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The Boy Who Hit Play

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is a quirky tale told in the presently fashionable present tense and in a distinctive insistent idiosyncratic voice. The voice belongs to Elvis (?not that Elvis??) Crampton Lucas, a boy who was discovered as a baby under a newspaper on a bench at a zoo, and is now determined to find his natural parents. Luckily he has an understanding adoptive dad, George Lucas (?not that George Lucas??), who has an eccentric friend, Lloyd, who not only turns up in unexpected places in the house (out of a suitcase, at one point) but also has enough money to fund a visit to Norway: a choice of destination suggested by the language in which the newspaper was written. So off they go on an adventure that it is both a road trip and a mystery, steering wildly from a Hitchcockian motel visit and train journey (no knives in the shower but at least one gun on the train) to a wild car chase across an icy causeway.

And, of course, they are pursued by shadowy figures who may be the key to the mystery. Or does it lie closer to home? Are George and Lloyd telling Elvis all they know? This is tremendous inventive fun, told at a pace, with plenty of contemporary references (Elvis is a YouTuber and video creator after all), unafraid to mix the absurd and improbable with some potentially weighty questions about identity and family, truth and justice, and peppered with spicy turns of phrase and laconic observation that wouldn't be out of place in a Raymond Chandler novel: altogether great stuff.

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