



Trust Games

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Trust Games is the fifth book by Simon Packham, set in the fictional St Thomas's Community College. Packham is an extremely good writer who covers tricky subjects with a great lightness of touch. His books are deceptively simple quick reads with very gripping storylines, but they always manage to be immensely thought provoking. This book is no exception.

We first meet Beth, the narrator, at her sixteenth birthday supper. It's so depressing ? comprising her, her dad and her oldest friend George, who she calls Grunt ? that she resolves to improve her life. So when the charismatic young drama teacher, Mr Moore, announces a school production of *Romeo and Juliet*, Beth auditions. She gets the part of Juliet's Nurse, and grows close to Hannah, who is Juliet. Beth is delighted to have a friend other than Grunt ? and Hannah is really popular, and someone she can confide in. Beth also confides in Mr Moore, for whom she develops strong feelings ? and who is married with a young child. The fact that there is an inappropriate teacher/pupil relationship came as no surprise to me ? but the details were a real shock.

Packham is very good at depicting pupils' interactions with each other and with their teachers, and very funny too. I also think his characterisation of Beth is particularly strong. Initially she comes across as icy and rather unappealing ? and very dismissive of poor Grunt, who's obviously hopelessly in love with her. But as she reveals more of herself and her sad past, and shows her wonderfully dry sense of humour, I grew to really like her, and I felt for her in the dilemma she faces at the end.

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