

GENERAL

Michigan Wind

Mark Raven

The Huttman Company

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Three Stars (out of Five)

Mark Raven's novel *Michigan Wind* is all about action. The story begins with Bob Connors saving a life in the ER. From here readers are thrown into the operating room and into anesthesiologist and researcher Bob's world. We learn how academia jealousy and bureaucracy have basically ruined his career. Bob leaves work after saving the woman's life with the intention of killing himself with materials taken from the very place that ruined him. However in the midst of his suicide attempt he has a vision that reminds him of the past he buried a past that will give him a reason to live. This is where the novel takes off: with the recollection of a memory and a trip home to what he left behind.

A plot- or action-focused novel is all well and good if the action is what propels the piece. However much of this book depends upon the characters and Raven falls into the trap of telling more than he shows when it comes to characterization. This is particularly troublesome when it comes to the romance at the heart of this piece. Readers are told that the couple falls in love at first sight but the descriptions are bare or lacking. Still there is one character that does stand out as more than a prototype or shadow: Gus the father of Bob's love interest. Because so much of this man is a mystery the character is more subtle than the others. Hints about his past come through his language and actions and this makes him a truly exciting character to watch. Readers won't be able to leave the book without a fondness for Gus and a strong memory of this intellectual cowboy.

The real strength of this book is the talk of science and medicine that permeates not only Bob's profession but later conversations that result in an urban vs. rural discussion of the world. This book is as full of ethical questions as it is full of romance. The language in such sections is pristine: the descriptions are specific and sharp and the tone is confident and sure of itself.

The earnestness of this novel's plot is addicting. By the time Bob reaches his destination readers won't be able to put the book down until they know whether love can really stand the test of time. This novel proves that you can go home again.