

[PDF] Mississippi Trial, 1955

Chris Crowe - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Mississippi Trial, 1955

Author: Chris Crowe

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly Basing his promising debut novel on historical events, Crowe adopts the point of view of a white teenager confronting racism in the 1950s South. Hiram Hillburn has resented his civil-rights-minded father ever since the age of nine, when his parents moved him from his adored grandfather's home in Greenwood, Miss., to the more liberal climate of an Arizona college town. Now that he is 16, Hiram has finally been permitted to visit Grampa Hillburn again. Crowe takes a bit too much time before arriving at the central action: the lynching of Emmett Till, a black teenager from Chicago who reputedly made "ugly remarks" to a white woman, and the nationally publicized trial, in which the murderers were acquitted. However, the author takes a nuanced approach to ethical dilemmas and his plotting seems lifelike. Events force Hiram to question his willingness to stand up for his beliefs and to reevaluate his understanding of the animosity between his grandfather and father. The characterizations are sketched with care, from the white lawyers who mock the black witnesses they cross-examine, to R.C., the bully whom Hiram suspects of

participating in the crime, to R.C.'s sister, whom Hiram likes. If the conclusion feels a little hasty, Crowe's otherwise measured treatment will get readers thinking. Ages 12-up.
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From School Library Journal Grade 6-8-While visiting relatives in Mississippi, Emmett Till, 14, spoke "ugly" to a white woman and was subsequently tortured and murdered. Two men were arrested and tried for this heinous crime, but in spite of substantial evidence, were found not guilty. Crowe has woven the plot of his novel around these historical events. Hiram, the fictional main character, had lived with his grandparents in Mississippi as a child. Now 16, he returns to visit his aging grandfather, where he meets Emmett Till. He also renews a childhood acquaintance with R.C. Rydell, a redneck bully. When Emmett's mutilated body is found, Hiram immediately suspects that R.C. was involved. In a predictable twist at the end, he learns that it was his grandfather, not R.C., who helped the murderers. The Deep South setting is well realized. Descriptions of the climate, food, and landscape are vivid and on target. Likewise, Southern racial attitudes from the period are accurately portrayed. Grampa is a racist but Hiram enables readers to see his good qualities as well. Hiram himself seems rather naive. He is unable to fathom the racial prejudice at the root of his father's alienation from his grandfather. Nor does he feel the aura of racial fear and hatred that hangs over the entire region. The novel succeeds in telling Emmett Till's story, but there is an emotional distance that keeps readers from caring as deeply as they should about this crime. Still, it is a story that needs to be told. This book belongs in all collections to show young readers the full range of American history.

Bruce Anne Shook, Mendenhall Middle School, Greensboro, NC

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