



[Home](#) > Dead Boys? Club

Dead Boys? Club

Books Reviewed:

[Dead Boys? Club](#) [1]

Issue:

[203](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Jake Hope](#) [3]

Not a choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

The explosive, impactful opening of this novel seers its place in the mind. Twelve-year-old Sam Mbala has awoken in his village home in Uganda to find all is still and silent. Overwhelmed by trepidation at the cause of this, Sam steps outside to discover a pack of children wielding guns and racing towards him.

In the melee that ensues, Sam loses sight of his mother and sister. Determined to follow his father's advice to evade capture at all costs, Sam escapes, but inevitably is recruited like many of the other children in the village. His first test of physical endurance is the long march to the training camp. On arrival, Sam and the other children are indoctrinated as child soldiers by the maniacal and driven Colonel Dada. Throughout this, however, two things give Sam hope, his burgeoning friendship with Kito and the belief that he will, somehow, eventually, be reunited with his father.

The poignancy and resonance in **Dead Boys? Club** arises not from the sensation of its subject matter, but rather from the careful and considered way it negotiates around the spills and thrills. In so doing it creates a much larger canvas upon which to paint with its palette of uneasy questions around ethics, political corruption, mercenary intents and the highly affecting way in which some people's childhood is drawn to so abrupt an end in such a particularly savage way. An important, highly affecting and thought provoking novel.

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Links:

[1] <http://mx1.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/dead-boys?-club>

[2] <http://mx1.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/203>

[3] <http://mx1.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/jake-hope>