



[Home](#) > The Whispering Roads

The Whispering Roads

Books Reviewed:

[The Whispering Roads](#) [1]

Issue:

[150](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Adrian Jackson](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

There will be lots of comparisons with Dickens for this 400+ page helter-skelter journey through Victorian life and its gallery of extraordinary characters and yo-yoing of emotions. Joe and Annie, farmed out from the workhouse, escape their harsh employers and embark on a long flight to find the mother they are sure is coming back to reclaim them. We follow them as they tumble down snowy hills, struggle through woods, meeting the Dog-woman of folk-lore and her pack, find a home with the extraordinary performers of the circus and then, without Annie, Joe's struggle to survive the Manchester streets. As a member of a street gang with its sadly exotic members, destined for short and unhappy lives, Joe enters into the suffering of the city. There's the awful terrors of being chased for his life, and the desperation of trying to save one of the gang from the effects of cholera, pleading for help when they have no rights and, more importantly, no money. Although not all of them are honourable, there are people working to make the lives of the poor better. Like the novel as a whole, it's often breathless stuff, part social history but always thrilling with a dramatic, emotional and satisfying final act.

Running Order:

10

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

[2] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/150>

[3] <http://w.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/adrian-jackson>