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GENERAL

Mississippi Flyway
Nel Rand
iUniverse
978-1-58348-284-1
Four Stars (out of Five)

Ellie is a woman who has always had difficulty being what others want her to be: the thin daughter the good Catholic school student the supportive sibling a society reporter the doctor's wife. Ellie can't remember much about her early life but she does remember wanting to be an owl—a desire left over from her childhood days as a volunteer bird counter. That's not much help for Ellie who now finds herself divorced at thirty-one and feeling out of step with the world.

All that changes when Ellie's estranged father Tiny arrives on her doorstep. On the lam after playing a crooked game of poker with a corrupt sheriff Tiny invites Ellie on a road trip with him. She accepts his offer and soon father and daughter are on a journey not just through America's heartland but to confront a dark past.

This journey comes to life in *Mississippi Flyaway* because of author Nel Rand's ability to create a vivid world with her poetic description. Early in the book we see young Ellie as a Catholic school girl whose "socks puddle around her ankles." About a man who is confused she writes "a veil of fog had lowered in front of his face." These flourishes are small but they are sprinkled like seasoning through the novel to create dramatic characters and locations.

The real strength of this book is the relationship between Tiny and Ellie. It's evident from the beginning why father and daughter are estranged; so clear in fact that some readers may initially balk that Ellie agrees to leave with her father at all. But Rand has created strong compelling characters in Tiny and Ellie that make you want to keep reading keep rooting for them even when you suspect that what they have to face will not be pleasant.

Clearly *Mississippi Flyway* is a book that will keep readers talking even after they've finished the story. A brief interview with the author is included at the end of the novel along with discussion questions for book clubs. Even if you read it on your own *Mississippi Flyway* is book that is sure to stir up emotions.

Katerie Prior