



The Whites of Their Eyes

Andrew Clements , Adam Stower (Illustrator)

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Andrew Clements delivers the latest in his adventure-filled school series.

This could be the last great Memorial Day weekend on Barclay Bay, and Ben knows it. This time next year, he might not be able to stand in the yard of the Oakes School and watch the harbor shake off winter—boats buzzing just beyond the bulkhead and families spreading picnics in the fields. If the school gets torn down and replaced by an amusement park, the town will never be the same. But that's only *if* the school gets torn down. Ben and Jill are determined to keep that from happening. And the evil janitor Lyman has taken note. He's following their every move—and undoing their progress along the way. Good thing Ben and Jill have a secret weapon. (Who knew that annoying Robert Gerritt would be such a spy wiz?) But Lyman has a secret weapon as well: a vicious guard dog. These kids are smart, but can they outsmart Lyman—and his beast—as the clock tick, tick, ticks toward total demolition?

The Whites of Their Eyes Details

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From Reader Review The Whites of Their Eyes for online ebook

Clayton Sumner says

Are you an Andrew Clements fan? Do you like exciting adventures? Do you like to read mysteries? If you do, you should read the Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School series!

In the third book in the series, Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School: The Whites of their Eyes, Andrew Clements brings characters Ben, Jill, and Robert to life as they battle their new custodian, Lyman, to save their school from being destroyed to make an amusement park! Lyman was hired by the group that's going to run the amusement park and was told to stop anyone from saving the school.

I liked reading this book because I had lots of mental images. This was especially true when Ben, Jill, and Robert were in the secret compartment under the north stairwell in their school. This description tells when Lyman came with his guard dog. "And then everyone heard a door slam . . . and then the sound of footsteps . . . heavy steps with half a second between each one . . . the kind of footsteps a grown man would take . . . a tall man."

Does Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School: The Whites of their Eyes Book 3 sound interesting to you? Then what are you waiting for? Just go pick the series up at your local library or bookstore! The first book in the series is called Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School: We the Children and the second book in the series is called Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School: Fear Itself.

Jessica says

Narrator Review:

Overall, I thought that Keith Nobbs did a pretty fair job at narrating this book. His girl voices could use a little work, but then again it's tough to be a girlish girl when you have a deeper voice :). I accept that. His pacing is spot on, and I loved the way that he would pause for dramatic effect at important points. Nobbs also does a great job at intoning danger and excitement.

Audio Book Rating: 4/5 - It's a great listen!

Book Review:

First off I find it only fair to say that I wasn't really paying attention to the fact that this was the third book in the series. I'm a long time fan of Andrew Clements, and when I saw The Whites of Their Eyes I knew I wanted to read it! So, I picked it up. Unfortunately for me that meant I came in at the middle of the story. I'll warn you, this is not a stand alone book. I had to go back and pick up pieces from the other two in order to understand what was going on. If you're looking at this series, make sure to start from the beginning!

That being said, I was pleased to see that Ben and his friends fit so wonderfully into the world of Clements' writing. They are vivid, funny, and smart. His characters always know how to hold their own. In particular (and I may be a little biased) I loved Jill. She not only has the wit to keep up with Ben, but a lot of the good ideas they come up with start with her. These two are fun to follow, even when they head off into dangerous

situations. It's nice to see a female and male main character who both shine so boldly off the page.

The story does move a little more slowly than most books geared toward this age group generally do. There is a lot of historical background, and Ben does a lot of explaining about what his mission is. I had no problem with it as an older listener/reader, but I'm not sure that the younger audience would be as patient. Still, once the story picks up it does it very well! Clements' writing shines as Ben and Jill take off on a hunt for the ultimate treasure, and try to find a way to save their school from being torn down.

As a last comment, I really think that this installment should be coupled with the other two in one entire book. This was a short read, and it would be nice for readers to be able to get the entire story in one fell swoop. Despite everything though, I really did end up enjoying the story overall! If you have a young reader who loves adventure, pick up a copy of *The Whites of Their Eyes* and Ben's previous two adventures.

Steven R. McEvoy says

Having read 11 books by Andrew Clements in under a year I can now state he is one of my favourite middle grade authors ever. For the most part his books are a realistic fiction, but this series stretches that further than any other books of his I have read. This book represents the midpoint of this series, book 3 of 5. It follows directly after *Fear Itself*, which followed *We the Children*. In this volume the action really heats up and the days are counting down until The Oakes School will be demolished and the property turned into a theme park.

