



2003

King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-Advised Autobiography

Margaret Manchak

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Crutcher, Chris. *King of the Mild Frontier: An Ill-advised Autobiography*. Greenwillow Books, 2003. ISBN 0060502509. \$17.89. 260 pp.

Reviewer: Margaret Manchak

Reading Level: Young adult;

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Informational books;

Subject: Authors, American--20th Century--Biography--Juvenile literature; Crutcher, Chris--Juvenile literature; Idaho--Social life and customs--Juvenile literature;

This autobiography has undeniable appeal. *King of the Mild Frontier* chronicles Chris Crutcher's life growing up in the 1950's from toddler to teenager. The author portrays himself in a charmingly self-effacing way, first as a young "bawlbaby," and later an athletic misfit, an academic oddball, and an utter klutz with girls.

While the book is very entertaining to read, no subject, however taboo, is off-limits here. He writes about all the sinister adolescent games, all the hormones, and all the body functions, with very colorful language to boot. (Read: This could very well offend more sensitive readers.) Chris Crutcher is a successful Young Adult Novelist. His books have all been selected as ALA Best Books for Young Adults, and he has won two lifetime achievement awards. He is also a family therapist and a child protection specialist. On the face this book is all comedy, but Crutcher is a serious writer, and he approaches important adolescent topics such as rejection, loneliness, and competition in an honest and constructive way.