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Naked

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The young adult readers at whom this novel is primarily directed will not have any direct memory of 1976, the year in which it is set, or of the punk music which so dominated the popular culture of the era. They will, however, be well acquainted with both by the time they have read this gripping and gritty novel. Narrated by Lili, some thirty-five years after the events she describes, the story recalls how, as a gifted teenage musician in the classical mode, she falls under the spell of the very different musical world represented by the cooler than cool Curtis and his absorption in punk. A relationship develops when she joins his band and they are soon fully caught up in their sex, drugs and rock'n'roll London lives, encountering in the process some of the real-life punk luminaries of the time. And then along comes William, (aka Billy the Kid), all the way from Belfast, introducing the theme of the Ulster 'troubles': punk and 'troubles' go very credibly together. The consequences for Lili, Curtis and William himself are spectacularly dramatic, conveyed in a powerfully muscular prose which certainly pulls no linguistic punches: the various nakednesses of the adolescents are matched in the nakedness of the style. Never a writer to settle for facile solutions or to favour an oblique or understated approach, Brooks has given us here one of his most compelling novels to date.

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