

THE LAST MINUTE

9.21am: business as usual on a high street in England.9.22am: the explosions are heard for miles around, and in the early confusion there is talk of a gas leak, a plane crash, and even terrorism . . .The people of Heathwick had been preparing for Christmas unaware that many would die, and the rest would be transformed for ever. Travel with them, second-by-second, through the hopes, fears, love, worries, gossip, cruelty, kindness and trivia that dominated...



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The Last Minute

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Reader's Opinions

Updale takes the 60 seconds before an explosion devastates a small English town, and expands each second, "24"-style, to introduce the characters and drip-feed information to the reader. It's cleverly done, with enough repetition to make the large cast stick in your mind and enough detail to make you start to care about their fate as...

I thought this was a brilliant way to structure a story about a disaster. By starting at the end and counting down second by second we always know what is going to happen, but we get to know the victims; this really makes you stop and consider the crushing loss of loved ones. The fact that the story is set in a typical high street and...