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Hate

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Editor's Choice:

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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Inspired by the true story of Sophie Lancaster who was brutally and fatally attacked in a Lancashire park, Alan Gibbon's **Hate** explores issues of difference and courage. As much as real life events can act as springboards for stories, they can equally keep ideas shackled. Sadly this feels the case in **Hate** which never quite manages to shrug off the weight of responsibility to its source.

Eve's sister Rosie has been killed in an attack, leaving Eve and her family grieving her loss. That loss is particularly acute for Eve who, at various points through the novel, measures her own life, unfavourably, against that of her deceased sister.

Running parallel to the family tragedy, is the story of Anthony, a new boy at Eve's school who, it transpires, witnessed the attack but never came forward to present evidence. The establishment of this moral dilemma detracts from more pertinent elements of the case, just what is it in difference that so often serves to constitute as a threat?

Admirable in its intention, the book never successfully moves beyond the humanity and compassion of initial reaction to its real life counterpart. This means that its moral message is at points very heavy handed and overshadows issues of characterisation and impinges upon their emotional capacity. This is perhaps at its most explicit when the story itself is related in brief following its closure. Young people are capable of exploring moral complexity and it feels slightly sad that responsibility to the source material has resulted in such an overtly didactic work.

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