



## Reviews

- [The School Daily!](#)
- **NZ Herald 14<sup>th</sup> September 2002**

Roxborough manages to introduce several issues into this slim, exciting story. Most disturbing is a mother's failure to protect her children from the violence of her new partner - in fact, in this book, so afraid is the mother of losing her new bloke, she won't accept that anything bad is happening. This throws her children very much on to their own resources, so heroine Nadine, who must be around 13 or 14, stands out as independent and courageous, dealing with a difficult situation almost on her own.

Her stepfather, it turns out, is involved in much more than physically abusing her and her brothers. Dogs start to go missing in their small rural community, and Nadine is sickened to realise that a dog-fighting ring is operating nearby. Then Nadine's own dog is taken off her, and she must take action, even without her mother's support.

- **Around the Bookshops Marigold Enterprises November 2002**

Nadine, her brothers and her mother are locked into an intolerable family situation because they cannot afford to support themselves without the help of a brutal stepfather. By accident, Nadine comes across the terrible truth that he is operating a dog fighting ring in which the animals fight to bloody death. Worst of all, she finds her own well loved dog, Hawkeye, has been taken to be part of The Ring. This makes stark reading which is only too recognisable. Tania Roxborough is an established writer for teenagers and writes with understanding and compassion.

- **Well Read October 2002**

This is one of the New House series of books designed for Teenage Reading and it certainly seems to hit the spot. It has a strong, although uncomplicated, storyline, plenty of action, graphic descriptions of raw emotions... The emphasis is on story rather than character although the characteristic of cruelty and contempt for decency are well depicted in the brutality of the some of the action.

Nadine, living with her mother and brothers on the farm owned by 'Uncle Ted', her ineffectual mother's partner of three years. He is cruel, uncaring and there is no escape. Then one day, as her punishment for leaving a farm gate open, Ted confiscates her own beloved dog, Hawkeye, and takes him away from the farm. One of her brothers, forced into helping Ted and a neighboring farmer, discovers that some of the locals have set up a dog fighting ring and he is sure Hawkeye is fated to be trained as a participant.

The tension, emotional as well as physical, remains high throughout this book. There will be youngsters who may be disturbed by the progression of the plot and the unbridled horror of the narrative but Tania Roxborough pulls no punches in her writing and her imagery is strong. The book is recommended for teens who can switch off their sensitivity.

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