



Terror Kid

Benjamin Zephaniah

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Rico knows trouble. He knows the look of it and the sound of it. He also knows to stay away from it as best as he can. Because if there's one thing his Romany background has taught him, it's that he will always be a suspect.

Despite his best efforts to stay on the right side of the law, Rico is angry and frustrated at the injustices he sees happening at home and around the world. He wants to do something - but what? When he is approached by Speech, a mysterious man who shares Rico's hacktivist interests, Rico is given the perfect opportunity to speak out about injustice. After all, what harm can a peaceful cyber protest do...

From the bestselling author of REFUGEE BOY comes a powerful novel about justice, trust and idealism gone wrong that will make you look again at your definition of a terrorist.

Terror Kid Details

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Author : Benjamin Zephaniah

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From Reader Review Terror Kid for online ebook

Holly Jackson says

Taking into consideration that this book it aimed at young adults, I still don't think it's very well written. Which is a real shame because I love Benjamin Zephaniah as a poet, this is the first fiction book of his I've read and it really was only OK. A little far fetched, rushed and simplistic. Noughts & Crosses by Malorie Blackman is aimed at young adults and has similar themes, Terror Kid really can't hold a candle. Maybe good for teens who struggle with reading though.

Sorry Benjamin Zephaniah, I really do love your work and not just because you share your name with my little brother!

John Stanley says

I read this book because of the author. He has been on Question Time and I have come to respect him a great deal. I don't necessarily agree with all of his politics but I do respect him as a thinker and as a person and for his passion, so it was intriguing to see what his novels would be like.

His political and world views come across strongly, not in a bad way because of course that is what he believes in. The book is very plot based rather than character based, which is not something I normally favour, but this one was done with such fast pace that it was quite a ride and I ended up getting swept along with it. It was a good tale, although the ending was rushed.

CharlotteN says

The book was a bit of a let down especially after reading Face, by Benjamin Zephaniah. The book to start with didn't have a clear plot and I felt the end was almost rushed and pack in as much information as possible.

Jakob Okkenhaug says

Great young-adult novel for 13-16 year olds. Will use it in the classroom.

Sally Flint says

I don't quite know what to make of this book. The plot is good, but the execution of it just feels strange. I know it is aimed at young readers, but, even so, to me it read like the skeleton of a story that needed fleshing out. I can only think that the author was determined to make every single word count. There was nothing extra, just the stark truth. It is the story of a clever disaffected teenager who gets duped into terrorist

activities that he is unaware he is involved with. The social issues explored are listed really didactically and we don't see how they closely link to what he gets caught up in. The book challenges lots of our stereotypes, e.g. a belief amongst many that Islam is to blame for everything, but then nothing is resolved at all. I guess that must be the point, but as such it is pretty bleak without much hope. It is a good book though, and would evoke lots of discussion in a classroom. I definitely enjoyed it and would recommend it all my students.

Siobhan says

Very interesting viewpoint and good for reluctant readers. Pace is a little slow and the narrative is driven by dialogue which I don't think is always effective. However, it's unusual to hear a narrative from the viewpoint of the novel's main character - this is what makes it compelling.

Luna says

3.5 Stars

Terror Kid is a short and fast-paced story, on the one hand this works brilliantly because you're pulled into Rico's world from the very first page and you want to read the book in one sitting.

How Rico is treated in those first couple of chapters, the "wrong place, wrong time" is part of why later on in the book Rico does what he does. Rico is a little naïve but the injustices he sees and experiences are big part to what lead him helping to Speech.

I do wish Terror Kid could have been longer. While the pacing keeps you reading there wasn't enough time to get to know the characters as closely as I would have liked.

Terror Kid is a great talking book. There is so much contained within those 200 pages for discussion amongst any age group. I hope this gets picked up in schools and book-clubs across the country.

Eleanor Lees says

a really quick an amazing book full of drama and suspense but the ended was a little abrupt and i think it could've had a ending which ended the book on a nice note

Seppe says

My book's title is 'Terror kid' it is written by Benjamin Zephaniah.

It's about a 15-year old boy named Rico and he is tired that he can't do anything because the world is failing and by that I mean there are in every city people protesting against the government. That's why he is going to do something. But he sort of fails and the story changes.

I didn't enjoy the topic of the book because it was all about the protesting people and there was a lot of negative emotion they shouted often to each other. They could spice up the story a lot. Something to grab your attention.

I regret that the author doesn't mention how Rico learned the computer skills because that was a reason I read this book. When I read the book I had the idea that the story wasn't complete, there was something missing.

The complete story takes place in London but it could take place in many countries or cities. The reason that it takes place is that there are a lot of criminals in England.

I liked that the book goes about hacking and that attracted me to read this book. I read a couple of books about computers and hacking. But this book was different because with the justice system it makes it so current.

If you are interested in the justice system I surely recommend this book. It opens your look to the government. It is also an easy read for young and old people. But I read on the internet that all the books that Benjamin Zephaniah writes are easy to read.

Jenny Fribbins says

Read for the school bookshelves. Very readable but like other Zephaniah books I've read, the characters feel a bit forced. The storyline also wraps up super quickly and is therefore a little anti-climactic. But, the story is relevant and could possibly be good for teens at risk from terrorist grooming.

Dane Cobain says

The last few Zephaniah books that I've read have been a little bit hit and miss, but with Terror Kid (which was published last year and is his most recent work at the time of writing), he's definitely back on track. True to form, it takes a look at our struggling society and highlights some of the issues that Zephaniah clearly feels passionate about.

The story-line follows a teenage boy with a gift for computers, who unwittingly gets drawn into a terrorist plot in which nine people lose their lives. As usual, I'm not going to go into too much detail because I don't want to spoil it for you, and I do think that if you're looking for somewhere to start with Benjamin's work then this is as good a place as any.

