



The Case of the Good Boy

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Everyone's favorite preteen British detectives are back for another case! With toddlers disappearing and rumors of a large, beast-like creature roaming the woods, Tackleford is in serious danger. And then there's Mildred's new dog Archibald... if you can even call it a dog. After all, what kind of dog drinks tea out of a cup? Everything comes to a head once the boys get a picture of the beast and Archibald goes missing. Is there a connection? And what does it all have to do with the magic pencil Mildred won from a carnie con game? The second installment of John Allison's award-winning webcomic series in print!

The Case of the Good Boy Details

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Author : John Allison

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From Reader Review The Case of the Good Boy for online ebook

Meg Story says

John Allison is the greatest comic artist in the UK, the world even, MAYBE EVEN THE UNIVERSE? He is like the cool version of Midas where everything he touches turns to AWESOME and it won't even kill or maim you or whatevs. So let's all help support him by reading this book because unlike the terrifying version of Midas, his gift is not inherently monetarily valuable.

St. Expeditus says

John Allison comics are like Cary Grant or Katharine Hepburn films. The characters all speak in idiosyncratic, somewhat unnatural ways, but their timing is so perfect, their wit so sharp, and their idiom so charmingly sui generis, that the effect is just to make me wish that this could be how everyone spoke in real life.

When Scary Go Round ended, I was so sad that I couldn't get right into Bad Machinery, convinced that all its differences from that strip were terrible flaws, etc. But they weren't. Bad Machinery didn't even have a rocky start, as some people portrayed it. It was great right off the bat. I just wasn't ready for something so characteristically Allisonian that wasn't still all about the same cast of characters that I'd grown to love.

Alex Sarll says

Oh goodness, this is amazing. Anyone who grew up nowhere in particular in Britain will recognise the half-arsed bullying and the crushes and the teasing and the grand schemes in all their heartbreak and hilarity. The magic pencil and the mysterious toddler-eating beast...well, round our way it was more yer classic aliens and haunted house, but the principle is the same. The closest thing I've ever read to a UK Blue Monday, albeit far less sexy because hello, suburban Britain.

Lydia says

If anybody were to ask me to stock a graphic novel section for their school library, Bad Machinery books one and two are the first books that I would order, and I wouldn't even have to take a moment to think about it. Bad Machinery is the obscurely named but delightfully penned kid-detective series by John Allison, creator of Scary-Go-Round, Giant Days, and Bobbins. While his other works focus on more adult characters dealing with more adult situations, Bad Machinery is about growing up, moreso than the often fantastical mysteries that the main characters tackle along with all the problems that growing up brings.

With book one of Bad Machinery, The Case of the Team Spirit, having laid much of the groundwork for the setting already, The Case of the Good Boy plunges right into the action, making no attempt to disguise the fantastical features of the case du jour. A beast on the loose in Tackleford, a missing magical pencil, and a very good dog will both perplex and amuse readers, while in the background, class issues, friendship troubles, and bullying are all neatly and sensitively dealt with. Looking back at The Case of the Good Boy from the point that the web-version of the comic is at, it's rewarding to see just how much material there is to

make you love the protagonists and the strange world they live in right from the get-go. The Case of The Good Boy is one of my favourite Bad Machinery stories, and a strong second installment in an excellent series. The quality of the story in and of itself makes it more than worth buying a physical copy, but the extra content in the graphic novel makes it even better.

Pop Bop says

Sharp, Sly and Good Natured

This book is the second collection of strips from John Allison's web comic "Bad Machinery", which is itself a spinoff from his earlier online strip "Scary Go Round". The premise is that two groups of high schoolers, one group of three girls, and one group of three boys, get together to solve mysteries that have a vaguely supernatural flavor. The action is set in a medium sized town somewhere in England. This book covers one complete mystery, but there are loads of unrelated sub plots and threads, many of which are as much fun as the mystery.

There are a lot of good reasons for the strip's popularity. While the book follows just one mystery, the collection really reflects multiple story lines. First, of course, is the mystery that arcs through the whole book. (Here, toddlers are disappearing, although as DCI Carver notes, "There are thousands of children...but only nine have vanished....We urge people not to become hysterical if they can possibly avoid it."). Next, though, the series is seasoned by "one off" jokes and bits that only take a strip or two or three to set up a laugh. Finally, there are issues, characters and relationships that are developed in this series but that will continue to appear and develop in later books as well. Each kid has family issues and school issues and personal issues that pop up from time to time. This adds a lot of depth and interest to the whole undertaking, and reminds me very strongly of "Doonesbury", which followed a very similar pattern.

Also in the style of "Doonesbury", Allison has a real command of "minimalist" or succinct humor. You only get a few panels per strip, and only so many words. You have to set up a situation, work it, and then deliver a payoff with just a few drawings and a few well chosen words. Some of the best laughs are deadpan throwaway lines. That is just brutally difficult to do, (think of how many bad imitators of artist/humorist Gary Larson's "Far Side" are out there), and Allison pulls it off brilliantly.

Plus, each of the six teens, and almost all of the secondary characters, (parents, teachers), are individually realized and engaging. Within a few pages this is not a comicbook, but as compelling as any YA novel. Added to that is the fact that the dialogue is fast, sharp, and witty, and yet generous. It is not snarky or mean spirited, and is ultimately good-natured, if a bit edgy. As a result you end up liking these people as much as they like each other and sympathizing with their various predicaments and foibles. (Again, echoes of "Doonesbury".)

