

Noise

Brett Garcia Rose

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Noise by Brett Garcia Rose introduces a wealth of emotionally resonant characters via an action-packed vengeance tale that explores the impacts of family and love against isolation.

The novel's protagonist and antihero is Leon, an African refugee who was adopted as a child. Leon also happens to be deaf. His story in *Noise* launches when he receives a postcard from Lily, his adopted sister, who in childhood kept him from feeling too isolated by his circumstances, acting as both family and a friend. Lily became his connection to outside humanity, and she was his inspiration for living well, despite her leaving his life completely ten years prior.

The postcard is vague, simply asking Leon to meet Lily at a dingy New York City diner. This ignites a mystery when Leon learns his sister is missing. Leon is driven to investigate, and subsequent developments often entertain. Though its twists are sometimes predictable, unexpected turns keep the story exciting, and impactful flashbacks illuminate key plot points.

The developments in Leon's investigation are entertaining in their sheer cinematic explosiveness. The plot is excellently paced, and the author presents a near perfect balance between quiet character moments and over-the-top action. The characters' dialogue, especially in the small accessible moments, is well written and comes across as genuine. The first-person narration provides insight into Leon's motivations and further emphasizes the importance Lily has in his life.

Though told from Leon's perspective, Lily serves as the driver of this story. She is presented, mainly through flashbacks and secondhand accounts, as a torn yet relatable character. She left her family behind ten years previously to make it in the big city, yet her brother is still an important piece of her life. And the opposite is just as true: Leon is driven to help his sister even though they have been out of each other's lives.

The prose of *Noise* is descriptive, evocative, and passionate, raising the novel above its more violent elements. Leon, who ignores society's rules and uses his own brand of do-whatever-it-takes justice, operates in a moral gray area but still manages to evoke empathy, as he does what he does out of an overarching sense of family loyalty and love. Secondary characters also prove to be complex and sympathetic, including a pair of police officers who play a big role in Leon's journey.

Noise is an action-packed story certain to excite those who enjoy thrillers driven by revenge.

RON WATSON (June 24, 2016)

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