



Paperboy: An Enchanting True Story of a Belfast Paperboy Coming to Terms with the Troubles

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It's Belfast, 1975. The city lies under the dark cloud of the Troubles, and hatred fills the air like smoke. But Tony Macaulay has just turned twelve and he's got a new job. He's going to be a paperboy. And come rain or shine – or bombs and mortar – he will deliver...

Paperboy lives in Upper Shankill, Belfast, in the heart of the conflict between Loyalists and Republicans. Bombings are on the evening news, rubble lies where buildings once stood, and rumours spread like wildfire about the IRA and the UDA.

But Paperboy lives in a world of Doctor Who, Top of the Pops and fish suppers. His battles are fought with all the passion of Ireland's opposing sides – but against acne, the dentist and the 'wee hoods' who rob his paper money. On his rounds he hums songs by the Bay City Rollers, dreams about outer space and dreams even more about the beautiful Sharon Burgess.

In this touching, funny and nostalgic memoir, Tony Macaulay recounts his days growing up in Belfast during the Troubles, the harrowing years which saw neighbour fighting neighbour and brother fighting brother. But in the midst of all this turmoil, Paperboy, a scrappy upstart with a wicked sense of humour and sky-high dreams, dutifully goes about his paper round. He is a good paperboy, so he is.

Paperboy proves that happiness can be found even in the darkest of times; it is a story that will charm your socks off, make you laugh out loud and brings to life the culture, stories and colourful characters of a very different – but very familiar – time.

Paperboy: An Enchanting True Story of a Belfast Paperboy Coming to Terms with the Troubles Details

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Author : Tony Macaulay

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From Reader Review Paperboy: An Enchanting True Story of a Belfast Paperboy Coming to Terms with the Troubles for online ebook

David Campton says

It's always strange reading something by someone you know well. particularly as I tend to hang all my thoughts out to dry on sites like this... Not reviewing a book I've just read would be tantamount to devastating criticism. Given that I previously trashed a theatre production that Tony was in to his face (without realising he had been in it... the production had been about 15 years before) I hope he will forgive any mild criticism of this book. And it will be mild, because I really enjoyed it. It's a slight volume, perhaps without a strong core narrative, and I did find myself wondering whether I would have found it so engaging had I not known Tony, but it was great to read his story and get an insight into what makes him tick... It could probably have done with a little more shaping with the help of an experienced editor... for example some of the colloquial ticks in his writing, particularly at the beginning and/or ends of chapters, seemed a little forced "so they did." Also not too sure about some of the chronology, and whether certain things could actually have happened how and when they did, and some of the cultural backdrops, but if Tony's memory is anything like mine, your personal perception of history does get a little warped... Things didn't necessarily happen exactly in the order you remember... And as I heard one other speaker say recently "The older I get the clearer my memory of things that never happened." But all that is minor and actually adds to the veracity of the whole account, which offers me the perspective of a near contemporary growing up in the same city, but effectively half a world away. Both of us were from similar socio-economic backgrounds, but because I grew up in the politically monochrome world of outer east Belfast while he grew up in the contested ground of West Belfast, our experiences were radically different. We need to hear more of these stories. The ordinary stories of lives being shaped against the backdrop of the troubles. Thanks for your contribution to this Tony.

Nicola Mcfall says

I really thoroughly enjoyed this book. Although based in 1970's during the Northern Irish troubles, which isn't always the basis for the most uplifting of literature, this book is REALLY funny. I laughed out loud throughout. Although I grew up a decade or so later, and in Ballymena (which gets some stick from Tony in the book. lol) the atmosphere and feeling of growing up during the troubles felt very true to me and it transported me back to my own childhood. We were aware of what was going on, of the 'us and them' nature of society, and we occasionally felt it interrupt our own lives – but on the whole we had normal, happy childhoods and Tony has put this across fantastically. He has also expressed a childhood optimism that I believe existed at that time. Children were always far more willing to accept peace and to believe it was a possibility than the adults who had spent too long witnessing the horrors – this came across especially well in the chapter 'Peace in the Papers' which was so well written that it reduced me to tears. I sincerely hope that Tony plans to continue to write. I would love to get my hands on my books by him.

Forever Young Adult says

Graded By: Brian

Cover Story: Oh, Mr. Wilson!

Drinking Buddy: You Even Got to Ask?

Testosterone Level: F**k You Lookin' At?

