Book Review

Title: Young Widows Club
Author: Alexandra Coutts
Reviewer: Liz Smith
Publisher: Farrar Strauss Giroux Books for Young Readers
Publication Year: 2015
ISBN: 9780374301262
Number of Pages: 296
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Dependable

Review

At seventeen years old, Tamsen Baird (Tam) is already a widow. Her world is torn apart when her husband of six short months suddenly dies in his sleep. Noah was her world and when he dies, Tam is suddenly faced with trying to find out who she is and what to do next. While dealing with her grief, Tam makes some poor choices that land her in jail. In court, the judge orders her to move back home with her father, attend a monthly support group for young widows, and finish high school. Tam is less than thrilled but complies. The change of pace eventually brings Tam out of the emotional cage she has built around herself and helps her see the value in others as well as herself. She also comes to recognize some strengths and abilities she didn’t know she had. And last but not least, she finds she can love again.

Young Widows Club is a very believable story set on an island off the coast of New York. The isolated setting makes for an interesting small town dynamic where everyone knows each other and knows everyone else’s business. It is a classic high school love story with a twist. Noah and Tam were high school sweethearts. When Noah graduated, Tam dropped out of school to be with him. Noah’s sudden death forces Tam reconcile issues from her past and make adult decisions for her future. She has to learn to trust herself and others. She learns to forgive and find joy in her own abilities. She also learns age doesn’t have to be a barrier to love and friendship. Young adult readers may be able to gleam a new perspective on their life choices and think about the direction they want their future to go in.

*Contains: Mild sexual content; moderate language, and references to underage drinking.