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Car-jacked

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Jack is a twelve-year old genius with an IQ of 170. While his parents are arguing in a petrol station shop, their car is hijacked, with Jack in the back. From this gripping opening to the finale of the novel there is non-stop action as Jack and the car-jacker, Ross, travel from Northumberland to London via Leeds and Rotherham. There's a nod to the plot of **The Thirty-Nine Steps**, with Jack and Ross running across countryside, hiding in a remote cottage, travelling by train and taking part in a quiz show. There's also an enjoyable cameo role for a hard-working librarian in Kings Cross, staying late to prepare for her **Chatterbooks** reading club!

Jack is a superb hero; resourceful, clever and brave. He discovers his true potential, which is far more than just having a good brain. The relationship which develops between him and Ross is heart-warming, and gives the ending a real pathos. Ali Sparkes writes with great humour, particularly when showing up Jack's mother, Leonie, who suffocates Jack with a demanding home-school schedule and a restrictive diet. The theme of nurturing a child prodigy is interesting, especially as this is reflected in the current Channel 4 Child Genius programme. By the end of the novel Jack understands himself a lot better and has the confidence to assert himself, with positive results. A thoroughly enjoyable and satisfying adventure story.

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