In this volume Ben and Jill are trying to follow the clues to the secrets that were left behind that were intended to save the school. But because janitor Lyman is onto them they need to expand the team. They bring in the least likely partner and Ben's lifelong rival, Robert Gerritt. And every time they think they have found something that will save the school, the tables get turned on them. And time is ticking away. And yet the kids are determined and even have a few adults on their side.

This book really begins to explore some deeper themes, we have Ben dealing with the separation of his parents and their imminent divorce. Also we have Robert who has lost both his parents and is being raised by his grandmother. And Jill is dealing with her parents constantly fighting at home. They are also trying desperately to save their school, and now Lyman has rigged the school with sensors and even a beast of a dog after hours. Their troubles just keep mounting up.

Adam Stower does dome wonderful illustrations to supplement the story. There are a number of full pages illustrations and also numerous smaller pieces throughout the book. And the story has really picked up its pace. Children will stay glued to the pages wanting to find out what will happen next.

Clements writes great characters. I often find myself thinking about characters from other of his books and wondering what they are up to now. With this being one of his only three series after finishing this volume I am constantly wondering what will happen next. In this volume we see some huge character growth, both in Jill and Ben, especially in Ben as he reevaluates his lifelong rivalry with Robert. Reading this book will likely spark some reflection in children, and how they relate to others especially those they struggle to get along with.

I have been hooked on Clements's books for almost a year now, and this series recently, I look forward to finding this series and reading many more books by this gifted storyteller.

Read the review on my blog [Book Reviews and More](#) and reviews of other books by Andrew Clements.

Barrette Plett says

Slow start, but the book picks up; the second-weakest of the series but, hey, you have to read them all to get to the conclusion.

Josiah says

Sixth-graders Ben and Jill have an indispensable new ally, retired janitor Tom Benton, in their quest to save the Captain Duncan Oakes School from the wrecking ball. They've also found a decent revenue source to fund their battle against the Glennley Group, a shady coalition of investors who've sunk millions of dollars into demolishing the school and building an amusement park in its place. Drafted into the resistance effort by the current janitor, Mr. Keane, shortly before he died, Ben and Jill have learned a lot about their centuries-old school's history and the unsavories conspiring to have the building razed. But even with everything they've uncovered, including the first "safeguard" hidden by Captain Oakes himself in the late 1700s, saving the school may be beyond Ben and Jill's capability. Lyman, who replaced Mr. Keane as janitor, is no faithful Keeper of the school in the tradition handed down by Captain Oakes through a lineage of janitors dating back to the establishment's founding. He's a Glennley spy and he's on to Ben and Jill, tailing them every chance he gets to thwart their efforts. They need more help.

Who can be entrusted with an oath as sacred as protecting the town's wonderful old colonial school? Jill selects one of their peers as a candidate and makes the suggestion to Ben, but he doesn't like the idea. The two of them alone are obviously in over their heads, but to confide in another kid, one they can't be positive is trustworthy? That could be the death blow to their undercover operation. Lyman makes inroads against them every day: spying, stalking, acting like a disinterested custodian when other students are around but using his size, aggressive demeanor, and connections with Glennley to intimidate Ben and Jill when no one's there to see. As much as Ben doesn't want to add a third member to their group, he reluctantly agrees, and the decision is arrived at none too soon. Tom Benton is a good remote consultant from his retirement home, but a fresh set of eyes, ears, and ideas inside the school is exactly what's needed to keep Lyman at bay, and the best part is, he doesn't know Ben and Jill have formed an alliance with a third student. That allows the "secret weapon" to search the school for additional safeguards and not be harassed while doing so. If they play their cards right and keep the third kid's identity under wraps, they'll have Lyman at a disadvantage.

But the nefarious janitor is a professional spy, and tricks concocted by even extraordinarily intelligent sixth-graders aren't going to fool him long. Every time Ben, Jill, and their mystery partner gain an edge, Lyman neutralizes it. He's playing for keeps, not going easy because his opponents are young, but Ben and Jill are just as committed on their side of the struggle. An incredible discovery beneath the stairwells at Captain Duncan Oakes School could be a gamebreaker, but its public revelation must be delayed until just the right moment to maximize its value. Concealing the find from Lyman will be difficult, but the fight to preserve the school—a fight that has seemed all but over several times—could be ready to swing in favor of the Keepers. Can three children pursued by an unscrupulous corporate henchman keep their cool long enough for the balance of power to shift?

