



Bad Girls

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Sharing a common goal to be the meanest kids in their class, Margalo and Mikey conspire to turn their fifth-grade class into a minefield and fearlessly confront anyone who would stand in their way. Reprint. *PW. NYT. C. H. "*

Bad Girls Details

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From Reader Review Bad Girls for online ebook

Soul Glow says

this book was boring and uninteresting

Ann says

It took me a while to warm up to this book since the two main characters are not especially likeable. The longer I spent in a fifth grade classroom under the leadership of a strict teacher who is "the kind of person who saw herself as having short, potato-colored hair", the more realistic I found the students. Voigt gives reader layer upon layer of each character's soul. If Mikey and Margalo hadn't been seated by each other alphabetically, both new on the first day of school, they might not have found much in common.

The girls embrace their outsider-ness and show strength in different ways. Mikey's anger is her power; she seems not to care who likes her. Margalo finds her power in starting rumors and planting ideas in other people's lives that will add to her power. Both girls are skilled at manipulating others. And both girls are insecure in their relationship for most of the book.

Voigt is masterful in showing the many facets of each child's (and the teacher's) personality. And how I grew to love and appreciate Mrs. Chemsky and how she is aware of students' betrayals, kindnesses, cruelties, confusion.

An Odd1 says

I hoped for humor, got recipe for ten-year old fifth-grade truancy, girl-style "Think they can get away with anything" p253. I like reading about humans whose frailties are challenged and strengths encouraged, yielding a better world. This reads like a teacher/school memoirs (reinforced by Voigt bio), typical unhappy months ruled by bossy bullies from *their* point of view, revives my worst childhood years preferred forgotten. <http://www.cynthivoigt.com/biography...>

Michelle "Mikey" fights physically fist to nose and on the pitch (soccer futbol field), proud of being "not unselfish", "not nice" p83. "Harmless" p92 Margola, "sneaky" "devious" "mean inside" p99, starts rumors and manipulates for power, even secret. Strict but fair Mrs Chemsky seats the newcomers side-by-side; they sign themselves ME, and Me, respectively. Both want their own way, to be class president, and friends. Michelle is an only child with a waist-long braid, home-made healthy lunches, energetic forward player, instant enemies with permanent past class president Louis (view spoiler). Margola's unemployed mother gets married, makes babies, and divorces, packs cheap processed junk food.

I did not even notice what blonde pretty Rhonda said during elections "voting for Mikey because they feel sorry for her" p195 (view spoiler), but they target Louis for expulsion, Rhonda for smelly lunch bags, and ruin Pet Day (view spoiler). Final action (view spoiler) ends before the teacher sees unexpected challenges to authority and responds, so the misbehavior presumably continues unhindered by adults, either parents or educators, presumably forever. "They said later that they were friends from the first minute" is the opening sentence. The closing attributes to both mothers "But she looks perfectly ordinary. ?She looks like a nice girl" p277.

No resolution, no growth, no sense of satisfaction for good or justice, evil triumphs here. Or did I miss something? The girls were new, unhappy, unnoticed at home, and had no choice but to jointly vent their inner anger on innocents? A beginning to lives of crime? Adding review shows series ends after 5 books, the girls then fix injustice, so #1 is set up, but I do not like either of them enough to persist, you may, or skip to later in series, because the writing does flow appealingly, sets up realistic behavior, somewhat silly situations, bloody noses.

Catherine Mustread says

Overly long and somewhat confusing story of two fifth grade girls trying to maintain a friendship while each asserts her independence.

Rad says

It's hard to believe that this is the same Cynthia Voigt who wrote *Dacey's Song* and the rest of the *Homecoming* series, for *Bad Girls*, while also contemporary, is less about coming-of-age, family, and grief and more about classroom politics, motives, and friendship. Apparently it's also a series. But it's hard for me to take the title seriously because I just keep thinking of the song. "Bad boys, bad boys, what you gonna do, what you gonna do when they come for you?" Replace "boys" with "girls," however, and you'll see the dilemma.

April Hochstrasser says

The book is about two 5th grade girls that like to hurt boys and trick people. They put run over raccoons in a person's lunch box and don't even care what the punishment would be! Margolo had to write on the chalk board 150 times "I will never do that again" and Mikey had to wash all the desks. Maybe if I were 10 I would like a book about mean 5th grade girls, but right now it just seems childish.

Danna says

In a word: Wow! In this poignant novel, Cynthia Voigt delves into the darker side of elementary school, realities that adults have either forgotten or prefer to believe are rare anomalies. When we consider our own childhoods, or casually observe kids in the world or in media, we're looking through the lens of our adult experiences and understandings (and in the case of media portrayals, through the lens of advertisers and studio executives). Naturally, this distorts our perceptions and memories. It's a rare author who can help us see kids as they are, and Cynthia Voigt is one of them. I love Ms. Voigt for allowing us to understand these girls without imposing judgement. Another very difficult feat, and Ms. Voigt achieves it beautifully.

Alissa says

Bad Girls was a middle level novel about two girls who were new to Washington Street Elementary school and to Mrs. Chemsy's fifth grade classroom. They are a bit of trouble makers. Mikey (Michelle), doesn't take crap from any one. Margalo seems to be tame but she has a fire inside of her. They become best of friends and everyone elses nightmare. Mrs. Chemsy doesn't know how to control them and their classmates fear them. To top it off, the two girls love it. They love being bad. This book takes you on a journey of the two gals who just love being bad.

