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Payback

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Not to be taken
off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

McNab and Rigby's first book, *Boy Soldier*, sent 17-year-old Danny in search of his ex-SAS grandfather Fergus ? supposed to be a traitor and the reason that Danny's application to the army has been blocked. Danny finds Fergus and discovers that in fact it is he who has been betrayed by the authorities: sent to infiltrate FARC and then abandoned by MI6.

This second book continues their story. Danny and Fergus, who have taken refuge in Spain, are still being hunted by MI6. Using Danny's friend Elena, the heartlessly determined Marcie Deveraux lures Danny and Fergus back to England. Fergus has decided to clear his name but must use all his SAS knowledge, and Elena's computer skills, to do so. Deveraux meanwhile hopes to use them to prove that her boss Fincham, the man who framed Fergus, is a traitor. As far as Marcie is concerned, Danny, Fergus and Elena are expendable. As this is also what Fincham has in mind, Danny and his friends spend the novel being pursued on all sides, before finally defeating Fincham and surviving Deveraux.

A secondary plotline concerning (white) teenage suicide bombers runs through the book and promises to be developed in a third volume, with Danny and Elena now recruited as teenage agents in uneasy alliance with the calculating Deveraux.

This is a competently-written thriller which will have great appeal to most teenage boys and many teenage girls. The authors have plenty of opportunities to integrate descriptions of SAS tactics and jargon into their narrative, giving readers a pleasing sense of being privy to inside information. Characters are clearly defined, if lacking in psychological depth, and the plot moves at a good pace, with lots of twists and turns yet not hard to follow. It would be easy to have reservations about the ethics of making entertainment out of violence and amorality, but this is less exploitative than many movies available for children to watch every day. EMc

Running Order:

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