"But all *he* could really do was his best, each moment. That was what mattered most—even more than the final outcome. Because the final outcome wasn't up to him alone."

—*The Whites of Their Eyes*, P. 206

You probably won't think highly of *The Whites of Their Eyes* if you read it as a standalone, but it meshes well with the other gears of the five-book series. The excitement level is nearly as high as the previous book's, *Fear Itself*, and the story ends in a discomfiting surprise to leave us urgently desiring to pick up book four and resume reading. Nighttime break-ins and chase scenes, face-to-face confrontations and technological espionage so sophisticated it unsettles us as much as Ben and Jill, all are part of this novel. I'd rate it two and a half stars, and it could have earned higher if it were more self-contained. The series is shaping up splendidly, an effective blend of treasure-hunt adventure and believable, likable characters, and I'll grab volume four, *In Harm's Way*, as soon as possible. If you like Andrew Clements's other work, you may find this series even more evocative and entertaining. I look forward to continuing it.

Miss Pippi the Librarian says

The last day of school is coming closer and Benjamin Pratt is running out of time. Jill and Ben need another Keeper of the School. Janitor Lyman is upping the game with technology and they need to outsmart him. The school and its history needs to survive!

With each new addition to Clements series, I am left on the edge of my seat. Clements is writing a series that is reminiscent of the serialized novels of the 1800's. Readers from the past would wait for book chapters to be printed in the newspaper. Once the complete story was finished, printers would publish the novel in several novels (think Charles Dickens). I want to read the whole book in one sitting and Clements is drawing the readers along so cleverly. Bravo! I cannot wait for the next installment!

Keith Nobbs returns to narrate the third Keepers of the School. With the first words, the characters spring back to mind immediately.

Reviewed from a library copy.

Linda says

This is book #3 in the Keepers of the School series. I was not impressed with book #1 and I don't own book #2. It didn't matter much in the scheme of things, though. I like this one a little more than book #1. I still dislike the fact that the story is told piecemeal and you have to read an entire series in order to learn the story. I don't have any more books in this series.

The gist of the series: Benjamin Pratt and his friends Jill and Richard are trying to save their Massachusetts harbor school, started in the late 1700s, from being torn down to make an amusement park. Some school children in the 1790s had set up safeguards to save the school if it ever should be in trouble. Ben and his friends are following the clues one by one but must avoid the janitor, who is a spy for the company who will build the amusement park. There were some more exciting scenes in this book.

Kidsbookworm says

I think this series would make a great read - aloud for kids over 3rd grade. This, the third one in the series, started a bit slowly, but it was very good. I am not sure that I liked the format of braking the story between books two and three. I think it would be better to finish number two and then immediately pick up The

Whites of Their Eyes so you didn't lose the continuity.

Clements doesn't bother with too much background story here; that's all right with me, as I find that tedious at times.

My DS read this before I did and he enjoyed checking in with me to see where I was in the plot. I love that enthusiasm for a story. We do not know how we are going to wait for number four, though!

I am going to recommend this right now to a young friend who is looking for a book to capture his imagination.

Reed S says

I recently started reading The Whites Of Their Eyes, by: Andrew Clements. I really like this book because it tells you the feeling of Benjamin Pratt as you read the story, with all of the heart pounding situations he goes through. I also really enjoy how Andrew describes the setting in a special way. This book has a lot of suspense in the right parts and little suspense in parts that don't need it. I hope that Benjamin and Jill, the other main character in the book, can somehow save the school. If I was in Ben's situation I would do the exact thing he is doing. This book really relates to my life because he is trying to protect the school with his life and I have been in situations like that such as sometimes I have to hide things to keep them safe from my parents or my brother. I can't wait to read more!

Brenda says

I can't tell whether I like this series or not. I can't tell exactly how it is going to go and I am not sure I like all of the twists and turns that are unfolding and connected. I guess that means it is a series of merit - I just wish I had decided to read it when I could begin it from start to finish.