Janet says

So here I am, cleaning out my garage, and I ran across a diorama from long ago. I think my daughter wrote it in 5th grade (she got an "E") so that would make it 3rd grade when she wanted to buy the book. Here is her review, with apologies to my good friend Liz ... I guess I tried to do a little more "guiding" than I thought.

"No sugar, no spice ... what was I looking at? that phrase was on the back cover of *Bad Girls*. I was in Ms. Sottile's class and we were at the Book Fair. My mum was helping the children find books that day. When I picked up *Bad Girls* and looked at the cover I knew I had to get it. I took the book to my mum and said "I really want the book" but my mum tried to get me off the track by saying "Isn't that book too old for you? Why don't you look at that book of fairy tales." My mum was judging the book by its cover! Finally, I bugged my mum to buy it.

The book is about two 5th grade girls that like to hurt boys and trick people. They put run over raccoons in a person's lunch box and don't even care what the punishment would be! My diorama shows Margolo and Mikey in the classroom having detention for their mean lunch box trick. since they both did it, Margolo had to write on the chalk board 150 times "I will never do that again" and Mikey had to wash all the desks.

I think you should get this book because I had fun reading it. When you get to 5th grade, you'll know a little more about it."

CW

***CrAzY-PeRFeCtNeSs!!!! says**

pretty cool Mikey is awesome my new role model

Aimee Massey says

Mikey Elsinger and Margalo Epps are new to Washington Street Elementary School on the first day of fifth grade in Mrs. Chemsy's class. Mikey is a self-absorbed only child with a giant chip on her shoulder. Margalo is one of many step- and half-siblings in a family with more kids than money. Mikey likes to fight and Margalo appears innocent but is a skilled liar and manipulator.

I imagine Voigt thought she was being all PC by having "two strong female characters" but she seems to confuse strong with mean, as too many people seem to do. Mikey, for one, would be considered a bully by almost anyone's standards. She makes no effort to get along with her classmates, and the idea of "going along to get along" has never occurred to her.

On the surface the story is believable and probably if I read it in the fifth grade I would find it to be more or

less true-to-life, but scratch the surface just a little and you see the problems.

I was in elementary school before the days of zero-tolerance policies, yet I can tell you that a student who punched another student in the nose and drew blood, on the first day of class, no less, would have been in very serious trouble. Double that for if she did it again a few weeks later. Parents would have been called and there would probably have been a suspension. Yet Mikey is only reprimanded verbally. Louis gets in worse trouble when he cuts off her long braid; he's sent to a different classroom.

And then Margalo and Mikey rally their classmates to ask that Louis be returned to their class. No real motive is given for this, but it seems to be a power play, a way for the students and Margalo and Mikey in particular, to assert dominance over Louis and Mrs. Chemsky, not to mention Louis's new teacher and the principal. This just doesn't ring true for fifth-graders.

Mrs. Chemsky is portrayed as extremely strict, but as the book goes on it seems she is more of a micro-manager than truly a disciplinarian. She has all kinds of rules about how homework papers are to be completed, the headings on papers, no nicknames used for the students, but she allows Mikey to get away with bloodying Louis's nose twice without consequence. She allows her students to manipulate her, disrupt class and waste time. That's not what a strict teacher would do.

Nobody in the book was likable, not the protagonists, who you wouldn't want your own kids inviting home, and not the other students, who seem either dim-witted or unpleasantly and implausibly slick-talking.

Voigt just doesn't have much of an ear for dialogue and the way real kids talk. Mikey, falsely claiming to have eaten a dog biscuit in order to goad Louis into eating one, says she's tried it lots of times "but I never bothered to boast about it." What ten-year-old talks like that?

And during a discussion of Mrs. Chemsky's husband, someone suggests that she is divorced and that perhaps it was a nasty divorce "you know, like Burt and Loni?" The reference is totally dated now, and I suspect it might have been dated when the book was published, but even if it was, I can't see a fifth-grader making reference to the marriage of Burt Reynolds, not exactly a tween favorite even then.

I can't quite give the book 1 star because there's something about it that I found engaging. I did read it all the way through and don't have that "that's a whole x-number-of-hours I'll never get back" feeling. The characters aren't quite believable and certainly aren't likable, but I still wanted to find out what happened.

Tatum Roberts says

Overall the book was ok... nothing very eventful happened though. It was a steady stream of troublemaking

Liz says

I loved this book! I first read it when I was three or four years older than the main characters (and that's a lot in kid years) and loved it because it's pure mischief! Mikey Elsinger is a girl who prefers barrelling her way through everything in life, whilst Margalo Epps prefers trying her hand at social manipulation. The result is a delicious book of playground politics and insights into kids that you absolutely have to read. No, I mean it: go and read it. Especially if you've lost touch with your inner child. Cynthia Voigt is a master at letting you relive the playground days.

The first and best in the Bad Girls series. Word to the wise: after book two, they both sorta lose their edge.

Eugenia says

9-year-old picked this out and I thought I should investigate what constituted "badness" for this fifth-grade pair and see whether it was appropriate for her. It is -- it's fine for her maturity level, although she might, as I did, find herself frustrated by what's not told directly (we have to infer the girls' troubled backgrounds from hints in the text, but we never get to "meet" their families).

Deshawn Robinson says

After meeting on the first day in Mrs. Chemsky's fifth-grade class, Margalo Epps and Michelle had problem with school. They always where getting in trouble they wanting to do nothing. These two girl are never good and when they are always to getter they never want to listen or do there work they are bad girl. These girl everybody in there class because they are so bad and they are ruled and very mean to other. These girl never behave like they are supposed, no one want know what they and going to expect of them they not good girl.
