

The stories we inherit, the stories we invent to survive, and what happens when the truth finally catches up with us — played out across generations on an island where memory is almost impossible to escape.

A NOVEL OF PHILOXENIA, NOTIAS (SOUTH WIND) & THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

All the People We Are — *A Novel of the Aegean*

by **Sharon Feinstein**

Feinstein, an acclaimed journalist and author of three novels, brings her sharp eye and lyrical voice to the southern Cyclades.



Watching for the wind to turn — Folegandros

“The dangers of the stories human beings construct about one another.”

ΦΙΛΟΞΕΝΙΑ — GUEST-FRIENDSHIP

On a black, moonless night, Giorgos Papadopoulos broke Greece's oldest law — philoxenia — the trust owed to your dearest friend — when he accused Nikos of a dark and resounding betrayal. In the drunken fight that followed, Nikos staggered back and smashed his head on rock — and so, in a single, irreversible second, began a generational vendetta. The rupture recalls doomed Troy: destruction born not simply of violence, but of philoxenia betrayed. Fifty years later **Alexander**, Giorgos's grandson and the island's doctor, must carry this guilt

THE PREMISE

A broken act of philoxenia in 1967 — the time of the Junta, when exiles were imprisoned on Folegandros — leaves one family carrying the weight of inherited guilt across four generations. Fifty years later, three strangers arrive on this remote and mysterious island.

because of many of the island's unforgiving inhabitants.

*Philoxenia is Zeus's law. As **Zeus Xenios**, guardian of guests and travellers, the god watched over every threshold in Greece. A broken bond of hospitality and friendship was an offence against him.*

As in the Greek myths, human beings make genuine choices, yet somehow those choices carry them towards something that already seems to be waiting for them.

***Hermes**, messenger god and guide of wandering souls, presides over a hidden note, a whispered suggestion, a phalanx of messages that finally lead to the truth.*

NOTIAS

The Notias rises every summer, hot off the African coast, blowing the outside world into Folegandros — strangers, escapees running from their lives, shadowy griefs. *Suzannah* flees from Venice, still haunted by the eternal city and the broken love left behind. *Amber* leaves her husband and newborn. *Adam* arrives on a yacht with his American family and their newfound wealth. Each of them is subject to the spell and the dangers of Folegandros.

Every character is chasing truth and rebirth: a version of themselves, a person they reach for in the dark. The island is a mirror that reflects and betrays, and the truth is always elusive. Feinstein moves between London, Venice, Paris, Vancouver Island and New York, building atmosphere, detail and insight towards the shocking accident and the final unravelling of the buried secret.

THE CLOSING OF THE CIRCLE OF LIFE

The circle of life closes around the single act of violence that tore the island apart fifty years before. The accident has opened a new rupture. Secrets never end. They repeat themselves. Feinstein's prose is lyrical and fiercely dramatic. She has a rare ear for dialogue and an extraordinary gift for rendering relationships in all their dangers and tenderness. On an island where even a cormorant seems to know the truth,

oblivious to its grip.

SCALE & SCOPE

140

chapters spanning four generations and six locations, from 1967 to the present day

GENRE

- Literary Fiction
- Multi-generational Family Saga
- Mediterranean Setting
- Ensemble / Multiple voices
- Mystical & Spiritual
- Grief, Inheritance, Love and Betrayal.

IDEAL READERSHIP

Readers drawn to lyrical, dramatic prose and richly observed relationships; those who value a strong sense of place and multi-stranded literary fiction; book clubs interested in family life and the search for oneself; anyone who loved the lyricism of *Orbital* and wants to find it again grounded on earth and within the sea's depths.

and one woman refuses to tell it, the tension is as taut and unyielding as Odysseus' bow.

The title is so apposite: Suzannah's longing, Amber's grief, the Bach family's sudden inheritance, and Alexander's dark guilt all reflect what exists within each of us. Feinstein is naming: not one story, but All the People We Are.

This novel is not only what it seems. Its central mystery — what really happened, and how do we find the truth? — is timeless. She grapples with what we are all facing now: truth or lies, shifting reality, climate change, the cruelty done to animals, destruction of the natural world, and the importance of each small act of kindness and rebellion.

FOR READERS OF

- *Orbital* — Samantha Harvey
- *The Song of Achilles* — Madeline Miller
- *The Boy from the Sea* — Garrett Carr
- *The God of Small Things* — Arundhati Roy
- *The Secret History* — Donna Tartt



Folegandros, Greece

“Folegandros isn't a backdrop — it is a character in its own right, rendered with intimacy and understanding, without any trace of postcard gloss.”

ON THE ISLAND

“Worry beads (komboloi), a cormorant that hovers above a marked man, the whispers behind the twitching curtains of Ano Meria — this island speaks to you through its fierce, rocky soil and translucent sea.”

ON THE SETTING

“A lyrical, dramatic voice — dialogue that crackles, relationships rendered with precision, and the magnificence of nature.”

ON THE VOICE

A story about philoxenia broken and repaid, a wind that carries people to an island that whispers to each of them, and the circle of life coming round.

All the People We Are is the kind of novel to haunt you.

For all rights queries contact Jason Bartholomew | jason@thebksagency.com