So, a light authorial touch, insight, humor, and engaging characters. Just keep these collection volumes coming.

Please note that I received a free advance ecopy of this book in exchange for a candid review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to the author or the publisher of this book.

Anna says

Bad Machinery is hands down the best webcomic I have read, on multiple levels. Allison's talent for writing witty and effortlessly natural dialogue cannot be overstated, and the expressivity of his characters' faces and gestures is incredible. This is a grade-A book, and not just because it has a wendigo in it. (But the wendigo is very important.)

First Second Books says

John Allison steps up to fill the shoes of the classic British schoolkid stories – like the Famous Five by Enid Blyton – except in the modern day, which means that everything is funnier and also a comic.

Plus! Yetis!

Jenna says

Enjoyed this second volume much more than the first, perhaps because we've had a chance to get to know the crew. Drawings were just as cute as the last. And I definitely agree it could be akin to the Famous Five or Secret Seven for a new generation, although, having said that, the plot is a bit more meandering than a straightforward F.F book.

Shan says

These ungainly volumes* are just delightful -- smart, silly, and oh so very British. Good fun all around! I can't wait for Clare to be old enough for these.

*My only complaint -- I assume the books are done in a sort of landscape format because the illustrations can be bigger, but they're not very portable...

Emily says

Loved it. These characters make me smile. Fun story, great dialogue.

Charlotte's glossaries are not to be missed. And I loved that the scientific name for all but one of the creatures in the Rare Animal Encyclopedia at the end of the book was *Bombus Bombus*.

Punk says

Toddlers are disappearing and there are rumors of a large, beast-like creature roaming the woods. This definitely sounds like a case for a bunch of pre-teen middle schoolers.

Still super cute and this time the story hangs together even if it's completely nuts. The Good Boy of the title is a doodle brought to life and firmly in whatever the opposite of the Uncanny Valley is, while still being

horrifyingly uncanny. It's just *wrong*. But it's the kind of wrong that fits perfectly into this universe where weird shit happens and no one questions it too much. The art alone makes this worth your time, but the characters are diverse and likeable, too, and their friendships remain central to the story, enduring petty squabbles and the strain of growing up. The adults actually had something to do—which wasn't the case in the previous volume—and they fit nicely into the story, a part of it, rather than an afterthought. I liked this a lot better than the first volume, and I'm glad I kept reading.

Deals with bullying, and maybe a warning for animal harm, and also child harm because now that I think of it, not all those babies got returned.

Kerry says

I had previously read this story online, of course, as I am a huge fan of Bad Machinery. That was a few years ago, probably. Then I bought this book and read it all over again in one sitting.

MAN do I love this comic. I love the art, I love the characters, I love what they say. I laughed out loud many times. I love Archibald. And Amy, and Ryan. I just really adore this comic more than any other comic ever.

Like the previous book, this is, physically speaking, bee-yoo-tee-full. The colors are bright and crisp, the pages are BIG and shiny and I love to run my hands over it. Just a lovely, lovely thing.

Nigel says

Mildred wins a magic pencil and draws herself up a very weird dog. Children are disappearing and a beast is on the loose, attracting the attention of a famous hunter. Jack is being bullied and someone burns down the cricket pavilion, and it's more hilarious and charming and slightly surreal antics from the rival mystery solving teams of Tackleford. One of my favourite webcomics has produced what are now some of my favourite books.

Wayne McCoy says

'Bad Machinery #2: The Case of The Good Boy' is a strangely named volume since there are no bad machines (though this is the name of the webcomic), and I'm not sure what the case might be referring to. What you will find, is a charming collection of hilarious characters that live in a world where occasional strange things could happen.

There is a series of disappearances and a strange large beast lurking in the woods. There is a magic pencil at a fair that must be won. Apparently whatever is drawn with the pencil comes true. When Mildred draws a strange picture of a dog, it seemingly shows up at her house. Combine a strange new pet, a series of mysterious disappearances, young love, and some really funny dialogue and you have a quirky, fun story.

John Allison's writing is fun. It took me a few pages to get into the rhythm of the dialogue, I really enjoyed it.

I was given a review copy of this graphic novel by Diamond Book Distributors and Netgalley in exchange

for an honest review. Thank you for allowing me to review this fun graphic novel.

David Schaafsma says

You can read this series for free at Allison's website.

<http://scarygoround.com/index.php?dat...>

I read the stories in a big floppy paperback reprint, the second such collection of the webcomic. Sort of an answer to the question of who is writing today's Hardy Boys or Nancy Drew? (Or if you are British, Famous Five by Enid Blyton?) *Bad Machinery* is (to me) oddly titled, but it is a series of mysteries for tweens or teens. Very British humor, with lots of cultural references he doesn't care if Chicagoans get. Relax, have fun, laugh anyway. Beast on the loose, eating toddlers, oh! Girls at fault? Will the boys solve it this time? Involves (not just girls as in Nancy Drew or boys as in Hardy Boys) a set of three girls and three boys, a matched set.

And Mildred's new dog Archibald. . . . that doesn't really seem to be a dog, that drinks tea out of a cup. It's important that we know Mildred has won a magic pencil at a carnival, there's bullies. But the main thing to know is that Allison is very funny, with gags on every page. He draws very well! And the characters, if a little snarky at times, are at base very warm and sweet. It's about relationships and jokes, really. And not just for kids (consider reviewer as source).
