



Sharp North

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[Nicholas Tucker](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

This densely written novel takes a long time to read and must also have taken an age to write. It describes a miserable post-flood, freezing Britain at some date in the future run by a corrupt oligarchy expert in spying and oppression. Life for everyone else is hard and degrading, with natural resources at a premium and rubbish piling up on every street corner. Enter Mira, a determined young woman living far in the North who wants to discover why her name was on a list handed to her just before its bearer was murdered. Her search takes her into a labyrinth of intrigue, plotting and near-escapes, during which time she discovers her own terrible secret. Known to her controllers simply as a 'spare', she is in fact a cloned version of one of the ruling class, there just in case any of her organs are ever needed for a quick transplant. Cave is a workmanlike rather than an inspired writer. He tells his story straight and without verbal blemish, yet the whole project begins to unravel about a hundred pages before the end - why not some judicious editing? An already complex plot becomes increasingly opaque, and some genuinely tense stand-offs begin to lose their punch through sheer repetition. Dialogue is at times either demanding, including some half-translated passages in French, or else startling when it comes to outbreaks of four-letter words. Even so, it's impossible not to admire the persistence of the writing and the ambition of its wholesale attack on our own government's current geo-political outlook, roundly attacked in a short end-piece by the author under his own name. Like a long, cold walk in winter, reading this book can be hard work at the time but still feels well worth it afterwards on reflection.

Running Order:

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