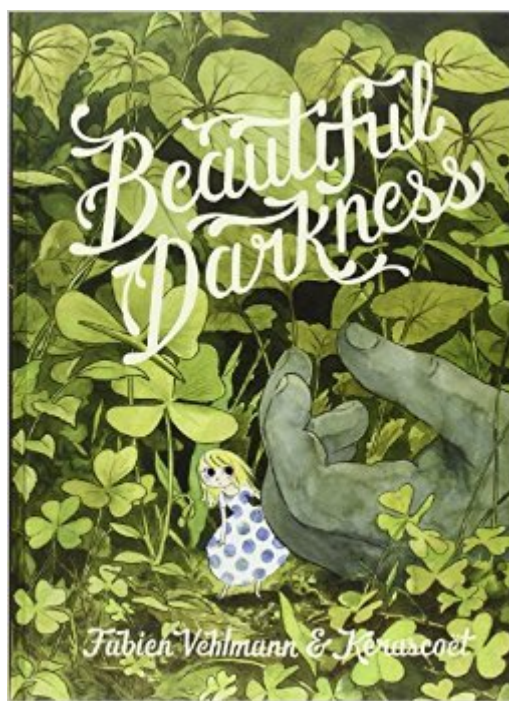


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Beautiful Darkness



Synopsis

BEST OF THE YEAR NODS FROM .COM AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY!"Kerascoët's | render Aurora and her friends in the huge-eyed style of classic children's book illustrations, but cuteness is just another Darwinian survival strategy here. Even on her clover-high scale, as Aurora discovers, romance is decided by social pecking order and murderous deceit."â •Douglas Wolk, New York TimesKerascoët's and Fabien Vehlmann's unsettling and gorgeous anti-fairy tale is a searing condemnation of our vast capacity for evil writ tiny. Join princess Aurora and her friends as they journey to civilization's heart of darkness in a bleak allegory about surviving the human experience. The sweet faces and bright leaves of Kerascoët's delicate watercolors serve to highlight the evil that dwells beneath Vehlmann's story as pettiness, greed, and jealousy take over. Beautiful Darkness is a harrowing look behind the routine politeness and meaningless kindness of civilized society.

Book Information

Hardcover: 96 pages

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Product Dimensions: 8.3 x 0.6 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (68 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #100,796 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #25 inÂ Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > Drawn and Quarterly #149 inÂ Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Literary #386 inÂ Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Fantasy Graphic Novels

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

This is a stunning book - the beautifully painted pages make it one of the best looking comics I own, and I've collected French, American and Japanese comics artists for 30 years. Usually I'm not really a fan of painted comics - often it results in a heavy-handed look that's artistically inferior to dynamic pure cartooning. But here it works - mostly because Kerascoët (A French husband/wife team) knows when to go for a beautiful realistic look, and when to use cartoonish characters. As for the

story - it's just brilliant. This is a very dark book - the art looks cute when you thumb through the pages, but make no mistake this is not a book for kids. This is like David Lynch and Hayao Miyazaki collaborating on a dark update of "Lord of the Flies" featuring fairy tale characters. And yes, there are flies here. And.... not a rotting pig head. It's something worse..... And don't expect everything to be explained - the narrative deliberately leaves things out. The book should appeal to people (like me) who get off on cuteness and pure darkness played up against each other. And fans of David Lynchian graphic novels like Charles Burns' "Black Hole" and "Exed Out" and Chester Brown's "Ed The Happy Clown". I'm happy to hear that this has reached the New York Times bestseller lists (probably due to Internet-savvy 'gothic' types sharing art samples online) - it deserves to be a future classic.

(Spoilerless review) This graphic novel starts out with little explanation as to who the characters are, how they got there, or what they're doing. But the story telling is so involving that you'll ultimately not care, with both writing and art that is fast paced and engrossing enough that by the time you realize the beginning was not a dream sequence you're already off and running into the next surprise. When you reach the ending you'll realize nothing was explained along the way, but will be strangely OK with it. The story centers around what appear to be a bunch of small fairy-tale type folk who live in the woods. Or are they dolls come to life? And where did they come from, and how long have they been there? They almost feel as if they have just recently arrived, and at times you wonder if the small female lead is some manifestation of the real world body of a dead girl that is near their homes. As the only ethical person in the lot, she takes up the mantle of provider, trying to help others in this "lost boys" tribe of immature and bratty wee-folk, just as the decomposing dead body helps the nearby animals of the forest floor. Fans of Vertigo's "Fables" will like this, particularly those who think that long running series is now growing a little stale and could use a shot of creativity like what is on display here. The painted color artwork is often cartoony but still proficient, and works well with the little houses and their interiors for animals (think David Peterson's "Mouseguard" series, "Stuart Little", "A Cricket in Times Square", "The Rescuers", etc.). It also provides a nice foil to this fairy tale like story that starts out sweet but quickly turns the darkest shade of black. A strangely satisfying book considering it seems like it is both missing a beginning and leaves you wanting more at the end. Originally published in France, this english hard bound version comes in at 94 pages. No information on the writers or artist is included, making who put this book together and what else they have worked on almost as much of a mystery as the story they wrote. If you're looking for something fresh and new this is a great way to go.

I'm really not sure exactly what I just read, but I really enjoyed it and will soon inflict it upon unsuspecting friends and loved ones. Very interesting and beautiful stylistically, but super unsettling.

Writer Vehlmann and the husband and wife artist team Kerascoff don't magnificently twist the classic children's story The Borrowers into a dark allegorical tale. Seemingly abandoned in a forest, princess Aurora and friends struggle for survival against creatures, both real and magical, and each other. Vehlmann and Kerascoff successfully incorporate well known elements of fairy tales—fey princesses, a noble prince, talking creatures, giants, little people, and witches—to great effect in their anti-fairy tale. The duo reveals and revels in the demented underbelly of the fairy tale: cannibalism, mutilation, deceit, and more. Kerascoff's amazing watercolors portray a lush world that is simultaneously beautiful and terrifying. The multi-layered Beautiful Darkness expertly provides an intelligent and nuanced view of the consensus reality.

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