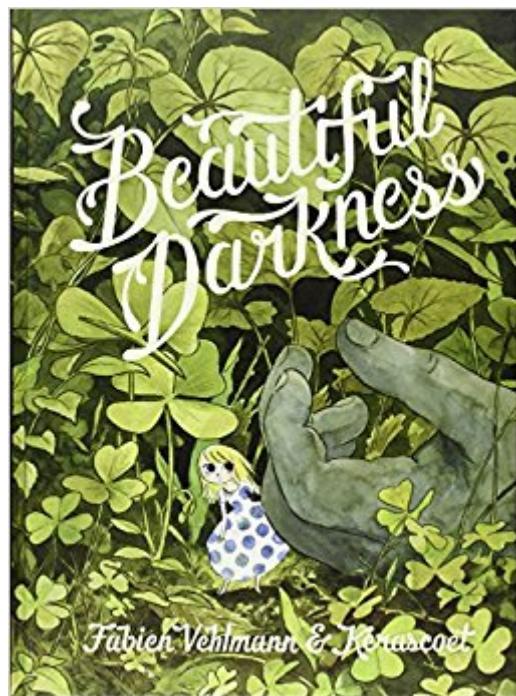


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# Beautiful Darkness



## Synopsis

BEST OF THE YEAR NODS FROM .COM AND PUBLISHERS WEEKLY!"Kerasco'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."•Douglas Wolk, New York TimesKerasco'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 Kerasco'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

Publisher: Drawn and Quarterly (February 25, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1770461299

ISBN-13: 978-1770461291

Product Dimensions: 8.3 x 0.6 x 11.2 inches

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

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 84 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #63,788 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Publishers > Drawn and Quarterly #120 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Graphic Novels > Literary #226 in Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > Fantasy Graphic Novels

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Gr 9 Up "What starts as a common fairy tale trope "Prince Hector and Princess Aurora are having tea the day after a ball" quickly turns dark and disturbing. The prince is charming but self-absorbed, and the princess is somewhat flighty and unprepared, when the ceiling appears to fall in, and they find themselves in a dark forest filled with other refugees, all Borrowers-small. While Aurora and her friend Plim adapt to their surroundings, taking charge and feeding the others they

have found, Hector is only concerned with staring into space. None of the characters notice the dead body that they are playing on and living around (a human-sized girl, also named Aurora), and do not question where the items they are using are from (quite possibly the corpse's purse). The forest's animals do not speak, distancing this from other fairy tales. The end does not find our characters rescued but living in the shack of a hermitlike human man, referred to as a giant. The artwork is cartoonlike and colorful, in contrast with the morbid and macabre tone. All of the protagonists are wide-eyed, though the animals and bodies are drawn realistically. Purchase where teens like their graphic novels and fractured fairy tales on the dark side.â "Suanne B. Roush, formerly at Osceola High School, Seminole, FL

When Princess Auroraâ ™s world implodes, she puts her courtship with the handsome prince aside to help make a life for herself and the other fairylike folk of her kingdom who inhabit this gorgeous, brutal book by award-winning French writer Vehlmann (*Isle of 100,000 Graves*, 2011). In scenes that mirror the worst of human behavior, the more Aurora blithely goes about putting things in order, the more those around her scheme, betray, belittle, and disregard everything our morality tells us the characters should care about. The delicate, haunting, and beautiful watercolor artwork by KerascoÃ«t helps to enhance the fairy-tale setting, juxtaposing the small, petty characters perfectly against the lush blues, greens, and purples used to create the huge forest that surrounds them. The result is a story that shocks as it entertains and is predictably unpredictable. As the seasons turn and wide-eyed Aurora loses her amiable innocence, the reader is left not knowing whether to cry or cheer when Aurora finally decides sheâ ™s had enough. --Eva Volin

(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 ordered this for my 12 year old daughter and it was way too dark and creepy for her. The illustrations are beautiful but this book is not for children.

All things considered:- the art really is incredibly gorgeous.- the story and execution is successful in that is GREATLY disturbed me, which is what it intended to do.- I think what keeps me from loving it is that at many points the characters are inconsistent: at many points it lost track of characters' motives and drives. For example, at some point they found something gross and then at another point they found something equivalent to be no biggie.- I think the author did a good job portraying cruelty but when no one around is bothered by it, it becomes banal and that detracts from the shock value. So yeah, I have mixed feelings. I'm also forever scared.

A wonderful story. Beware, when it says "Haunting" they really mean it's quite scary. This is not for your children as other reviewers have said! Definitely for teens or very mature/dark story loving preteens. This book really makes you wish for more, perfect marriage of cute, pretty art with dark, grim storytelling. The story starts off unassuming but beware, it gets good later on. As other reviewers have mentioned, this book is VERY French. The storytelling can seem aimless at times but it's more like a small collection of snippets from a long movie. Personally I love this style of comic but I can see why others wouldn't. They really got the child-like perspective down, very akin to Lord of the Flies. And even if you don't like the story, just look at that amazing art! Just wonderful watercolors.

Beautiful watercolor graphic novel that will have you asking lots of questions after finishing reading it. The book itself has lots of nice little details everywhere and i love the artist's art style.

This book is beautifully tragic and captivating. To think a Thumbelina like world could have such twisted little creatures with distorted morals and goals and doing everything to achieve them, going so far as to deceive their own peers to take advantage is an astonishing concept. The trivialization of violence and death are also abridged in depth with the themes within the book. The lack of boundaries and morals make for a perfect and beautifully done comic!

It was beautifully made and time was put in but this one just didn't sit with me. I admit my 3 star is based purely on my dislike of the story personally, not as a true critique of the book itself. I bought this for the loss of innocence story and got more than I bargained for. The images stuck with me and not in a good way. I bought this with Emily Carroll's "Through The Woods" which is much more my speed. So reader be warned, if you want a scary and disturbing read this may not be the book you think it is.

Lovely book but way too intense and creepy for most kids. Im not sure what age they would be Ok with it, but not 3. My 3 years old likes dark-ish stories (kettle Witch) but I decided not to show this one to here (dead little girl decomposing through story). Looks like a great story but not for kids, which maybe is obvious to everyone but me. Just FYI.

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