



The Roots Run Deep

by Chris Strong



Fiction - New Adult

242 Pages

Reviewed on 08/15/2024

Book Review



Reviewed by Asher Syed for Readers' Favorite

In *The Roots Run Deep* by Chris Strong, Chris West is overcome with intense grief at his childhood friend's funeral, finding the sorrow linked more to the loss of a family member than to a friend's passing. Nostalgia kicks in and West reflects on his past with the Cool Crew, a group of friends from Coolidge Lane who once dreamed of a road trip to Mt. Hood. But life happens, and as an adult West is sandwiched between his busy life and a desire to reconnect with his friends. Buddy, who meets Stella at an airport after a minor accident, marries her, and they have a child within four years. Meanwhile, Izzy's suicide attempt prompts West, Buddy, and Sean to finally organize that dreamed-of trip to Mt. Hood, looking to provide Izzy with a supportive escape from what pushed him to the edge, only to discover that he is not the only one who needs support, or whose life hangs in the balance.

The Roots Run Deep by Chris Strong threw me for a bit of a loop because I was pretty sure I knew more about the funeral West is eulogizing than it turns out I did. The author has some twisty turns in there and they're both beautiful and devastating. This completely character-driven novel transitions between the friends as kids and the friends as adults on their trip, and proves that there is a story to be told in which the journey is the whole point and not the destination. The beauty of literary fiction is that it has the flexibility to be more artistic without getting tied up in a single discernable plot. We know someone has died, and we learn of the trip that precludes it...but then Strong pulls out his ace card. The writing is simple and straightforward with some fun nods to generational pop culture. Overall, Strong gives us a thoughtful work of escapism that will no doubt resonate with readers. Recommended.