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# Abarat

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

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Is it accidental that Candy Quackenbush has discovered the lighthouse in the middle of the plains of Minnesota and sailed to Abarat? Or is she the one person who can stop the darkness rising? Christopher Carrion, Lord of Midnight, plots to take over Abarat and, with a generosity of invention typical of the book, Barker provides a second, rival villain with plans for commercial domination. This first part of a four-book sequence provides the wonder, invention and events to set the fantasy in motion. The scenes at the lighthouse where the sea arrives to carry Candy from Chickentown to Abarat and the journey on the plane created out of words in the air linger as favourites among many. Abarat is a land beyond our own, the hereafter, with traders once sailing between the two. The new world is a flight of fancy in a squadron of fancies. Abarat has an island for each hour of the day, plus one (out of time), all wildly different. The inhabitants have assorted arrangements of limbs and features, human and animal, and extras. One has several heads growing on one head, all called John, who take some keeping under control. And this one is good. The bad ones are... well, nasty. Those who know Barker's adult novels will understand how well he does horror: encounter the Stitchlings 'a vast, soulless army of mud and thread and patches'. There is much that could be horrifying but this is well-understood children's fantasy with a guiding hand. The title logo is already trademarked by Disney, who apparently bought the film rights for a Beckham ransom on the basis of the author's paintings for the book (wildly bright and bold oils). Events not ideas are Abarat's strength. It is a reader's delight of fantasy, a roller coaster of excitements held together by the pace of adventures and the variety of its extravagant imaginings.

Running Order:

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