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Good Boy

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This Barrington Stoke publication is classified as reading age 8, but YA, as the content is more suitable for older readers, so perhaps this belongs in what is sometimes called Hi-Lo.

It starts with Sandie's nightmare as a child about a black dog which is chasing her, and it is frightening enough for Mum to need to comfort her. Professional advice leads to the family getting a friendly dog, and sure enough, having Rabbie sleeping under her bed means that he growls when her sleep is disturbed, and she can stroke him 'Good boy!?' and go back to sleep. The nightmares gradually stop, Sandie has a happy time at university, and all is well until Rabbie dies on the day that Sandie learns that she has been accepted into the police force. The nightmares return, Sandie gets too little restful sleep and her work suffers, so she is recommended to get medical help, but does not take the pills prescribed.

One day, she and her partner in the police car are summoned to an incident in a block of flats, and, leaving her partner to look after the injured, Sandie takes a risk, goes up to the roof and comes face to face with a man with a gun. The black dog, just as in her nightmare, appears on the next block- and jumps?. There is a twist, and the reader is not entirely sure what has happened, but all is well.

Mal Peet was indeed a master storyteller, and his widow Elspeth is still finding unpublished stories. Emma Shoard's illustrations, mostly in black and white, do have a nightmarish quality to match the tale, and with a suitable warning about the content, this could be popular.

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