



# Running Girl

Books Reviewed:

[Running Girl](#) [1]

Issue:

[204](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Nicholas Tucker](#) [3]

~~Editors Choice:~~

Editors Choice

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

This story begins badly, with its mixed race hero sixteen-year-old Garvie Smith lying on his bed for the last two hours, too bored to get up but too arrogant to worry about school work not done or the upset he is causing his single mother, a nurse originally from Barbados. Not chosen company, perhaps, particularly when all he can bring himself to do when he does finally rouse himself is smoke a spiff. But what a mistake any increasingly irate reviewer would have made to have given up at this point. For Garvie, however maddening, is in fact a genius at detection ? not for nothing is he nick-named ?Sherlock? by his equally dissolute mates. And when a nasty murder happens on his patch, it is his probing, alongside the work of the initially and understandably hostile Detective Inspector Singh, that finally brings about justice and a solution.

Set in a scuzzy anonymous city complete with ring road and industrial district. Garvie lives on the sort of estate often described as soulless. But he himself does have a strong code of honour, often hard to spot underneath his habitual insolence and disobedience. Brave to the point of becoming the butt of increasing physical violence, from which he always makes a more or less instant recovery, he is in fact a reincarnation of that immemorial British favourite, the continually feted amateur detective whose only loyalty is to discovering the truth. Simon Mason keeps his story going with skill and panache; there is not a dull sentence in his continually gripping story. Nor is there much light relief, but once hooked any reader will surely want to hang on to this novel's explosively unexpected ending.

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[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/running-girl>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/204>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/nicholas-tucker>