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# Time Bomb

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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It's the summer of 1949 with four boys between primary and secondary school, heading into what they hope is the freedom of the long holiday to play on the old bomb-site. There are other transitions out of childhood and a range of leavings. The novel has a nicely historical feel but the nostalgia is held at bay from the beginning when one of the children, Eddie, suffers what they all feel is a deep injustice at the hands (and cane) of their primary headteacher on their last day. This sets off a train of clashes with adult authority but also exposes the underlying tensions between the boys and the adults, between them as a group and between the world shown in the films (that Andrew, the narrator, loves) and the 'real' one. Bob, who has deliberately failed his 11+ exam to avoid his father, a harsh teacher at the grammar school, stutters since being buried alive for thirty-two hours after a bomb attack; Manny's 'life seemed awful', constantly fussed over and 'spectacularly unattractive'; Andrew worries about his father's black market activities and his unfaithfulness to his mother; and then the bomb-site starts being redeveloped. Their frustration and anger becomes in Eddie a deep desire for revenge and then they discover an unexploded bomb... There is a hardness which takes this beyond a 'what larks' story. It's childhood memory coloured by anger, sad confusions and the dubious actions of adults with no mitigating human warmth.

Running Order:

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