Talky Talk: English Speaking Country, My Ass

Bonus Factors: Rip-Off Comic Book Ads, Golden Age of Television

Bromance Status: The Big Brother Who Constantly Beats the Shit Out of Me

Read the full book report [here](#).

Apratim Mukherjee says

This is a book set in the seventies in Northern Ireland (Belfast to be particular).

Now generally the title might suggest that this would be a story of hardships and conflicts where a teenager becomes a victim. But it turned out to be the exact opposite of what I thought. The book is about a paperboy who has to balance his professional life with his personal life. And this story of balance made me laugh hysterically many a times. A well written humorous book on day to day life in Northern Ireland during the Troubles is a rarity. That's why I recommend it highly and give five stars to it.

Mari says

I bought the book while visiting Belfast, in order to better understand everyday life during the Troubles, and this autobiography is really good because you discover Belfast through the eyes of a 12-years-old boy of the Upper Shankill (protestant quarter).

There is a lot of humour and wit and emotion, and it is really lively! I recommend it!

Meg - A Bookish Affair says

"Paperboy" is the memoir of Tony Macaulay, a young boy who takes on a job as a paperboy in Belfast during the 1970s. If you know your history, you may recognize that the mid to late 1970s were the setting for the so-called "Troubles" in Northern Ireland, a tumultuous time to say the least. Tony is old enough to realize what is going on around him but is still busy growing up. Even in the face of really horrible things, Macaulay maintains his humor!

I love memoirs so much. I always think it's really cool to be able to walk in someone else's shoes. I knew about the Troubles from a historical perspective but I don't believe that I've read anything about the Troubles other than straight history books on the matter so I found this memoir really refreshing.

Even though this book takes place during a very serious time, Tony is still a kid so this book is filled with some of his funny 12-year-old antics. Some parts of this book made me laugh out loud. It was a good reminder that even when bad things are going on around you, there are still ways to make life a little bit more normal.

I liked the writing in this book. You do need to know a little bit about the Troubles in order to understand

some of the things that happen in the book.

Overall,

Jodi R. says

This was a lovely little book about being a teenager in Belfast during the Troubles. The author's recollections are hilarious, and the portraits he paints of his life and the people and places in it are rich and vibrant. I smiled throughout, despite appreciating the horrific circumstances they were facing every day. It's always amazing to see how resilient people can be - especially kids. Sure, there are cars and businesses being blown up when you're trying to make your way home from school, but you still have to undertake the serious business of growing up, chasing the girls, buying questionable mail order items (sea monkeys, anyone?), loving the BCR and getting your paper route (er - round) done on time and without incidence (thievery, bombs, etc.). Life does go on in the face of just about anything. And teenage life in the 70s - well, hilarity ensues. :-)

I am not a history expert by any means, but I realized in reading this memoir that my limited knowledge of the Troubles always seemed to stem from the Catholic perspective. It was interesting to learn a bit about the Protestant side of things - although this book is not really political. It refers to the situation and the sides, but it doesn't "take sides" or hammer home any side's point of view. It just takes it all in and shows how it all pertains to a wee paperboy, who is just trying to make his way through teenage life. It's quite well done by the author.

A special shout out to Tony's parents - what an amazing pair these two were. To running a pop-up disco for all the neighbourhood kids to hang out at every Saturday night (and thus stay safe and out of mischief), to building a float for the kids to go in a parade, to delivering the papers when Tony is indisposed - they weren't soft or easy people by any stretch, but they were clearly very special people and awesome parents. I am sure Tony realizes how very blessed he was to have them.

SundayAtDusk says

This has got to be the funniest book ever written about growing up in Northern Ireland. It also was the first one I've read by a Protestant. I didn't even realize that until I would wonder why he said what he did in certain places at the beginning of the book; even though I knew he was a Protestant, it still didn't sink in for a while; I kept wondering why he said things that made him sound like he wasn't Catholic! Finally, his Protestant nature sank deep into my mind, and I could proceed unconfused with reading an incredibly humorous memoir.

Tony Macaulay was born in 1963, and grew up on Shankill Road in Belfast. His father worked in a foundry, and his mother did sewing for "swanky" women, who obviously lived in better neighborhoods than he did. Young Tony did not feel poor, however. Just the opposite, he felt rich! He was a paperboy . . . the only pacifist paperboy in Belfast, mind you . . . and he could spend his wages how he wanted. One of his favorite ways was to order things from the back of *Look-in* magazine, such as a book about developing muscles like Charles Atlas, or those infamous Sea Monkeys that obviously disappointed kids in Ireland as much as they disappointed kids in the United States.

