



[Home](#) > You

You

Books Reviewed:

[You](#) [1]

Issue:

[141](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Val Randall](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This book has already been read by my teenage Book Panel of Year 8 girls who were unable to put it down. I had an identical experience - this is a compact and gripping read. Its strengths lie in the narrative twists which suddenly pitch the story into another perspective, genuinely surprising the reader. At the beginning of the book the narrative voice is clearly that of a female college student, bemoaning the fact that her friend Alex is haunting her memory with stark examples of behaviour which graduates from the disruptive to the attempted murder of a young child. Glover then makes it startlingly clear that the two characters are the same and that Alex has now been subsumed into Josie as part of a protection programme for young offenders who have been released back into the community. This heady shift works beautifully because the two characters are so clearly delineated and the story is told so starkly, without a trace of sentimentality. It is made clear that Josie/Alex has endured a life of emotional mutilation and yet there is no sense of clumsily manipulating the reader into a position of pity. Instead, the reader is encouraged to take a cool and distanced view which, shockingly, takes us far more immediately into the mind of the protagonist than if we had been drawn in. The story ends on a note of hope - it seems that there will be a future for Alex/Josie, but it is made evident that it will be a long and difficult road to establishing any kind of normal links with society. The topicality of the narrative, with its resonant echoes of the Jamie Bulger case, will give pause to those who think that early release offenders have an enviable life, free of the horror of what they have done.

Running Order:

9

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[1] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/you>

[2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/141>

[3] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/val-randall>