Review of Lost and Wanted

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Review

Author: Nell Freudenberger  
Title:  *Lost and Wanted: A Novel*  
Publisher: Alfred A. Knopf  
Release date: April 2019  
Number of pages: 318  
Features:  
Format: Hard cover  
ISBN: 9780385352680  
Price: $26.95  

In this, her third novel, Freudenberger (*The Dissident, The Newlyweds*) deploys the obscurities of science to untangle a series of interpersonal relationships as complex as any quadratic equation. Helen, the narrator, is a theoretical physicist. A Harvard graduate and now an MIT professor of repute, Helen is forced to ponder and question her place in the universe of persons in her orbit when she begins, inexplicably, receiving text and email messages from her recently-deceased best friend’s telephone.  

The book is rich in the vivid detail that is characteristic of Freudenberger. The narrator’s lofty clarifications of physical concepts, such as gravitational waves and the efforts of LIGO scientists to detect them, are balanced by hints of the mundane world she inhabits, such as a desk strewn with the detritus of everyday life, including a note reminding her to buy toothpaste.  

The title suggests the loss of something earnestly desired. What that desire is seems, at first, unknown even to Helen. But, in the end, through the apt analogy of gravity and with her own soul searching, Helen comes to an ultimate moment of “finding.”  

VERDICT: Recommended for anyone drawn to contemporary literary and character-driven fiction.