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# Child X

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

Weatherley's first novel plunges us into the world of media sensationalism, as 13-year-old Jules gradually discovers why her parents have suddenly separated and her father refuses to speak to her. The X of the title has nothing to do with Malcolm X or the Nation of Islam. It refers to the way in which Jules is identified by press and television because they are legally restrained from naming her. Told in the first person, the story moves swiftly, keeping the reader's interest with a large cast of characters, a central plot which depends on sexual revelations and media harassment, and subplots involving bullying at school, Jules's part-time career as an actress in a stage adaptation of *Northern Lights*, and her growing romance with a school friend. All in all, there is rather too much going on to allow some of the characters to appear as any more than insubstantial and unconvincing, and the break between father and daughter, essential to the development of the plot, is difficult to believe. But Weatherley can tell a story, and Jules herself is a solid, three-dimensional figure, self-conscious and vulnerable, funny, touching and exasperating at turns, who gradually acquires self-confidence as she makes her way through the usual embarrassments of adolescence and the sudden extraordinary collapse of her family life, all in the glare of national publicity.

Running Order:

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