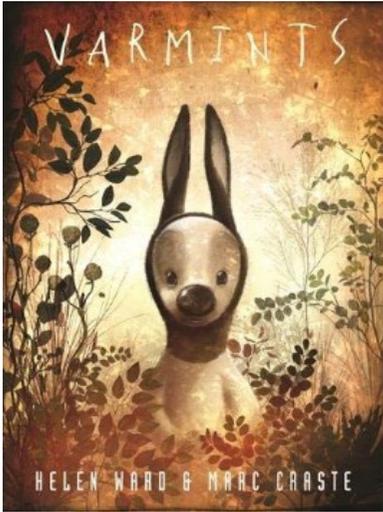


Varmints

By Helen Ward



Blurb:

The most overlooked threat in the world is that of the loss of peace and quiet. The Varmints come and build their city where once was grass. Before they realise what they have done, there is nothing but a huge dark city. Can someone find the time and space to stop, think and plant seeds of change?

What the Kate Greenaway Award judges said: 'A breath-taking and magical piece of work, that is wholly original and allows your imagination space to work. Craste makes outstanding use of light to haunting and often poignant effect.'

Key Information:

Plot: Once, the only sounds to be heard were the buzzing of bees in the grass, the murmuring of moles in the earth, and the song of birds in the sky. These warmed the hearts of those who cared to listen - until the others came to fill the sky with a cacophony of noise. With dramatically lit artwork and a spare, intriguing text, Varmints tells of a pastoral world in need of protection and of the souls who love it enough to ensure its regeneration.

Setting: Visual story telling

Themes: Reflection on the world we live in and the very real and philosophical challenges we face as a species. How communities—economic, socio-political, environmental— change over time (historical changes)

Key Characters:

Varmints	A mischievous creature
OTHERS	Unknown

Author Voice:

Helen Ward trained as an illustrator at Brighton School of Art, under the direction of well-known children's illustrators such as Raymond Briggs, Justin Todd, Chris McEwan and John Vernon Lord. In 1985, her final year at Brighton, Helen was awarded the first Walker Prize for Children's Illustration. Awards for Helen's work include The National Art Library Awards 1998 and 2001 for The Hare and the Tortoise and her version of Kenneth Grahame's The Wind in the Willows in the Templar Classic series, and The National Art Library Award for The Tin Forest.

Key Vocabulary:

wilderness	An uncultivated, uninhabited and inhospitable region
nurture	To take care of, feed, protect, help develop
mole	A small burrowing animal, small eyes, velvety fur
varmint	An obnoxious or irritating person/animal
gentle	Kind, mild temperament/character
watch	Look at, observe attentively over a period of time
care	Give protection, provide for

Key Quotes:

Every day there were more of THEM. Making more NOISE...

Listening less

Discussion Points:

- What does the story make you think about?
- Who are the OTHERS, where did they come from?
- Is it too late to make a change,; could change be effective?