



[Home](#) > Born to Run

Born to Run

Books Reviewed:

[Born to Run](#) [1]

Issue:

[168](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Anne Faundez](#) [3]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Objective realism and compassion merge in this powerful story, an indictment of greyhound racing. Patrick rescues a litter of greyhound puppies from a cruel and deliberate drowning. He instantly falls in love with one of them, which he keeps and names Best Mate. Both boy and dog flourish until the day that Best Mate is kidnapped. The dog is removed to a racing kennels where he is trained to be a champion. Life here is merciless, and the trainer, Craig, treats him as an object of profit, nothing more. Best Mate makes friends with fellow greyhound Alfie, a supreme champion who makes the days more bearable, and Suzie, the trainer's stepdaughter. She loathes Craig for his brutality, and suspects him of killing the dogs when their racing days are over. When her suspicions are confirmed, she runs away, taking Best Mate, renamed Brighteyes, with her. Though harrowing at times, the story is skilfully resolved through happy outcomes regarding the fate of the characters while ensuring a deep emotional response from the reader.

There are parallels to be drawn here with **Black Beauty**, but the book also explores the animal/human relationship and the healing power that an animal can have on the human psyche. There is nothing sentimental in this story, and the greyhound, vulnerable and innocent, is described with dignity and restraint. The book is finely crafted, the writing almost detached, thus reinforcing the reality and cruelty of the dog-racing industry. The interjection of a first-person narrative as the greyhound brings his own perspective and feelings to the story makes it all the more poignant. Beautifully written, at all times measured, this is a story that will endure.

Running Order:

62

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Links:

[1] <http://wqw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/born-to-run>

[2] <http://wqw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/168>

[3] <http://wqw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/anne-faundez>