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Jolene's Back

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Two more stories about an After School Club based in an old mobile hut at the back of a school playground. For the kids who go there it's a special place to escape to, a place they feel they can belong, away from the hassle of school, teachers, home, and families. The main characters in the series as a whole are Brody, the child model, and Sammie, who just needs to get away for a couple of hours, but these two books revolve round Jolene and Alex. In *Jolene's Back*, the title character is a feisty ten-year-old Sunderland supporter with an anger management problem. The relationship between her mum and her stepdad Darryl is rapidly deteriorating. Jolene wants to leave her mum to live with Darryl and her two stepbrothers, Keith and Jack, with whom she gets along just fine, as her mum is such a nag. If that's not an option, then Jolene intends on doing a runner? again.

Alex's head teacher, Mr Sharkey, asks her to sing at his wedding in *Alex's Back*. He is getting married to the leader of the After School Club, Mrs Fryston. He wants her to sing a special song as a surprise for his bride, whilst Mrs Fryston also wants Alex to sing at their wedding ? a different song. The only person Alex feels she can talk to about the dilemma of which song to sing, is her brother Daniel, who died before she was born. Alex sings both songs at the wedding, an obvious solution maybe.

The eight stories in the series have a familiar setting and an interesting set of issues that will resonate with many young readers. For example, children can identify with Alex as she attempts to cope with an older sister stressing over exams and a mother who is trying to deal with grief, although this theme isn't developed as much as it might have been. Some other titles in the series are *Starring Sammie* and *Starring Brody*. AK

Running Order:

35

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