friends and rocks a family to it's everyday middle class core.

Karen is the girl next door - the middle aged mom version that is, while Mark is the love struck boy - circa middle-aged family man. Mark's wife, Deb, knows something is going on between Karen and Mark. The subtle flirting, the texting, the whispered conversations and morning jogs together. She can see her husband drifting off to the arms of another woman. She is certain of this. So much so she confronts Mark and Karen - causing a stir and creating a scene which changes their lives forever.

Sounds like a midday-made-for-TV-movie doesn't it? Think again. Jason Starr has a knack for writing troubled characters who succumb to an all too easy dark persona while making said dark persona shine with normalcy. The blue collar noir of Jason Starr's earlier novels rears its head in the mean streets of suburbia and the end result is a topsy turvey thriller sure to please.
