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Candy

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In his three earlier young adult stories Brooks has shown his ability to create extremely strong narratives which, with their convincing characterisation and sharply focused settings, make for compelling reading. The tradition continues with his new novel, a sympathetic (but not soft-edged) depiction of the consequences of a chance encounter between two teenagers, Joe and Candy. Although both are from apparently secure middle class backgrounds, Candy has fallen prey to the King's Cross world of heroin, prostitution, pimps and violence, none of which deters Joe, from the moment of their first meeting, from becoming totally obsessed by her. His subsequent mission to rescue her and the evolution of his romantic attachment to her are related by Brooks in expertly paced prose which concentrates on the need of two young people to establish some sense of order and some sense of love in the chaos of their lives. As in his previous work, Brooks's strengths in conveying the introspection of adolescence and in devising a thoroughly effective style for communicating it are particularly impressive.

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