



[Home](#) > Blood Willow

Blood Willow

Books Reviewed:

[Blood Willow](#) [1]

Issue:

[142](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

If you've seen the 70s cult horror film **The Wicker Man**, some of the atmosphere and characters in this adventure will be familiar. Jack and Rosh are swept out to sea off the Northumbrian coast in a hired canoe and land up on a mysterious island ruled by Sir Algernon Blood Willow. They make friends with Bernie, a girl who lives in Sir Algernon's care at his crumbling stately pile, Blood Willow Hall. There they gradually learn that interlopers must play the batsman's role in the island's deadly game of wicketing. This is a perverse form of cricket in which there are stones instead of a ball, there is no wicket, and the batsman defends himself as best he can with a curved club. There are plenty of references here to Britain's class-ridden imperial past. In the kinds of stories that Bloor is drawing on and lampooning, boy heroes faced the same vicissitudes of the playing field, shark attack, shipwreck, and cruel native rituals, but with more composure than modern Rosh and Jack can muster. There may be serious purpose behind Bloor's playfulness. Rosh's mother comes from Sri Lanka, an island where Rosh's grandparents were killed in the civil war; and one of the results of Rosh's bizarre experience on Sir Algernon's island is to excite his interest in his own history. But speculation like this may be an adult preoccupation. Children will enjoy the story primarily for its excitement and humour, and its spice of horror.

Running Order:

29

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[1] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/blood-willow>

[2] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/142>

[3] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>