



Red Rain

Books Reviewed:

[Red Rain](#) [1]

Issue:

[203](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Hannah Love](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

BfK Rating:

2

The strength of R. L. Stine's younger horror fiction was how much could be packed into a short text - they introduced a sense of unease and racked up to a dramatic climax in a short space of time, leaving an entire generation scared to switch the light off. Unfortunately, this doesn't effectively translate into a longer book, leaving long lengths of text where the fear dies out and has to be rebuilt.

Lea is a jobbing travel writer who is on a little known, superstition steeped island in the middle of a hurricane. As she emerges the next day into the resulting carnage and a rainfall of blood, young twin boys emerge from the jungle. They claim to have lost everything, and in a moment of compassion Lea takes them home, persuading her husband Mark to adopt them. Mark is unhappy but acquiesces. Daniel and Samuel have been looking for the chance to leave the island for a long time however, and as their ambitions to rule the school grow, more and more people turn up viciously murdered, with all clues pointing to Mark as the killer. However, as the children of the town start to act strangely, suspicion finally starts to turn back towards the seemingly angelic twin boys.

The main issue with this book is that it seems to be drifting between being a novel for teenagers and for adults. This leads to moments of gory horror or explicit sex interspersed with marital problems and subplots for secondary characters that slow the story down. There are moments of true R. L. Stine horror that make the book exciting, and one twist towards the end that is genuinely chilling. However, these moments are too sparse, and whilst the demonic children and resurrection themes are unnerving, they are not as scary as one might hope.

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Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/red-rain>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/203>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/hannah-love>