



[Home](#) > Goodbye, Perfect

Goodbye, Perfect

Books Reviewed:

[Goodbye, Perfect](#) [1]

Issue:

[228](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Val Randall](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This is a stunning novel, a must-read-not only for young adults, but for adult readers too. Eden and her sister Daisy have had troubled lives. They have been fostered so many times that Eden has built solid defences against what she perceives-often rightly-as a hostile world. When her unkempt appearance and sullen withdrawal invited yet more bullying at the most recent of her schools it was Bonnie, A* student with a perfect record, who rescued Eden and became the best friend she had always wanted.

Eden could not understand Bonnie's interest in her - she was wild, angry, underachieving as a result of the combination of her attitude and her dyslexia. What she failed to realise until much later was that Bonnie - obedient, compliant, exam-obsessed - saw Eden as her foil, the person she would have liked to have been had she felt able to break out of the persona she had been moulded into by her parents and teachers. The crisis comes for Bonnie when she decides to run away with the boyfriend she will only call Jack - her music teacher, Mr Cohn.

Eden feels a double betrayal. She and Bonnie have always shared their deepest secrets but she had never confided this darkest one to Eden. Additionally, Eden had taken a titanic step in forming such a close friendship with Bonnie when her go-to survival strategy involved locking herself away from intimate human contact. Now adopted, she regards her parents, Carolyn and Bob as allies but that group is a very small one and Bonnie was right at the heart of it.

Bonnie's abrupt departure with her teacher, is, of course, treated as abduction of a minor and Barnard beautifully and subtly details the tensions between Bonnie's conviction that this is the adventure she always wanted with the man she loves and the criminality of Mr Cohn's actions. As Bonnie strives to live the life of abandon which she sees as an escape route from the claustrophobia of study, exams and parental expectations, Eden tries to save her from herself. Extracting clues from the texts and calls she receives from Bonnie, she persuades her boyfriend Connor and her older adoptive sister Valerie to go with her to Glasgow to Track Bonnie down.

Barnard excels at the shift and drift of relationships, always avoiding sentimentality and cliché and resisting the tightly bound up climax. Both Eden and Bonnie appear to change markedly during the course of this book-but is that change really just a gradual admittance and acceptance of the flip side of their personalities, long locked away until a crisis thrusts them out into the cold light of reality?

Source URL (retrieved on Dec '19): <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/228/childrens-books/reviews/goodbye-perfect>

Links:

- [1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/goodbye-perfect>
- [2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/228>
- [3] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/val-randall>