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## this is what I did:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Pretentiously, this is described as 'part novel in verse, part screenplay?'. Certainly many of the dialogue sequences are set out like a play script and many sequences would lend themselves to filming. Quite where the poetry lies escapes me.

Set in small-town America, the gritty story is narrated by an uptight, withdrawn young teenage boy whose family have moved to a new area in order to give him a fresh start following an unspecified crisis. However, his past follows him and he continues to be teased and bullied. The novel's plot is the slow (at times painfully slow) uncovering of what caused him to become so introverted. Although this event (to which the narrator was a passive witness rather than a participant) is the springboard of the action, it is also its climax. To reveal it would spoil the story: suffice to say here that he saw and did nothing about abuse that happened to his best friend.

For her first novel, the author has set herself the daunting task of using an unpopular loner, an apparent social misfit surrounded by bullying classmates (and Scouts) but who strikes up a tentative friendship with a girl preoccupied with palindromes. It is not a story populated by likable characters. Added to this is the fact that the author's chosen style is both grimly realistic and cryptic. It is a tribute to the concept of the novel that the reader persists, hooked on finding the answer to its central psychological mystery.

Running Order:

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