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Trick and Other Stories, The

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The world of 1950s northern England is movingly evoked in this collection of stories, which will remind many adult readers of the work of Bill Naughton. Here you will find the same plain language, robust storylines and shrewd humour, though Layton deals with some edgier themes, and deftly plays with timelines to enhance suspense. The linked stories are based on the relationship between the unnamed lad who tells them, his single mum and her sister Doreen. A supporting cast of friends, enemies, teachers, neighbours and strangers appear throughout the stories against a backdrop of post-war austerity enlivened by joyous glimpses of a popular culture that now seems more than half a century ago: one of the most touching events in the book features a rapturous account of how magical it was to watch a black and white TV in somebody's living room for the first time. Death stalks into some of the stories, sharpening our sense of the narrator's courage and vulnerability, but this book is much more to do with life, particularly the interplay of joy, sadness and compassion.

Running Order:

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