



[Home](#) > Blackout

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# Blackout

Books Reviewed:

[Blackout](#) [1]

Issue:

[188](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

Not a Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Set in a small Welsh mining town at the opening of the Second World War, this is part detective story, part survival story and part (sotto voce) morality tale. Tom and Mary and their gang, playing at spy-catchers, decide that two strangers from London are planning to steal the town's one treasure, a hoard of Roman gold coins, locked in a safe in the basement of the town museum and library. Unable to convince any adults to take their suspicions seriously, they steal the gold themselves and take it to a disused drift mine where they believe it will be safe; only to find themselves trapped by a rock-fall. Two people come to know of their situation, which becomes more desperate when a rescue attempt causes a further fall. The first is one of the would-be English thieves. The other is a downed German pilot intent on escaping to Ireland. Both have obvious reasons for not reporting anything to the authorities; and I think you might guess who does the decent thing. While this tale doesn't engage all of Swindell's powers, it's well plotted and fast moving, with strong characters and some feeling for time and place even if the notions of London villains and a Welsh village are close to those you might find in the British films of the 1940s and 1950s.

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