Least you think Tony only thought about himself, that's totally untrue; he also sent money to save starving children in Africa. One day, a visiting minister to his church told them they should stop sending money for food to Africa. As the author describes what was said that day in church: "My pompous preacher friend next went on to explain that we should not waste money by sending food to Africans because we needed to send missionaries to get them saved first, as that was more important. I couldn't work out how you could give them salvation if they had already died of starvation."

The book is filled with such wit. It's also filled with all the other things a boy back then was into--Dr. Who, ABBA, Donny Osmond, the Bay City Rollers, *Lost In Space*, family, school, vacations in the caravan, guitar lessons, violin lessons, dancing at the Westy Disco, girlfriends, pets, braces, and the Troubles. He does talk about the violence in Belfast--the close calls with bombs and guns, the "peace walls", the soldiers. But what Tony Macaulay so amazingly showed in *Paperboy* is that a child could grow up and have a very happy childhood, even when living in a city torn to pieces by discord and violence. He also so amazingly showed you could write a really, really funny book about such a childhood.

(Note: I received a free ARC of this book from Amazon Vine.)

Lori says

This is a memoir by Tony Macaulay. It mostly takes place in 1975-about 1977. at this time he was 12. Tony lived in Belfast Ireland. his first job was a paperboy. this was during some of the worst of times on Belfast the troubles between the Catholic and protestant religions. while he was still a boy he witnessed the fights, the bombs going off the fight for and against the IRA. meanwhile he is growing up, managing his paper route. experiencing his first crush. playing the violin in the school orchestra, learning the guitar. i liked how he mentioned the bands and singers that were famous in 1975 such as the Bay City rollers. his excitement of going to a Bay City Rollers concert and the humorous encounter with one of the band's players. he witnessed a lot growing up during this trying scary time in Belfast Ireland. I remember back then I had a couple Bay City Roller records on 45s. S.A.T.U.R.D.A.Y. Night!! a likable and honest memoir seen through a 12 year old boys eyes.

J.P. Sexton says

I recently read Tony Macaulay's memoir about growing up In Belfast; "Paperboy." I grew up horizontally West of him in North Donegal. Derry was our weekly shopping place and like Belfast, it was being blown apart during at that time, so I could relate to his story.

Tony's stories brought back memories..maybe different to his, since he seemed to have a great love for the Bay City Rollers, whereas myself and my school mates despised them! The BCR were huge when I was in secondary school. The girls went around in their tartan scarves, wrist bands and even sewed tartan on the bottom of their jeans and parallels. I did like Showaddywaddy though and I am sure many more English bands to which Tony listened.

There is a lot of humor in "Paperboy." One of my favorite parts was when he does his "jimmie joe" in Brut aftershave! Readers who are not au fait with Irish vernacular, especially Northern Irish /Ulster slang, may not be sure of some words, but I think you will still get a good gist of the story. I'm very much looking forward

to reading the next two books in the Trilogy!

Angeline King says

When I bought this book, I assumed that it was a novel, and it is testament to the technique of the writer that I still didn't know by the last page that it was a memoir. I felt that I'd made a true friend in this 'Upper' Shankill boy who went to the posh grammar school where the kids pronounced their 'ings.' The satire was so understated and clever that it was easy to escape into a non-political world of the adventures of a Paperboy in the cultural context of 1970s Belfast, while surfacing now and then to take in the political ironies. In terms of the language, the first line hit me in the face, so it did, and the pace and confidence of the story and the writing really started to build about a quarter of the way through. I laughed frequently and I shed a wee tear a couple of times when I least expected it. It's a beautiful piece of work. Thankfully there's a sequel!

Ryan Miller says

Enchanting, engaging memoir of growing up in Northern Ireland during the Troubles. Macaulay's pre- and adolescent wonder is well-written and entertaining.

Katie says

As a child that grew up in Belfast in the 70's and 80's I could just picture wee Tony on his paper round. It brought back lots of memories from my own childhood that I had forgotten about. You don't need to be from Belfast to enjoy this lovely book which should strike a chord with any child of the 70's.

Rebecca McNutt says

I love books set in the Seventies, and *Paperboy*, a moving and exciting historical memoir, is definitely no exception. The author captures the scenery of Ireland and the atmosphere of the times as if he's playing an old home movie.

Rob says

A fantastic story of a young boy living amongst the 'Troubles' and life in Belfast, but with a naivety that comes with age. Beautifully told. This is a book I will definitely go back to read again.