It'll resonate particularly strongly with teenagers and young adults – after all, it's their plight that's being captured here. I can't say I'm speaking from experience, but I'm guessing that if you have some sort of ethnic background then you might be able to relate to that, too. Try it!

Sarah Churchill says

I admire what the author's set out to do, and the very topical and controversial subject at the core of the story, but the execution of it wasn't for me. This is a very short story (200 pages, large type) that's quick and to the point, but not fleshed out enough for me to feel anything real about the characters involved.

I know it's meant to make me question what makes someone a terrorist, and whether the media is filled with propaganda to perpetuate hate and discrimination, but to be honest it didn't, because Rico ISN'T a terrorist, and I didn't get any insight at all into terrorism, or the people who turn to it. That's what I was expecting - a fundamentally 'good kid' being converted/brainwashed/pulled in over his head into a world of terrorism. That's not what I got.

There is some mention of the riots that happened in Britain a few years back, though brief and pretty much just the basics we already know. It's good to set the scene, though, along with the student protests and other peaceful (or at least planned-peaceful) protests around the country. Rico wants to make a difference, but he doesn't want to hurt people. He enjoys hacking into government websites, but sees himself as an innocent. He's naive and easily led, and not nearly as street wise as he probably should be considering the characters of his family and friends.

But that's it really. A short, simple, predictable plot written in short, blunt sentences that just skims the surface of what could have been a provocative novel. Not really what I was hoping for.

Katy Noyes says

3.5 stars

I applaud what the author is trying to do with Terror Kid, but there was a lot here that grated on me as I listened (I audio read this), and it may have come across better on paper.

Rico is a talented computer whizz kid - he can repair them, hack them, build them. He's known for it. The story begins when he's in the 'wrong place at the wrong time', walking home in the middle of a riot (those riots from a few summers ago, near his house in Birmingham. Wrongfully arrested, he is indignant and released begrudgingly. Soon after he is approached by a man with a request to build a website, seemingly a genuine customer, but the requests soon escalate until Rico is involved in something he didn't expect or want, and he really is no longer a complete innocent.

Rico comes across as a whiny teenager on the audiobook, he makes very bad choices and doesn't think ahead or take care, especially for someone so bright. I tried to feel sympathy for him, but this was really difficult as I was willing him to do the right thing and every time, he didn't.

I think the author laid the moralising on a little thick as well, more 'tell' than 'show' and not inferring enough, but laying it out plain - felt a little patronising as a teenage audience would surely catch on to the subtleties.

The escalation part was a shock, as his actions, seemingly an innocent prank mask a deadly act of serious criminals, and this part would merit discussion.

*SPOILER *But the actions of the police seemed ridiculous and unexplained (why do they brand Rico a terrorist? The evidence they garner is totally fake and a lie - if the real terrorists had planted it, surely they were smart enough to fill Rico's role themselves)
END SPOILER

I was pleased at the ending, satisfied with where Rico is in life, and disappointed overall that the story didn't delve into it all more deeply. The 'true' bad guy - Speech - uses Rico then vanishes, and he's the interesting one, the one you want to follow and understand. Rico is just the dupe, is the designated fall guy.

There's a tighter and more subtle story in here, but I just didn't find it. It could stimulate discussion in a teenage book club or in KS3/4 lessons on terrorism / internet safety / social issues, but it's not up to the standards of Zephaniah's fantastic poetry, or the wonderful novel 'Face'.

Sarah says

Read for Concorde Book Awards 2016.

Front Cover Thoughts: Ooh this book will be interesting, especially with what's happening in the world right now, can't wait to read it.

Last Page Thoughts: Wow, another case of a great idea written so badly (flashbacks to The Maze Runner)

Characters: RICO: quietly angry teenage boy. KARIMA: angry teenage girl. STEFAN: angry dad. LENA: angry, tired mum. LOLA: not sure why she wasn't charged at the end?

Storyline: so basically this was a book about injustice. it was about a 15y.o boy who wants to change the world because everything is falling to pieces.

I didn't particularly like the attitude in this book, like the attitude was that in every city of every country people are protesting against the authorities. At one point, Rico watches TV and points out about all the protests going on - I'm not saying protests and things like it, rights and marches, don't happen (in fact, on Saturday the women in Saudi Arabia got to vote) it's just that Zephaniah was acting like its the only thing that happens, and its not.

also, did not enjoy the writing style, there was nothing to stir you up emotionally at all. as well, whenever there was dialogue, the characters only "spoke" or "shouted". there was pretty much nothing else.

Also, everyone in the book seemed to hate the police.. I didn't like that much. I understand that police do make mistakes, but on the whole they do a good job, and I respect them for that.

Another thing, there was no little bits in the story that are actually completely irrelevant but make you understand the character more. it was all just so.. factual (but fictional).

I guess it had a good message, which is why it's got 3 stars and not 2.

definitely not the book I'm going to vote for in the Concorde Book Awards.

Allegra S says

When I read this book I actually thought there were pages missing. This book moves extremely quickly and doesn't provided the expected explanations, resolutions, or emotional connection between characters. The author doesn't really explain how Rico learned his computer skills or give us a sense of how hard works to hack things. Usually in a story the character has set-backs due to lack of a quality while trying to complete a task. For Rico he breezes through the internet with no problems. I also didn't feel his emotional connections to other characters. We are told he has close friendships and family ties, but we don't feel them.

I think this would have worked amazingly well as a short story, because the set-up and reveal are fairly jaw-dropping. As is the way complex stories are perceived and told so one-sidedly by the police and the media. I think this was a good concept, but needed more development to be a good novel.
