

City of the beasts



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of the Beasts By Isabel Allende Harper Collins, 2002 416 pages Good Family relationships, friendship, good versus evil, environmentalism Fifteen-year-old Alexander world's change when her ill mother was brought to New York for her chemotherapy treatment. He was forced to live with his uncommon grandmother Kate, who is a writer for the International Geographic magazine. Alexander then finds himself with a team set for the jungles of Amazon in search of the "The Beast", the tropical version of the Big Foot. City of the Beasts takes us from the modern day highly urbanized setting to the primitive Amazon. It talks about the friendship of Alex and Nadia, the twelve-year old girl who is the daughter of the team's guide. The story also recounts the Alex and Nadia's encounters with the "People of the Mist" and their efforts in saving these people from the true reason of their expedition. The book is a magical journey into the heart of the jungle as well as Alex's journey towards self discovery under the most unexpected circumstances. Nadia and Alex both find their inner strengths through visions and their interactions with the tribe. Through their encounters with the "People of the Mist", City of the Beasts encourages readers to look beyond what is seen by the naked eye and listen beyond what the ears can hear. City of the Beasts clearly reveals that there is beauty even in the evil looking creatures and how people are easily swayed by outside appearance of individuals. Listening by the heart is also shown as a way to understanding things which cannot be fully grasped by our senses. The story also revolves on the painful realities of the worlds such as racial discrimination, catastrophic decisions on the environment, abuse of power, and corrupt officials. However, though the story is crafted with essential lessons it also has some pitfalls. The book drew a picture of the world based on popular clichs. All the

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modern persons in the story are depicted as destructive and tough, sometimes to the point of being inhumane. Some readers may also find the story boring as a lot of pages is devoted to the description of the Amazon. Allende also became bold in her storytelling and failed to sugar coat the story.

I believe that one of the most essential aspects of a storyline is being able to leave the readers good thoughts to ponder after a reading journey. Allende was able to accomplish this by setting out a story which mixed fantasy with reality and enriched with lessons from cover to cover.