



Nobody Saw No One

Books Reviewed:

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Reviewer:

[Ruth Williams](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Nobody Saw No One is a modern-day retelling of *Oliver Twist*, mainly set in the gritty surroundings of North London's Seven Sisters Road. Byron, aka Citizen Digit, escaped to London from his secure care home, the inappropriately named Tenderness House, and is now 'liberating goods' for a man they call Virus, in return for food and shelter. On one of Digit's shoplifting expeditions, he sees Alfi Spar, a fellow Tenderness House runaway who's now living on the streets. Digit has always felt very protective towards the infuriatingly naïve, honest Alfi, and scoops him up and brings him home to Virus. We soon find out why they escaped: Tenderness House, led by the odious governor 'Call-Me Norman' is a centre of paedophile activity.

Alfi's not cut out for a life of crime with Virus. (Given how cherubic and well-behaved Alfi is, I kept wondering why he hadn't been adopted years before, and why his previous foster parents were so quick to believe he'd stolen from them.) It's not long before he's caught by the police and placed with foster parents. But there's no chance he can stay in this happy home: Virus and the money-obsessed Jackson Banks both need him for their own purposes, and it seems not even Digit can protect him. Blood, bodies, kidnapping, car chases, explosions and grim revelations follow before this action-packed book reaches a pleasing conclusion.

In Steve Tasane's impressive debut, [Blood Donors](#) [4], the protagonist tells the story in a very convincing street voice. This time Digit and Alfi tell the story alternately, and their voices too are always convincing and distinctive. Digit's narrative is littered with made-up but easy-to-understand words, like 'diminimising' and 'snarkastically', and his descriptions are particularly evocative: of the governor he says, 'Pubey brown hairs were sticking out of his ears and chin and cheeks, and protruding like spiders' legs out of both nostrils?; a fellow thief is 'more irritating than an eyeful of Vindaloo?; and Alfi 'would be terrified of his own bad breath?.

It's a gripping, fast-paced, satisfying and highly topical read, with some great characters - especially Digit, who becomes more and more appealing as his own background is revealed. I look forward to reading more from this author.

Links:

[1] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/nobody-saw-no-one>

[2] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/212>

[3] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/ruth-williams>

[4] <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/202/childrens-books/reviews/blood-donors>