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What's a Girl Gotta Do?

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

Charlotte Thomas, better known as Lottie, is an ambitious seventeen year old. She is academically gifted, destined she hopes for Cambridge. Among her less testing ambitions is to become Prime Minister. Lottie is also a feminist. Being catcalled by some loutish builders she decides that in the month before her Cambridge interview she will call out every incidence of sexism she encounters

The story poses a host of valid questions. What does feminism mean for a 21st century young woman? What can Lottie achieve by identifying instances of prejudice? What will be the impact of her campaign, outing the sexists in society, impact on her, her friends and her Sixth Form College? How will it affect her chances of ending up on the banks of the Cam?

In this book Bourne plays a dangerous and almost reckless narrative game. In the early parts of the book Lottie embarks on such perilous ventures that the reader comes within a hair's breadth of losing sympathy for her. Dealing for example with a rugby player whose attitude seems to Lottie to be reprehensible, her answer is to give him a custard pie in the face. Any reader will pause and ask whether Lottie is trying deliberately to deprive herself of a glittering future.

But then Lottie finds herself drained by her own campaign. And at that point her ideology becomes cool and balanced. She becomes not just a loud source of noise but a reasoned and effective campaigner. More mature political campaigners than Lottie often seem not to have absorbed this lesson. The reaction of Lottie's parents to her adventures, her near misses, is convincingly depicted.

Bourne occupies neglected territory in the world of teenage fiction and makes a success of her undertaking. Bourne takes a deliberately risky attitude towards storytelling, as her characters do towards life

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