

Review of Anthony Cartwright's How I Killed Margaret Thatcher

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This is not a story set in an alternative reality, but one firmly rooted in the harsh realities of growing up in a Midlands industrial town during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher. Through a child's eyes we see the factory closures, job losses and sense of powerlessness amongst working families in a once prosperous and thriving community. In spite of the background of struggles against poverty, the first person narrator makes you laugh: he's a likeable boy with the usual priorities - food, friends and fun. While the adults around him are arguing, he can always seek refuge with his grandparents, and the book provides a nice portrait of a close-knit family and the security it gives a child. As the story moves towards the present day, and the Thatcher era recedes, we understand the personal tragedy of the narrator, and realise that he has laid to rest the person whose politics dominated his childhood. This book will resonate with anyone who grew up in a place blighted by unemployment, but for those whose lives have been easier, it's a convincing picture of a significant moment in 20th century history.