



Hidden

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Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Life on Hayling Island is quiet. There aren't too many things to worry about ? apart from the bullying at school. 14-year-old Alix isn't sure what she thinks about this ? Samir is certainly not British, but he doesn't deserve to be beaten up by local bad boy Terrence and his gang. Why doesn't Samir stick up for himself? However, Alix has her own worries; dad has walked out, and mum has broken her leg ? Alix is having to do the housework. Then a body washes up in front of her. He is not dead. But as an illegal immigrant he might as well be if discovered. Can Alix and her friends keep him safe until they can find proper help?

Set against the everyday background of secondary school, this is a readable contemporary novel dealing with contemporary issues ? family split, bullying, prejudice and immigration. The heroine is attractively lively and well realised, combining a streetwise attitude with a naivety that is very believable. Halahmy maintains the realism of her story by keeping the narrative firmly within the local community. There are no high powered chases or international criminal masterminds; rather we are presented with the desperation faced by many asylum seekers as they struggle to make themselves heard and the ignorance surrounding those of refugee status in small communities. The author makes sure the young reader will be made aware of some of the issues surrounding these contentious subjects. Indeed, if there is a fault, it is in a tendency to didacticism. However, this is a very accessible novel that, though billed for young adults, would present no problems to good readers at the top of KS2.

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