

The Badness of Ballydog
by GARRETT CARR

Can a town be bad?

Ballydog is, and three children - one there against his will, one an outcast and one trying to maintain his position as gang leader - all know that something big is about to happen that will destroy the town. They don't want that to happen.

Can they save the baddest town in the world?

This is an atmospheric, supernatural mystery. Telling the stories of three characters who are drawn together, through adversity, to save their town. Ewan is hiding under a witness protection scheme with his mother. May is the school "oddball" who can talk to animals and lives on a boat in the harbour. Andrew is the school gang leader, struggling to keep his position amongst his peers. Together they know they have to save the town from the biggest creature on earth, and they have to do it alone.

The book is beautifully written and the characters and places well drawn, from the farmer's fierce bull to the local pub. Full of wonderful descriptions which amuse and horrify in turns, it entices you in and insists you read it.

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1. How do you think Ewan was feeling in the first few days of moving to Ballydog?
2. What is "The Villa"?
3. Who lives on the "Sunny Buoy"?
4. May thinks the Old man of the Sea is very wise. Why do you think she has that opinion and how does she know?
5. Why do you think the fish had deserted the sea around Ballydog?
6. What did Weir, the Lighthouse Keeper, and Andrew have in common?
7. Write down three events the locals had ignored which Ewan, Andrew and May understood to be dangerous signs.
8. What was Weir really planning to do with Ewan and May?
9. How did Andrew manage to save Ewan and May from the creature?
10. What satisfied the creature's hunger and anger in the end?

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Answers

1. Angry, miserable, upset, frightened.
2. "The Villa" is the gang hut where Andrew and his gang meet.
3. May lives on the "Sunny Buoy" with her dad.
4. a. the Old Man of the Sea is very old and would therefore have gathered a lot of knowledge.
b. May is able to talk to animals through telepathy.
5. The fish had all left because they knew the monster was coming.
6. Both Weir and Andrew have been drawing pictures of the creature which they had been dreaming about. The pictures showed identical monsters.
7. i] the animals leaving the town.
ii] Andrew's goldfish banging its head on the fish bowl.
iii] the fish leaving the fishing grounds.
iv] everyone having nightmares.
v] the farmer's bull behaving strangely.
8. Weir was planning to sacrifice Ewan and May to pacify the monster.
9. Andrew managed to fly into the creature's stomach using a jetpack and to rescue his friends.
10. The creature saw the submarine as a sacrifice and after eating it, returned to the deep until called again.