



The Year of the Beasts

Cecil Castellucci , Nate Powell (Illustrations)

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Every summer the trucks roll in, bringing the carnival and its infinite possibilities to town. This year Tessa and her younger sister Lulu are un-chaperoned and want to be first in line to experience the rides, the food... and the boys. Except this summer, jealousy will invade their relationship for the first time, setting in motion a course of events that can only end in tragedy, putting everyone's love and friendship to the test.

Alternating chapters of prose and comics are interwoven in this extraordinary novel that will break your heart and crack it wide open at the same time.

The Year of the Beasts Details

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Author : Cecil Castellucci , Nate Powell (Illustrations)

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From Reader Review *The Year of the Beasts* for online ebook

Patrick says

A strange bird here. A story with chapters of YA novel alternating with chapters of graphic novel.

Both stories are related, but the time frames don't mesh. And while the YA novel doesn't have any element of the fantastic involved, the graphic novel is full of mythic elements.

First, let me say that I've enjoyed a lot of Castellucci's work in the past. Good storyteller.

Second, I admire the hell out of her for being willing to take a risk. For being willing to try something new and different. I don't think I've *ever* run into something that was half-comic half-novel before.

That said... I don't know how successful it was.

Speaking only from my personal experience, I picked up this book thinking it was going to be a comic with an element of the fantastic. This was reinforced by the title and the cover and my previous experience with Castellucci as a comic writer.

When I opened up the book and it looked like it was mostly text.... I was disappointed, and I put it aside for over a year.

Then, when I started to read it, I found it hard to shift gears every chapter. Moving not only between comic and raw text, but between two stories featuring the same characters, but one of them full of fantastic elements, and the other perfectly mundane.

The story did come to good resolution. The relationship between the two stories becoming clear, fruitful even. But that doesn't retroactively remove the frustration I felt through most of the book.

It's possible that the true audience of this book, younger readers, would have less of a problem with this shifting of gears. They are more limber of mind and less set in their ways. They have fewer expectations crudding up their potential enjoyment of things.

In the end, I enjoyed it about 3.5 stars worth. Rounding up to 4 because I admire anyone willing to do something genuinely new and different.

Melki says

I was a teenage gorgon!

Fifteen-year-old Tessa spends her time brooding about WHY Charlie, the attractive, popular boy, prefers her younger sister. In the meantime, she finds possible true love, or at least LUST, with Jasper...but, dammit! He's not socially presentable.

Wow! Such problems...

Maybe I'm just too old for this book. I no longer find teenage-girl-angst charming. I find it gratingly tedious. But my biggest problem with this one is that Tessa seems to have NOTHING ELSE going on with her life.

I was one of the angstiest teenaged girls ever! I spent hours upon hours in my room, brooding over why boys, even the nerdy ones, didn't like me. **BUT**, that wasn't ALL I did. I read books, drew pictures, listened to record albums (yes, I'm THAT old!) and used my roll-on deodorant as a microphone to belt out those tunes to my imaginary adoring masses.

Tessa does none of this. Her only hobby, other than ruminating, seems to be plotting revenge against her sister.

The book alternates chapters, one prose, one graphic novel. The artwork is nice, but the story, not so hot. It's honestly not very well written. None of the characters come alive and begin to breathe. The ending is horrifying and wrenching...(view spoiler), but that's apparently what it takes to bring Tessa out of herself. She shakes her snakes dreads, pastes a determined smile on her face and carries on, brave girl. She's going to be okay, people.

The drama, the drama!

Jo says

I wish I had some kind of superpower that allowed me to touch a book and get a feel of how much it was going to destroy me.

[Also, wouldn't that make an incredibly geeky fantastic TV programme ~~that only I would watch?~~]

Because I thought that this book was going to be a sweet book about first kisses and sisters and lovely things. And it was.

But it was also the kind of book that punches you in the gut.

Multiple times.

And then just as you've got your breath back?

BOOM.

That's it slapping you in the face.

I'm kind of tempted to leave this review there because that's basically how I'm still feeling about this book and I finished it a good few days ago. But I like the sound of my fingers tippy-tapping against my keyboard.

This book is *so* clever. I didn't really understand the connection between the two alternating chapters (one is written in prose and the next is a graphic novel), and I can understand why people wouldn't really like the style, but it didn't bother me at all especially when the pictures looked like this.

Gorgeous, right?

And the thing about this book is that I can't even say that there was a huge twist. Because it was right there in front of me from the beginning.

But that's all I'm saying.

This book was genius and I'm *still* feeling a little wobbly with surprise at the turn of events.

I picked up this book because I was feeling sorry for myself and wanted a gentle book that was the equivalent of a literary cuddle. Instead I got a punch in the face and a broken heart and it was *excellent*.

I received a copy of this book from the publishers via Netgalley.

You can read this review and lots of other exciting things on [Wear the Old Coat](#).

Sarah says

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