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Crowboy

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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This is a complex and ambitious story told without the precision of time or place. We just have a war shifting onwards past cities over a desolate landscape and the war within a war of two children's gangs into which the strange, vision-led boy Joey and the girl Mal arrive. It's bleak and spare storytelling, suggestive of myth, shifting in short chapters between the different characters' narration and gradually focusing on the warring gangs who gradually move away from the seeming order of hierarchy and rules of no knives through their first death and the deceptions of the power-seeking members of the gangs. Joey takes on the authority of a talisman, becoming 'crowboy' as one gang defeats the other using his symbol, but then becomes the object to have on your side. The children's games increasingly echo the random and senseless violence of the soldiers and the crow, like Ted Hughes's, offers a dark version of a deity with Joey's visions foretelling more suffering. An unusual book, not a laugh in sight, but it draws you in slowly and the action takes over before figures depart this landscape just as they arrived.

Running Order:

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