

Manhattan Book Review

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HomoAmerican - The Secret Society

By Michael Dane

\$24.95 , 500 pages, Format: eBook

★★★★★ /5

A fight for survival tied to visibility and existing sincerely and unbridledly! In a time when being different was much more frowned upon than in today's world, Michael Dane struggled to defend their identity and uniqueness against all those afraid of and convinced to take action against diversity. *HomoAmerican - The Secret Society* includes Michael Dane's story as they experienced growing up in a broken home and becoming an escape artist around their father, finding refuge in ballet and fighting to practice it as a boy, barely escaping war in Vietnam, getting arrested for murder in France, falling in and out of love, losing close friends and family, experiencing fame, dancing to their songs to make a living, and much more.

HomoAmerican - The Secret Society is one of the most revealing, elaborate, introspective, and brilliant biographies I have read. My decision to read it was abundantly rewarded with the multiple euphoric moments I had as I reflected on the many poetic and perspective words in the book. An example: "Just as starving men dream to dine ...I dream with the shadows and wake a starving man." Michael Dane has a truly keen eye that's trained to examine and dissect society and its flaws and contrast their experiences of different cultures, including South Africa's "extravagance", Iran's "sea of honking horns", and their wild experience in Belgium as they fought for food and everything else. I spent a good amount of time bookmarking several lines that I couldn't afford to read just once, one of which beautifully articulates how limiting being normal is.

I was mightily impressed and inspired by the author's boldness and creativity as they got involved in different activities, from dancing, writing music, and singing professionally to writing a play—which they starred in, directed, and designed costumes for. Michael Dane's story gets quite deep and personal, and I found I could relate to a lot of their struggles. As a musician and a creative myself, I understood how the creative process can be "a lonely one" and the need for money to create art.

By the time I finished the book, I felt like I knew the author personally. It's unbelievable how mean people can get when they discover you are different. Imagine getting detained twice by the police for painting your small fingernail red or getting abused and threatened for being romantically involved with the same sex. *HomoAmerican - The Secret Society* is a book the world needs to remind us why we need to stop discriminating against others—no matter their differences as, deep down, we all have similar feelings, dreams, and a desire to be happy.

Reviewed by Foluso Falaye

