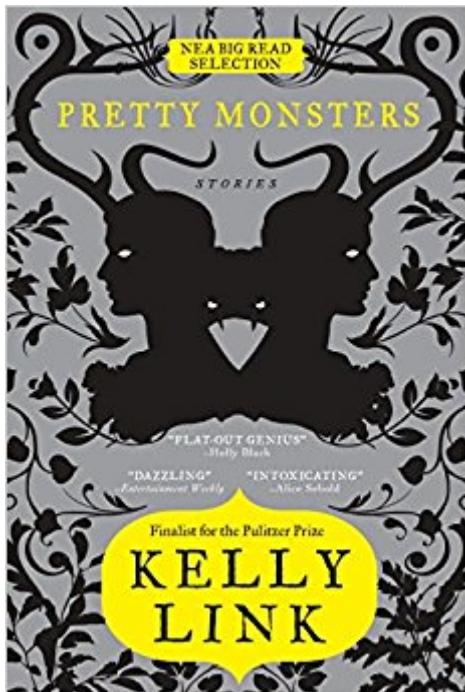


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# Pretty Monsters



## **Synopsis**

The crossover literary sensation...now in paperback! Through the lens of Kelly Link's vivid imagination, nothing is what it seems, and everything deserves a second look. From the multiple award-winning "The Faery Handbag," in which a teenager's grandmother carries an entire village (or is it a man-eating dog?) in her handbag, to the near-future of "The Surfer," whose narrator (a soccer-playing skeptic) waits with a planeload of refugees for the aliens to arrive, these ten stories are funny and full of unexpected insights and skewed perspectives on the world. Kelly Link's fans range from Michael Chabon to Peter Buck of R.E.M. to Holly Black of *Spiderwick Chronicles* fame. Now teens can have their world rocked too!

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 740 (What's this?)

Paperback: 416 pages

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Shipping Weight: 12 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 36 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #97,989 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #62 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Short Stories #382 in Books > Children's Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Spine-Chilling Horror #460 in Books > Teens > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Horror

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Starred Review. Readers as yet unfamiliar with Link (*Magic for Beginners*) will be excited to discover her singular voice in this collection of nine short stories, her first book for young adults. The first entry, *The Wrong Grave*, immediately demonstrates her rare talents: a deadpan narration that conceals the author's metafictional sleight-of-hand (Miles had always been impulsive. I think you should know that right up front); subjects that range from absurd to mundane, all observed with equidistant irony. Miles, hoping to recover the poems he's buried with his dead girlfriend, digs up what appears to be the wrong corpse (It's a mistake anyone could make, interjects the narrator),

who regains life and visits her mother, a lapsed Buddhist (Mrs. Baldwin had taken her Buddhism very seriously, once, before substitute teaching had knocked it out of her'). Other stories have more overtly magical or intertextual themes; in each, Link's peppering of her prose with random associations dislocates readers from the ordinary. With a quirky, fairytale style evocative of Neil Gaiman, the author mingles the grotesque and the ethereal to make magic on the page. Ages 12-18. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Grade 9 Up. In her first collection of stories for young adults, Link upends traditional horror, science fiction, and fantasy motifs, creating original, quirky, and distinctly beautiful literary landscapes. Honed, brilliant language renders blood, werewolves, ghosts, magic, and monsters sublime--at times even funny. Readers will relish uncertainty in these savory, strange stories and never feel quite sure of their footing. They proceed giddily, jumping from one uncanny premise, phrase, or image to the next, eventually stumbling upon a revelation that hits them like the snap of a rubber band. Clever resolutions and tricky plots place teens on delightfully circuitous reading paths. Unexpected endings force them to double back and reconsider each story from the beginning. In this second read, young adults might notice Link's seamless incorporation of their own experiences. Awkward adolescence, uncomfortable first love, frustrating parents, and complicated friendships surface quietly amid wonderfully knotty, twisted plots and incandescent imagery. This compilation of intricate, transfixing selections succeeds in making the weird wonderful and the grotesque absolutely gorgeous. Shelley Huntington, New York Public Library Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an alternate Paperback edition.

Kelly Link is one of the most brilliant writers of experimental sci-fi/fantasy/horror I have ever read (I have indeed read a few). Her dialogue is natural but much more than "real life" conversation. Her prose is effortless; she evokes place and plot, character and theme while never putting in an excess word, but seeming to put in all the words there are, but also just the right ones, only the right ones. In "The Faery Handbag," the narrator's grandmother claims she was born and raised in "Baldeziwurlekistan." The narrator fusses that it isn't a real place. The grandmother responds, "They call it something else now...But I think it's important to remember where we come from. I think it's only fair that I get to use Baldeziwurleki words [in Scrabble]. Your English is so much better than me. Promise me something, mouthful of dumpling, a small, small thing. You'll remember its real

name. Baldeziwurlekistan. Now when I add that up, I get three hundred and sixty-eight points. Could that be right?" Might it become important for the narrator to keep this promise? You'll have to see, but in any case, read Kelly Link's stories. Some are better than others, but all of them are well-crafted, marvels to look at, if not to--never to--live in.

I love this book. Kelly Link is one of those absolutely adept authors who can change how you view fiction. "Magic for Beginners" is nothing short of brilliant, "The Wizards Perfil" is haunting, "The Faery Handbag" is utterly charming. I wish more people were reading (and writing) YA fiction like this, these compelling stories are full of fantastical happenings anchored by real angst, love, human curiosity, and humor. If you're looking at this as a potential gift for a YA reader, GET IT. If you're looking for stories that will infuse a little bit of magic into your life, GET IT. If you're looking for sexy smut, STAHP, you've browsed too far, you know this is a YA book, right?

Rarely do I encounter a collection of short stories that I can read in one sitting, but Pretty Monsters is one of those collections I gobbled up in one bite. Link's voice is so incredibly well crafted from story to story that it's easy to disappear into the worlds of Perfil or the Faery Handbag or an episode of The Library or Costa Rica. Ms. Link has just earned herself a lifelong fan. I'd recommend this to anyone who likes a fairy tale with a darker edge.

Kelly Link is just simply amazing. She's definitely one of the authors to watch these days, and her tales never cease to intrigue and captivate me. With Pretty Monsters she ups the ante even further, delivering some seriously wonderful tales. If you're on the fence about this one, don't be - she delivers and then some. Click away, you won't regret it.

Kelly Link is so special in her writing, because she dares to be different from other writers, she has her own, awkward style, which blends into and makes every story she makes into something uniquely special. Like a treasure, to be enjoyed but also to push the boundaries of how you understand the world. Keep it up. Another gem from you!

I love Kelly Link's short stories. They are so very unique and in a class by themselves. Fantastic writing. It's amazing how she can create these ideas and put them into words and make it all work so well.

Link fans will not be disappointed. Once again, Link astonishes and satiates with creative, perfect prose, creating characters and tales that reflect worlds beyond planes. Pretty Monsters is not for the faint of heart.

Fun stories! I didn't realize this was a "teen" book. As an adult in my 40's I loved it as much as a young adult would.

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