



Ever Rest

Roz Morris

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In 1994, Ashten Geddard, the front man of the popular UK band the Ashbirds, disappeared while attempting to climb Mount Everest. That's how Roz Morris's excellent novel *Ever Rest* begins—before jumping eighteen years into the future, to look at how Ashten's disappearance continues to shape the lives of people connected to him. These characters have their own memorable stories; each explores their complicated relationships with Ashten, music, and grief.

This applies to Elza, Ashten's girlfriend at the time of the mountaineering accident. Now dating a new man, she still struggles with the fame their relationship brought, and with the paparazzi who still take an interest every time a frozen body on Everest might turn out to be Ashten's. And there's Hugo, who was not only Ashten's Ashbirds band mate, but a friend since their school days. Hugo helped to get Ashten involved in music, and he survived the same attempt at summiting Everest. And Robert, who briefly worked with Ashten on some unused Ashbirds songs, is in the process of getting the funding to record a new album under the band's name.

These three characters drive *Ever Rest*, with the details of their relationships with Ashten revealed as the book goes along, and their interactions with each other in the present underscored by his loss nearly two decades earlier. A supporting cast contributes to the small conflicts that keep the story moving at a brisk pace. While there's sadness at the heart of the book, it also captures the joy of making music, the struggle to create memorable art, and the challenge of keeping one's inner self private while dealing with public scrutiny. The result is a strong novel that fits its pieces together into a meaningful whole.

JEFF FLEISCHER (May / June 2021)

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