



Searching for Jimmy Page

Christy Alexander Hallberg

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Christy Alexander Hallberg's novel *Searching for Jimmy Page* is a character study about loss and identity.

In 1988 in North Carolina, Luna—the daughter of a single mother who committed suicide—is being raised by her maternal grandmother. Then her great-grandfather, a faith healer, dies, leaving behind cryptic final words. When Luna's aunt and uncle visit afterward, they bring Luna an album by Led Zeppelin guitarist Jimmy Page, her mother's favorite musician. Seeing the album causes Luna to black out, but also unlocks memories of her mother.

Luna narrates, covering her attempts to come to terms with her mother's death and the questions that she left behind. The memories that the album triggers, combined with her late mother's evasive explanations as she was growing up, lead Luna and to wonder if the rock legend might be her father. Later, Luna, who has never traveled anywhere before, heads out alone for England, where she hopes to get some answers. It's a desperate trip: each day, she tries to get word to Jimmy Page about her theory.

Luna's story is compelling because of its urgency. It is anchored by its strong emotions and forwarded by gradual reveals and family lore. The loss of Luna's mother hangs over the entire story, represented by the door to the bedroom where she shot herself, which is kept closed after, and by the images of posters that Luna remembers from her mother's collection. Her heavy legacy informs every step that Luna takes. It also impacts how she views her family members, and her desire to explore her own image and sexuality.

Searching for Jimmy Page is a powerful coming-of-age story in which an orphaned girl tries to make sense of her difficult circumstances.

JEFF FLEISCHER (September / October 2021)

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