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Ballywhinney Girl

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While Maeve and her grandfather are in the bogs near their home in Ballywhinney, Ireland, they find a mummified body of a young girl buried deep in the bog. Soon a team of archaeologists from Dublin arrives to investigate. They tell Maeve that the body is over a thousand years old. Maeve is unnerved and full of curiosity about the young girl. The archaeologists take the mummy to their lab in Dublin to run tests. They name her “The Ballywhinney Girl” and put her on display in a museum in Dublin. Maeve visits the body in the museum to say goodbye, but she likes to imagine her spirit walking on the bog and nights, carrying flowers as she goes.

Finding a long-dead body in a bog is likely a bit traumatizing for a young girl of Maeve’s age. This book does a wonderful job of detailing the importance and miraculous discoveries surrounding such a historical find, and what could have otherwise been somewhat “creepy” becomes a way by which Maeve is able to connect with the history of the place she lives. She finds herself imagining a life and a story for the young girl and feels that they share a connection. The book provides insight into the job of an archaeologist and how they use Maeve’s find to learn more about the past, and upholds a theme regarding the importance of studying the past.