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Beyond the Chocolate War

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

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Media type:

Book

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Robert Cormier has, perhaps, the surest touch of any novelist I know in seeking out the worst in all of us and parading it before our horrified eyes. **Beyond the Chocolate War** clearly demonstrates that he has suffered no diminution of this skill. Cormier makes double fools of us -- he lets us believe that we have cracked the code of his book and then, at the last moment, twists it breathtakingly away from us. He places us in a position of superiority, only to demonstrate that the characters we have judged and found wanting are an undeniable part of us all. Yet in all this fine writing there is a flaw -- in his description of the sexual relationships of the two main characters, Archie and Obie. Obie's relationship motivates him to rid himself of Archie's domination and Archie's provides a further insight into his manipulatory powers. It is the unpleasant coyness of the description of the sexual act which shocks - not the act itself. Cormier has here failed to resolve the dilemma implicit in this area: it is not explicit language which is the issue but a failure to describe a sensitive subject in an acceptably honest way. This aside, **Beyond the Chocolate War** is tailor-made for GCSE wider reading - offer it selectively to maturer fourth and fifth readers.

Running Order:

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