



City of the Beasts

By Isabel Allende

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But there are many secrets hidden in the unexplored wilderness, as Alex and his new friend Nadia soon discover. Drawing on the strength of their spirit guides, both young people are led on a thrilling and unforgettable journey to the ultimate discovery. . . .

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Adventure seekers will find plenty of thrills in Allende's first novel for young readers. When 15-year-old Alexander Cold is sent to stay with his eccentric, gruff grandmother, Kate, while his mother is being treated for cancer, he is more than a little reluctant to accompany Kate on a writing assignment in South America to search for a legendary nine-foot-tall "Beast." However, once the expedition down the Amazon begins, Alexander's doubts are pushed out of his mind by more immediate concerns, such as keeping an eye on two suspicious members of the party: a native named Karakawe and Mauro Cari as, a wealthy entrepreneur. After Alexander's mysterious encounter with a caged jaguar, another teen, Nadia, explains its importance to him, and begins calling Alexander "Jaguar." This marks the beginning of their somewhat surreal journey: the two teens are kidnapped by the "People of the Mist," a tribe possessing the power of turning invisible, and enter a mountain to discover the mythical city of El Dorado and the enigmatic "Beasts." Reluctant readers may be intimidated by the thickness of this volume, but the plot moves at a rapid pace, laced with surprises and ironic twists. The action and outcome seem preordained, cleverly crafted to deliver the moral, but many readers will find the author's formula successful with its environmentalist theme, a pinch of the grotesque and a larger dose of magic. Ages 10-up.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 7-10-In her first novel for younger readers (HarperCollins, 2002), Isabel Allende creates an authentic South American world, this time in the Amazon rain forest, and combines it with mythical realms of the imagination. California teen Alexander Cold embarks with his rather stern and prickly grandmother Kate, a writer, on a trek to locate a legendary Yeti-like Beast of the Amazon. An egotistical anthropologist, two photographers, and a guide with a teenage daughter fill out the official party. They are joined by a rich Amazon adventurer with villainous intentions and a doctor whose job supposedly is to carry protective vaccines to any native population. The story develops jungle and expedition details as well as cultural and economic conflicts with a mysterious People of the Mist very well. But the travels of the young people alone into the territory of the People as well as that of the giant Beasts are full of mysticism and fantastic happenings. Just when one twist of the plot seems to be reaching a resolution, two or three more arise, creating layer upon layer of incredible events. Narrator Blair Brown creates subtle voices and distinguishing accents for all the characters. Her rendering of unfamiliar native words is excellent, and this feature will be helpful to listeners who might come to a frustrated full stop at seeing the words in print. Her convincing reading is a real asset. A short appropriate musical passage plays at the beginning and ending of each side of the tape. The lengthy, complex plot may limit the audiobook's appeal. The story is noteworthy for its portrayal of the region and its problems, but unusual in its reliance on the supernatural and mystical. It will appeal to teens with an interest in the rain forest and a taste for the fantastic.

Jane P. Fenn, Corning-Painted Post West High School, Painted Post NY

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 9-12. Acclaimed author Allende's first YA novel, part thrilling survival adventure, part coming-of-age journey, blends magical realism with grim history and contemporary politics in a way that shakes up all the usual definitions of savagery and civilization. Alex, 15, has been wrenched from the safe boundaries of his California home to accompany his journalist grandmother, Kate, on an International Geographic Expedition deep into the heart of the Amazon jungle. They are searching for a legendary beast, a gigantic, possibly humanoid creature that has been glimpsed in the area. The setting is more than background here: it's the heart

of the story. The Indian People of the Mist, who have lived in the region since the Stone Age, are now threatened by adventurers and entrepreneurs who want the land and its riches. There's some plot contrivance as Alex and a local girl each go on a vision quest to save the Indians; and some expedition members seem like caricatures--the buffoon anthropologist, the idealistic physician, the hard grandma. But the characters are also funny, angry, and needy, and they surprise even themselves. Caught by the young characters and their wild adventures, readers will race through this for the story, then stop and think about the issues of wildness, survival, and the nature of beasts and humans. *Hazel Rochman*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Corey Valenzuela:

Do you one among people who can't read gratifying if the sentence chained from the straightway, hold on guys this particular aren't like that. This City of the Beasts book is readable by means of you who hate the perfect word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable looking at experience without leaving also decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer involving City of the Beasts content conveys the thought easily to understand by most people. The printed and e-book are not different in the information but it just different such as it. So , do you still thinking City of the Beasts is not loveable to be your top collection reading book?

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Randy Hunter:

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James Martin:

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