

# GARGANTIS

## Book Club Guide

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**There's a storm raging in Eerie-on-Sea. Has the mighty Gargantis come back from the deep...?**

When an ancient bottle is found washed up on the beach after a ferocious electrical storm, all the residents of Eerie-on-Sea seem to want it ... but should they in fact fear it? Legend has it that the bottle contains an extraordinary secret that spells doom for the whole of Eerie-on-Sea. Could it be true that the vast sea creature Gargantis has awoken from her slumbers, and is causing the large cracks that are appearing all across the town? Finding themselves entrusted with the bottle, Herbie and Violet discover they will need to ride the terrible storm and pacify the creature if they want to save Eerie-on-Sea from sliding into the ocean and being lost for ever.

**Taylor's magical touch makes you believe the impossible.**

**- CATHERINE DOYLE**

# Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about the book's cover? What did you expect from the novel based on the cover art? Did you find your assumptions were correct, or were you surprised by certain things?
2. Discuss the Gargantic Light and its role in the story. Where did it come from? How is it a significant part of the story? How would the story have been different if Herbie and Violet had never opened the glass bottle, and had given it to one of the other characters who wanted it instead?
3. Thomas Taylor draws on real sea creatures for inspiration when creating the magical creatures of Eerie-on-Sea. For example, Gargantis and the Gargantic Light have what is known as a symbiotic relationship, in which each creature relies on the other for help. Can you think of some real world examples of symbiotic relationships? What do they have in common with Gargantis and the Gargantic Light?
4. Gargantis also has a symbiotic relationship with Eerie-on-Sea. She depends on its subterranean caves for a place to live, and Eerie depends on her to hold up Eerie rock and prevent the town from falling into the ocean. What do you think the story has to teach us about our relationship with nature? Do you think there are parallels between the story and things that happen in the real world?
5. Herbie and Violet argue over who between them is Sherlock Holmes and who is Watson. Sherlock Holmes is a genius detective who stars in the *Sherlock Holmes mysteries* by Arthur Conan Doyle, and Watson is his friend who narrates the stories. Discuss the features of detective stories like Sherlock Holmes. In what ways is *Gargantis* similar to a detective story, and in what ways is it different? Do you think that Violet or Herbie has a greater claim to being Sherlock Holmes? Why?
6. "*When Eerie cat turns widdershins thrice, 'tis dreary luck for men and mice.*" Page 111\*. This is just one of many old fisherfolk sayings that appear in the book. Why do you think these sayings and traditions are so important to the fishermen of Eerie? Can you think of some examples of sayings or traditions that are important to your own family or community?
7. How does your opinion of Gargantis, or Gancy, change throughout the course of the novel? Think about when we are first introduced to her, and what we discover about her connection to Eerie on Sea and the Gargantic Light over the course of the story. What was the moment that made you change your mind about her?
8. "*There's always a hundred different ways to feel about the books that the mermonkey dispenses.*" Violet, page 351\*. At the end of the novel, different characters have very different ideas about why the mermonkey gave Herbie *The Cold, Dark Bottom of the Sea*. If you visited the Eerie Book Dispensary and the mermonkey dispensed Gargantis to you, what message do you think it might be trying to send? How would your feelings about the book change if you knew that it held a secret message just for you?
9. What impression do you get of Eerie-on-Sea from reading *Gargantis*? What do you think it would be like to live there, or to walk along the beach, or to visit Dr. Thalassi's museum and Mrs. Fossils's Flotsamporium? Do you think you'd enjoy living there? Would you prefer to visit in winter or summer?
10. How would the novel look from another character's point of view? Discuss how the book would be different if it were narrated by Violet or the Sprightning. How would it change further if narrated by a character with a very different role in the story, like Sebastian Eels or even Gargantis?

\*please check page references against a final copy.