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Deadly!

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This is the second collaboration between these best-selling writers. It is a typically scatological black comedy, full of scabrous detail and weird events, many of which revisit scenes from horror films or comics, and reflect the younger teenage fascination with the taboo, the strange and the violent. It starts as it means to go on, with a naked boy lost in a forest, squatting down to empty his bowels, and pursued by a bunch of sinister toddlers, as interested in examining his excreta as they are in capturing him. The story, played both for shock and laughs, is good value, but not entirely successful. It appeared first in serial form, and relies heavily on cliffhangers at the end of one sequence and plot recapitulations at the beginning of the next. It is told by two narrators, a boy - Sprocket, and a girl - Amy, who take alternate chapters, and the reader is constantly aware of the presence of the two writers, apparently taking it in turns to drive the plot on and introduce new twists and turns. This makes for a jerky read, and means that the story is sometimes overwhelmed by events which tumble pell-mell after one another in a relentless cycle of the grotesque and the gross, which leaves little space for development of plot or character. Gradually both do cohere, and there is space for serious preoccupations about mortality, self-knowledge, and the relationship of parents and children. There are some good jokes, too, in the second part, built around Amy's mum experiencing a second childhood. But it is not a format that brings out the best in either writer.

Running Order:

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