

The Rhythm of the Road: A Novel

Albyn Leah Hall



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The mesmerizing debut novel about driving trucks, loving music, and growing up.

A truck driver's daughter who grows up in the front seat of her father's truck, Jo shares her father's love of country music, junk food, and the open highway. Jo's life is a perfect slice of Americana, except that their "open road" is in England, and her father--the gentle, melancholy Bobby Pickering--is from Northern Ireland. The only truly American thing about Jo is her mother, whom she has never met.

Jo is twelve when she and Bobby pick up hitchhiker Cosima Stewart, an American country singer whose band is touring England. They become dedicated fans, and Cosima, touched by the unlikely duo, comes to regard Jo with an indulgent, even sisterly, eye.

But when Jo is sixteen, Bobby sinks into serious despair and Jo seeks refuge in Cosima and the band. When Bobby disappears, Jo's adoration becomes obsessive as she follows her idol all to the way to California. Here, in the sweltering Mohave Desert and alone for the first time, Jo must face the painful truths of her own life, the mother she has never known, and the father she can't force from her mind. With shades of Zadie Smith and Mark Haddon, Albyn Leah Hall's powerful debut is a page-turning study of what frightens us about one another and ourselves; of how we run away and what we can't, ultimately, escape from.

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