



[Home](#) > How to be a boy

How to be a boy

Books Reviewed:

[How to be a Boy](#) [1]

Issue:

[190](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

There was a time (perhaps it was a long time ago) when short stories about boys growing up would involve conflict with family and friends, love and sexuality, and perhaps sporting or artistic aspirations and achievements: finding yourself in one way or another. These days, if this collection is to be believed, it's about surviving on the mean streets, being bullied or bullying, running from the gangs or running with them. A good proportion of these ten stories fall into this category, but there are some that don't. Mal Peet's is about the tragic associations a tree house holds for a grown up boy. Katie Dale's deals with how a boy copes with other people's attitudes to his unconventional family and his own feelings for a seemingly unattainable girl. And there is more than one way of looking at the mean streets. Tim Wynne Jones injects some fantasy into a story of boy deciding whether to confirm or confound adult expectations of him. Flint Keller looks at the history of a gun assault from the perspectives of adult victim and teenage perpetrator. Ian Beck goes lyrical and street wise in charting the beginning of an unlikely romance. Altogether this is a high class collection from some fine writers that is gripping, hard hitting and thought provoking, if, overall, a little one dimensional in the way it approaches its subject.

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Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/how-to-be-a-boy>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/190>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>