



[Home](#) > The Long Weekend

The Long Weekend

Books Reviewed:

[The Long Weekend](#) [1]

Issue:

[175](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Val Randall](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

After four schools in three different countries 11-year-old Sam is tired of the loneliness and the anxiety of being the new boy. He is delighted with his brand-new friendship with Lloyd, whose wealthy father's glamorous lifestyle in the music business ensures that his son has all the confidence and material possessions that Sam has always wanted. So when the boys are to be picked up after school by one set of parents, Sam assumes the expensive car which collects them is Lloyd's father's and the remote and luxurious manor house they are driven to is a treat connected with a concert being given locally by his favourite band.

It soon becomes clear, however, that Lloyd assumes that Sam's father is the owner of the car and the boys' attempts to rationalise their position are further muddled by the driver's obtuseness. The manor house, at first a treasure trove of entertainment and fun, rapidly becomes a prison and when the boys are taken to separate rooms Sam's misgivings begin to take over.

Kalhan builds tension expertly; she strips back layer by layer Sam's attempts to normalise their situation until there is only one viable conclusion - the boys are in the hands of an abuser and child murderer and his attentions are focused on Lloyd. The details of Sam's escape and his return for the utterly cowed Lloyd convincingly explore the interplay of personalities under extreme duress and their captor's slowly revealed insanity is graphic and chilling. The boys escape but they are irrevocably changed and the friendship dissolves under the strain of their experience and the knowledge of the shock and shame they wanted kept secret being teased out by the counsellors' efforts to heal their mental and emotional wounds.

A postscript moves the story on six years to a chance meeting between the two boys and Kalhan gives subtle indications of a way forward for their long-postponed friendship. This is beautifully handled, without a trace of sentimentality and provides a credible and compassionate ending to a harrowing story - sadly, very much of our time.

Running Order:

9

Source URL (retrieved on Jul '19): <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/175/childrens-books/reviews/the-long-weekend>

Links:

[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-long-weekend>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/175>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/val-randall>