



The Four Winds by Kristen Hanna
Reviewed by Harini



Stand Alone, Historical Fiction

Give a summary without spoilers!

The Four Winds starts in Texas, shortly after World War I. Elsa Wolcott, 25, is the black sheep of her family. She strives for education, but her dreams are put at a stand-still when she gets pregnant and has two kids, Loreda and Anthony. Her husband stays for years before finally leaving his family behind. By this time, Loreda is 12, and Anthony is 7. To get some food for her children, Elsa works alongside her in-laws as a farmer. Due to poor agricultural farming leading to frequent dust storms, and the Great Depression, many are fleeing to the West in search of new opportunities. As the years go by, their food supply decreases, and with no light at the end, Elsa is forced to leave Texas and go West with her children. Now, she hopes that the 'golden opportunities' rumored about California are true and must hope that their lives are better here than there.

What drew you to this book?

Living in the 21st-century, where technology and modern medicine are available, *The Four Winds* was a refreshing view of the past. The book shows how people endured without any of the items that we take advantage of constantly. The description of the poor climate, insufficient tools for farmers, and more has allowed me to appreciate the things around me.

Did it remind you of something that you've previously read?

The Four Winds reminds me of *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. The stories both take place during the Dust Bowl and The Great Depression Era, where lives are at a standstill. The storylines are similar where the main characters and their families are forced to move to California in hopes of a better opportunity.

To whom would you recommend this book?

I would recommend this book to anyone interested in historical novels. This book shows a close-up perspective of during The Great Depression and Dust Bowl, and addresses the prejudice that the people in the West have against the "Okies."

Overall, did you like it and would you recommend it to others?

Overall, I would rate this book a 4/5 because Kristen Hannah transports the reader to the 1930s in Texas, during the Dust Bowl and The Great Depression. Instead of sugar-coating the truth, the author writes it as it is. Life-changing decisions, the uncertainty of not knowing, and the relentless taking, and not giving, piled with everything else, shows a fraction of what the people who've experienced these events might have gone through.