



Devil You Know

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Logan Massie has had a troubled life. He got in with the wrong crowd in Aberdeen and after exclusions from school and escalating levels of anti-social behaviour his mother moved to Glasgow with him and her new husband Vince, in the hope of making a fresh start. The move seemed in vain when Logan discovered new friends to associate with-Claude, Mikey, Gary and the charismatic but unstable Baz-and things slowly began to unravel all over again.

At first the friends' exploits are relatively low-key, but Baz always wants to make life more dangerous and clashes with local gangs become the norm. The road to any kind of salvation disappears when, at Baz's suggestion, the boys help Al Butler, local villain, to rob a warehouse belonging to Mike Machan, a notoriously violent gangster, and set it on fire. Unfortunately, the flames could not destroy the footage already transmitted from the internal CCTV camera and Machan and his associates ruthlessly hunt down both villain and boys to exact their merciless revenge.

The relationships between the boys are carefully established and their characters never descend into the realms of stereotype or cipher. The balance of power is always with Baz and Macphail vividly illustrates how different the gang is when he is not around. An account of a day trip to Glasgow city centre, completed in his absence, shows the boys in a very different light. When Machan has taken sickening revenge on Claude and Mikey, Gary turns to the police with the full story, saving Logan in the nick of time from brutal torture.

The sting in the tail& at the end of the novel, stunningly delivered, is that Baz is, in fact, Logan's alter ego-his downfall and the cause of Claude and Mikey's traumatic treatment. This dual identity-of which Logan is unaware-caused him to construct an elaborate fantasy around his father's desertion and to snub Victor, who he eventually comes to see as an honest and compassionate man. Macphail has brought her usual combination of author and ambassador to vulnerable young people to her work, creating a fast-paced psychological thriller which always holds the attention of its readers.

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