



[Home](#) > Troublemakers

Troublemakers

Books Reviewed:

[Troublemakers](#) [1]

Issue:

[224](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Matthew Martin](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Set in the London of today, against a background of terrorist threats and dangerous populist politics, and posing real questions about personal responsibility, **Troublemakers** feels both timely and unusual.

The central character, fifteen-year-old Alena has been brought up by her brother Danny and his partner Nick. Alena's mother died when she was just a toddler and she has hardly any memories of her, something that bothers her more and more as she grows up. She ? and readers ? are conscious too of the sacrifices Danny has made bringing up his little sister, he was only eighteen when their mother died. Trying to find out more about her mother, Alena comes across a photo online showing her at Greenham Common, and can't understand why it makes Danny so angry, or why he is so against her contacting her mother's old friends. As the plot unfolds, it's clear that Danny has been keeping secrets from Alena, believing he was protecting her. Meanwhile he takes a job orchestrating the election campaign for a local politician, who is not above using a spate of bomb attacks to his own advantage, stoking up the feelings of fear and suspicion they arouse. Nick is angry with Danny for taking the job; he himself runs a coffee shop, somewhere that represents real security to Alena, but is itself the target for extremist attacks.

Catherine Barter weaves the different plotlines together with much skill and despite the complex subject matter **Troublemakers** is a real page-turner. Alena's search to find out more about her mother drives the narrative, and the more she finds out, the more we realise that politics affects us all, not just because of the choices we make at the ballot box, but through the decisions we make every day in our own lives.

Intelligent and thought-provoking, this is an absorbing novel, and a highly impressive debut.

Source URL (retrieved on Oct '19): <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/224/childrens-books/reviews/troublemakers>

Links:

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

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/224>

[3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/matthew-martin>