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# If You Were Me

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Sam Heburn established a reputation for taut, tightly plotted thrillers for young readers with [Chasing the Dark](#) [4]. **If You Were Me**, Heburn's latest novel, is another truly thrilling read and will reinforce that reputation.

The action begins in Afghanistan. Aliya, her mother and little sister are forced to flee their home in the middle of the night to escape the Taliban, who are after Aliya's brother Behrouz, a translator for the British army. Vividly described, it's a nail-biting opening chapter. Life as refugees in England is not easy, and no safer for the family either: they've only been there a few weeks when Behrouz is badly injured in an explosion and accused by the authorities of terrorist activity. Aliya knows that her brother would never do such a thing and is determined to prove his innocence. Plumber's son Dan feels compelled to help Aliya: he has evidence that could clear Behrouz's name but is too ashamed to share it with her, and unable to go to the police either, because it implicates his own father in a very serious criminal operation.

Together these two very different young people work to uncover the truth, untangling a web of deceit and corruption, and putting both their lives in danger in the process. The plot unfolds through dual first person narratives from Aliya and Dan in alternating chapters. It is credit to Heburn's skill as a thriller writer that no matter how complex the plot becomes, all remains clear and readers will be kept right on the edge of their seats from beginning to end. Her two central characters ring very true as intelligent, determined and courageous young people, and their various escapades as they track down some decidedly nasty and frightening villains are always credible.

This is a very well-plotted, intriguing and involving contemporary thriller that gives equal respect to its central characters and its readers.

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