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Beads, Boys and Bangles

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Issue:
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Reviewer:
Val Randall [3]
Editor's Choice:
NewsTagChoice:
off

Media type:
Book
BfK Rating:
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This is the second book in the series about teenage fashion designer Crow and her friends Nonie, Jenny and Edie. The premise for the series is an interesting and contemporary one ? Crow and her brother have fled from war in their native Africa and her aim is to produce clothes which are original and exciting without using Third World child labour. Edie?s website campaigns against such practices, but when she is accused of publicising Crow?s work for Miss Teen designs despite the fact that the company allegedly uses child labour, she and the girls decide they must go to India to see for themselves what really happens in the manufacture of the clothes.

Their travels, shocking discoveries and determination to help eradicate child labour ? which readers are also encouraged to do ? are interwoven with Nonie?s ?romance? with Alexander, a self-obsessed ballet dancer, Jenny?s attempts to establish herself on the stage and a plethora of fascinating detail about fashion and the industry which produces it. There is also a positive feeling that young people can effect very real change for the better.

The book has a heart ? its message about exploitation is clear ? but it also unashamedly entertains with characters and events from the world of fashion and celebrity. The attention to these kinds of detail is sometimes over-lavish and the Nonie/Alexander relationship is too slight to merit the protracted treatment it is given in the book, but this novel will appeal to fashion-conscious teenage girls who like to think before they buy.