



[Home](#) > The Cybil War

---

# The Cybil War

Books Reviewed:

[The Cybil War](#) [1]

Issue:

[19](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Cathy Lister](#) [3]

~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

0

'Well, it's about this boy who fancies this girl, Cybil, and his friend does too.' That 13 year old was reluctant to agree with me that it was one of the funniest books I have read lately (I suspect he took the whole thing a little more seriously!) but he did admit that once you started reading you couldn't stop and that it really was 'a great book'. Betsy Byars has a gift for noting the meaning in the slightest flicker of a child's face and writing it into exactly the right incident. The class nutrition play when the choice of parts ranges from a dill pickle to a carton of cottage cheese; the pet show in which a poodle appears dressed as a baby and soils its diaper: Simon is well aware of how awful these events are and agonises over them as he agonises over his ecologically minded father who has left home for the 'good life' or self sufficiency. The humour is unspoken. It arises from the awful reality of life, the agony of not wanting to grow up, the realisation that all is not fair in love and war and that your best friend can betray you. Cybil remains sane and sensible throughout: Simon recognises the one-sidedness of his friendship with Toni Angotti and begins to see the twosidedness of his parents' failure. He stops posing as the woebegone and abandoned and enters the real world. Encourage all intelligent twelve year olds to read this and then suggest they read it again six months later.

Running Order:

12

---

Source URL (retrieved on *Mar '21*): <http://ww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/19/childrens-books/reviews/the-cybil-war>

## Links:

[1] <http://ww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/the-cybil-war-0>

[2] <http://ww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/19>

[3] <http://ww.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/cathy-lister>