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The Wild

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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The Aral Sea in Kazakhstan is a misnomer: the sea vanished long since - as much a casualty of the Soviet era as the children who now inhabit the poisoned landscape of Whyman's latest book. Alexi is the leader of a teenage crew who, along with rivals The Molotov Horde, try to make their living by salvaging the debris generated by rocket launches from the nearby cosmodrome. Alexi's brother Misha is terminally ill with a brain tumour bred of his environment and it is the seriousness of his brother's condition - and a death feud with The Bat, leader of their rivals, which drives Alexi to desperate measures. The brothers leave to seek treatment to save Misha's life but find themselves at the mercy of the bitter Russian weather when they arrive, by chance, in Moscow. The city proves to be as much of an enemy as the elements and when Misha succumbs to his illness, Alexi is left, 'battlescarred and frozen to the bone' but utterly determined to return to the deadly environs of home and the only friends he has ever known. This is bleak and harrowing book - the descriptions of the brothers living rough in the Moscow winter are particularly poignant - but Whyman keeps Alexi and his kind alive with the knowledge that the human spirit is indomitable. Alexi has learned some hard lessons in the unrelenting harshness of the city and these will give him the strength to endure the many dangers and hardships awaiting him - and to enjoy the comradeship and love which his friends carry in their hearts for him.

Running Order:

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