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Review: Stressed in Scottsdale by Marcia Fine



Title: Stressed in Scottsdale

Author: Marcia Fine

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Publisher: L'Image Press

Genre: Contemporary Fiction

Rating: 4.0 out of 5.0

Publisher: Multitasking Jean Rubin has too much to do. She races to accomplish endless errands, care for an elderly mother forced to move to assisted living, help with her kid's fertility problems and assist husband, Maury, with a Green Party campaign that includes a snarky opponent, political corruption and environmental issues. With an influx of technology, roof rats invading her yard and a robbery by the Rock Burglar, Jean finds herself **STRESSED in SCOTTSDALE**. Even her two upscale friends, April and Glee, can't distract her from all the anxiety with a spa intervention

My Thoughts: Delightfully funny and absurd, **Stressed in Scottsdale** is a smart, witty story, unlike anything you've recently read. Few topics are safe from **Marcia Fine's** satire as she takes aim at societal issues of relationships, fertility, politics and the environment, showing how carried away people get and how absurd things can become. In the midst of all the wackiness, Marcia Fine does a terrific job of reminding us that, although there are things in life we need to take care of, most of them aren't important enough to cause us to lose our minds.

I read this book at a time I was feeling harried, blue and depressed with a lot on my plate. One night I just needed to put my feet up, kick back and get lost in a light, entertaining book. I've never been to Scottsdale, never read a book by Marcia Fine and was a little unsure of this book based on the cover but decided to give it a try and am so glad I did! Much of it is laugh out loud funny and Fine's descriptions of the character's clothes, homes, cars, attitudes and the ensuing scenarios are hilarious. I laughed often. But, I also found myself thinking about my priorities and what's important to me in my life.

My favorite thing about **Stressed in Scottsdale** is the characters, with Jean Rubin the main character and narrator. We've all known a Jean Rubin, the woman who cannot say no to anyone. So she's over-scheduled and stretched well beyond her limits. Jean can't refuse her husband, Maury, her grown children, her clients, her recently widowed mother, Florence and her best friends, April and Glee. She's a

woman on the verge of a nervous breakdown, carrying her large, overstuffed day planner with her everywhere, (and leaving it everywhere!) and misplacing many other items like her car keys. Jean is harried and anxious, constantly muttering to herself with a never-ending stream of thoughts running through her ends rendering her unable to focus on anything!

Maury loves Jean but, like so many husbands he rarely listens to her, and when he does, he doesn't actually hear her as she tells him repeatedly she has way too much to do. Maury means well when he volunteers Jean to help out the Green Party in a local political race, telling the campaign head what a terrific writer Jean is, but he doesn't bother to ask Jean if she wants to volunteer in the first place! She gets annoyed with him, so Maury tells her not to worry, he'll help, but as with so many other tasks, he never actually does.

Maury also conceals from Jean that the opposing candidate in the race is a woman Jean had a very unpleasant confrontation with in the past named Flora Beaudreaux. Jean is convinced Flora tried to kill her. Jean is livid when she discovers Flora is running in the race and is afraid to see her. But she is unable to say no to working on the campaign so when she discovers that Flora's husband has violated numerous environmental laws and is under investigation, Jean becomes giddy and somewhat obsessed with the idea of beating Flora!

Jean's two best friends, April and Glee, are constantly encouraging Jean to relax in ways they believe are relaxing without considering whether or not those methods will help Jean. April is married to a wealthy man and has two young children who don't seem to figure much in her life. She is very thin, stunningly beautiful and impeccably dressed in the top designers. Jean is more of a modern day hippie who favors long, flowered, elastic-waist skirts and Birkenstocks. April believes a makeover will improve Jean's life. April spends her days taking care of herself and her 4 small, yippy dogs and finds it all exhausting, and is unable to understand why Jean is so stressed and is sure a spa day is all she needs!

Glee is one of those larger than life women who changes her career focus frequently and always has a new interest. Creative, but not at all practical, when we first meet her Glee is an erotic artist, yoga instructor and personal life and intuitive coach. Glee is also searching for her perfect man and takes bio-identical hormone injections to improve her sex drive, as well as many, many vitamins. She is an atheist but throws a big party for the Day of the Dead celebrating souls who have returned from the afterlife and decorates her home with skeletons and an altar to honor her departed parents. Shortly after this she decides to become a stress coach and help people enjoy their lives.

April and Glee periodically take Jean to various events that they think she would enjoy, such as a monthly meeting of the Scottsdale Babe Society where sex, finding a partner and plastic surgery are hot topics that cause Jean to cringe. April and Glee also introduce Jean to a type of exercise called Ratango that,

much to Jean's embarrassment and dismay, is meant to enhance sensuality, increase passion and improve intimacy .

There are several other people in Jean's life asking favors of her, demanding her help and crying on her shoulder for whom there's not enough room here to even mention! Jean, although she desperately wants to, as usual, cannot say no to them. The situation comes to a head when Jean takes drastic action to show Maury, her mother, her friends (and the others) that she just cannot take on any more burdens. She is just one woman! Her actions are uniquely Jean, so, apart from being nutty and funny, of course they wind up causing her additional work rather than easing her burdens. But Jean begins to realize that not everything is her problem and that very often things work themselves out, with or without her. Jean slowly begins to figure out her priorities and what she wants her life to be.

Stressed in Scottsdale is a very enjoyable story that amidst all the humor and absurdity reminds us what's important in our lives. That's why I'd recommend this book to any 21st Century American woman who knows what it's like to feel swamped but knows enough to step back once in a while and see the humor in all of it. In other words, if you're one of those woman who's trying to have it all and can still see the craziness that ensues, this book is for you! Hopefully it will make you laugh and remind you about what you love most in your life.

I received an ARC copy of this book from the publisher, L'Image Press LLC through Shelf Awareness.

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