I appreciate the connections to history. I really like how the characters grow and develop from book to book. They have gained dimension from one book to the next. I appreciate the family situations and diversity - they match the New England seacoast families I know too. I think kids can connect - I just want to know if the end stays true to the beginning. I'm not certain of that.

And I wonder about the history of the back story. Will we get to know and understand. How do human beings have that much compassion and fore thought over centuries?

Jesse heinz says

Plot

The plot starts in the Captain Oaks School and the kids are trying to save the school from the Mr. Lyman, the janitor. Mr. Lyman is trying to tear down the school and trying to build a carnival. The main characters are Ben, Jill, Robert and Mr. Lyman. They found a lot of money in the bank, 88 million dollars to be exact.

Personal Response

I like the book. It is a good book if you like mystery book. it is very interesting and it does not let me down.

The book is good if you like mystery books. The book is easy to read. The audience for this book would be younger people and teens. The book is little bit childish.

Heather says

Full Review at Little Red Reads: <http://littleredreads.blogspot.com/20...>

Heather's Review: This was my children's first experience with a full unabridged audiobook so I was curious how they would do. From the minute I put in on all was quiet in our car and they kept asking for more. We picked up the series with book three after Simon Audio sent us a copy for review and while we're missing a lot of the back story my children didn't seem to mind at all. The Keepers of the School start out as a team of two, Benjamin Pratt and his friend Jill. They are trying to save their historic school property the Oakes School from being destroyed and replaced by a theme park. Their biggest enemy... Lyman the school custodian who is spying for the ocean front land developers. Things get a little hard for just the two of them so they recruit class genius, Robert onto the case. Ben has to learn to work through his jealousy of Robert who seems to have it all-the clothes, the perfect sail boat and the brains. But as we all know things aren't always what they seem.

The author explores the effects of divorce and parental loss on children. He also adds fascinating tidbits of the history of transportation and the underground railroad which were our favorite parts of the audiobook. I wish Lyman had a more active role in the storyline so that the conflict was well established and a sense of tension was developed. But overall, I can't complain because my kids loved it! We can't wait until the next int he series. Thanks so much to Simon Audio for the chance to be introduced to the world of the Keepers of the School!

Content: some name calling and thoughts of violence by one of the boys

Debbie says

This is book three in a series written by one of my favorite authors of books for juveniles. I'll be honest, the first book did not grab my attention. The second book didn't do much for me either. This book, however, has increased my desire to continue reading as new books are released in the series. I'd say the whole thing just got off to a slow start. The plot is getting far more interesting as the two primary characters (Ben and Jill) decide to invite another person (Robert) on their mission to save the Oakes school from demolition to make way for a theme park. There is a lot more character development and more backstory revealed this time. Also, the main nemesis has some tricks up his sleeve and it's fascinating to see how the kids fight back. There's a thematic lesson too: never give up and stay positive.

Sydnee Andress says

I really enjoy this series by Andrew Clements. It is a great chapter book series for third and fourth graders. It

is full of mystery and the story line is very entertaining and children will like it. The plot is extremely suspenseful so the kids will continue to turn the page and finish the series. The two main characters are great role models for the children as well. They display great characteristics and are people that children can aspire to act like. Over all, I was very impressed by these chapter books. It was an interesting chapter book to read because along with the chapters there were little pictures occasionally on the pages that go along with the objects that the story is describing.

M. says

Book 3 of the series Benjamin Pratt and the Keepers of the School. Well written. My only problem with this book is that it doesn't stand alone--the reader should really start with Book 1 of this series to understand the story line from the beginning.

The story...The Oakes School, built in 1783, is threatened by a developer who wants to build an amusement park on its land as well as on adjacent ocean-front land. Benjamin Pratt and his friend Jill, the Keepers of the School and grade school students at the school, want to save it, the beachfront, and the harbor. Captain Oakes, the man who built the school originally, has left a series of clues (and money) to be found to save the school whenever it is endangered. Ben and Jill enlist another student, Robert, to help them and together they work to outsmart the developers and their spy, Lyman, the school custodian.

Other than some confusion in the beginning due to my starting this series with Book 3, I like the book. There's a lot of thinking and growing up when it comes to the interactions between Ben and Robert and between Ben and Jill, and there's a lot of cleverness in the three kids' detective work.

Probably for early 3rd grade and up, but younger kids who are good readers would also enjoy it.
