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# Malamander

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

A mixture of magical realism and Gothic adventure, this amiable novel zips along at a good pace until its needlessly spun-out ending. Told from the perspective of mild-mannered twelve-year-old Herbert Lemon, in charge of the Lost and Found department at Eerie-on-Sea's Grand Nautilus Hotel, it tells how he and his new friend Violet of the same age solve the mystery of the legendary sea monster known to all locals as the Malamander. They also discover what happened to Violet's parents, once also on the same track but now disappeared. And there is Sebastian Eels to deal with as well, a sinister writer with a hidden agenda, not to mention the ghostly, water-logged figure of Captain Kraken, sporting a boathook as substitute for a missing hand.

All great fun, from a writer with a good turn of phrase and an original take on what could otherwise be fairly well-worn material. Previously the illustrator for the first Harry Potter book jacket, Taylor includes witty pen and ink illustrations before each chapter anticipating and then fleshing out details to come. There is also an opening map of Eerie-on-Sea, featuring among other details the Whelk and Walrus Pub, the Church of St. Dismal and Dolphin main square. The author has drawn some of the inspiration for all this from Hastings, his nearest town; the rest comes from a lively and cheerful imagination well worth sampling.

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