



[Home](#) > Chasing the Dark

---

# Chasing the Dark

Books Reviewed:

[Chasing the Dark](#) [1]

Issue:

[201](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Andrea Reece](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Properly pacey, smart and intriguing thrillers for younger readers are rarer than you would think. **Chasing the Dark** is a great new addition to the genre.

Its hero is 14-year old Joe Slattery. Joe has recently lost his mother in a car accident and is living in the country with her snobby sister, Doreen. Joe's father was Kenyan, and he grew up on a London council estate, in Doreen's eyes he's very much the poor relation. Walking in the woods near his aunt's home, Joe stumbles across a mansion, now fallen into disrepair, and, in its cellar, the terrifying figure of a tramp, badly hurt, but armed with a knife.

The tramp turns out to be a Ukrainian named Yuri and when he takes Joe's dog Oz hostage, Joe has no choice but to bring him the food and medicines he demands. Meanwhile, the police return Joe's mother's possessions and they reveal a larger mystery, one that also seems to have its roots in the Ukraine.

All sorts of elements feed into a fast-moving and cleverly structured plot: **Great Expectations**, the Lord Lucan case, the opening of the KGB files. Joe is a smart kid, and, using brains rather than brawn, and helped by his friend Bailey, and a girl called Nina, he manages to unravel the mystery. There are lots of exciting episodes and adventures along the way, and it all builds to a suitably thrilling climax. Despite the twists and turns of the plot, and a large cast of characters, the writing style ensures that the action is easy to follow. The dialogue is particularly sharp and the author has given Joe a great line in the kind of deadpan, down-beat humour familiar from harder-boiled detective novels!

Sam Hepburn is also [Sam Osman](#) [4], and writes equally appealing fantasy adventures too.

---

**Source URL (retrieved on Oct '20):** <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/201/childrens-books/reviews/chasing-the-dark>

## Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/chasing-the-dark>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/201>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/andrea-reece>

[4] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/181/childrens-books/reviews/quicksilver>