



Guignol: A Tale of Escalating Horror

Brett Schwaner

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From the darkness! From the eternal night! The theater students of the art academy of Sainte Jeanne d'Arc present, for the first time ever... GUIGNOL! A Tale of Escalating Horror!

It was supposed to be an ordinary Halloween play, but for Mae and her new friends, the horror suddenly seems all too real...

Brett Schwaner and Keith Hogan present the debut of an all new illustrated tale of terror with an unexpected twist.

Guignol: A Tale of Escalating Horror Details

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Author : Brett Schwaner

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From Reader Review **Guignol: A Tale of Escalating Horror** for online ebook

Jeanette Andromeda says

Take “Interview with a Vampire”, mix it with the twisted Halloween flair of “Trick R’ Treat” and add some splashes of “Let the Right one in” for flavor. Ok, now take that resulting ominous, yet festive, mixture and place it into one of the most vulnerable moments in your life. That’s right, middle school. That’s the quick way of describing what you should expect from **Guignol**. But just on the surface.

There’s a web of choices and consequences that tie together all of the dark moments in this story and they all start with one lonely girl becoming friends with the mysterious new kid who’s catching everyone attention, Lily.

There’s this beautiful, almost hopeful span of time where the girls of the story become a tight group of friends. And then things start changing. They start transforming, and everything in their worlds unravels in ways that left my mouth hanging wide open.

The pacing is a huge part of why this book was such a fantastic read. You know how classic horror takes it’s time, building up the world, the characters and the atmosphere before starting to allow the supernatural to creep up on you in the night? This book has that same slow build up of dread that you usually see in classic horror. Where, straight off the bat you know this isn’t going to end well, but you can’t even imagine how badly it’s going to go. Think- the Picture of Dorian Gray.

A cast of vivid, believable, three dimensional female characters?!

Hells yeah! It’s about damn time a book properly captured the broad spectrum of emotional complexity young girls truly have. We underestimate young girls a lot of the time as does literature. But they are complex creatures at this stage of life. Forming their sense of right and wrong. Figuring out who they are and how they fit into the world. Understanding loneliness, isolation, and the deep seeded need every human being has to have friendship in their lives. And I can see this mix of complexity in each of the characters of this book.

Some give into their darker sides, tossing aside their moral compass in favor of feeling true power over the predators in the world around them. Others, fight with what they are experiencing, and question the peer pressure they are under.

These dynamics makes for a very interesting read, where you’re constantly on edge, wondering what each character will choose, and what they will do.

A little illustration goes a long way. This may be the most biased part of this review, given that I am an illustrator, and passionately believe that art can massively enhance the way you experience a story but... The addition of Keith Hogan’s artwork massively enhanced this story.

I enjoyed the cartoon quality of the artwork in this book. Mostly because the style of it almost tricks you into thinking it’s a heartfelt tale of horror meant for a younger audience. It’s really not. The artwork, much like the story itself, starts off in a more realistic place and then grows the supernatural elements as the horror escalates. I really enjoyed seeing some of the more pivotal moments drawn out.

It made me pause.

Which I rarely do while reading. I tend to speed-read my way through books in less than a day. (That's how I'm managing a book in a week atm.) But the artwork took those moments where you need to reflect and forced you to take a breath. it allowed you to experience the moment on a deeper level.

I read this book, looking for flaws and instead I found a tale that was fresh, gruesome, and poignant. One that reminded me of some of my favorite stories and left me wondering, "what's going to happen next?"
