



After the Death of Alice Bennett

Books Reviewed:

[After the Death of Alice Bennett](#) [1]

Issue:

[163](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[David Self](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Controversy may dog this novel for two reasons. First, spiritualism is presented as a natural source of comfort to the bereaved ? which will doubtless offend some mainstream Christians. Indeed, the sceptic within me did wonder whether the author might have presented the scene in the spiritualist church in a slightly more questioning way. (The unlikely medium, incidentally, is a shaven-headed, tattooed ex-jailbird.)

Secondly, the plot revolves around a young boy?s relationship (conducted through a series of text messages) with an unknown stranger whom he eventually meets at a motorway service station. That the reader gets to realise the stranger (a long-distance lorry-driver) is well-intentioned long before the young boy knows this may actually make the relationship seem even safer to the impressionable reader.

The young boy is Sam. His mother has just died and the novel opens with a painfully realistic description of the crematorium service. Before she died from a brain tumour, she had told Sam that, as a spiritualist, she knew she would still be alive in the next world. In his loneliness, Sam comes to believe that it might be possible to contact her through the internet, by email or by texting ? and eventually texts an anonymous number he finds on the fridge door ? thus initiating the relationship with the stranger.

Although the first half of the book is singularly devoid of action, it is a moving and highly realistic story which wins and holds the reader?s attention and sympathetically teaches the lesson that the sorrow of death should not be avoided. For that reason, I?d ultimately defend and applaud the novel with the proviso that any vulnerable young reader starting on the book should read to its conclusion.

Running Order:

64

Source URL (retrieved on May '20): <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/163/childrens-books/reviews/after-the-death-of-alice-bennett>

Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/after-the-death-of-alice-bennett>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/163>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/david-self>