



2017

A Taste For Monsters

Tessa McMillan

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McMillan, Tessa (2017) "A Taste For Monsters," *Children's Book and Media Review*: Vol. 38 : Iss. 7 , Article 57.
Available at: <http://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/cbmr/vol38/iss7/57>

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Book Review

Title: A Taste For Monsters
Author: Matthew J. Kirby
Reviewer: Tessa McMillan
Publisher: Scholastic Press
Publication Year: 2016
ISBN: 9780545817844
Number of Pages: 352
Interest Level: Young Adult
Rating: Excellent



Review

Evelyn must escape the merciless London streets for her survival. Hiding her disfigured face and hungering for asylum, Evelyn seeks employment at the London Hospital. The hospital has a position working for someone else hiding from the world: Joseph Merrick, the Elephant Man. Evelyn is scared by the hideous being, but she grows to love and respect the childlike man inside the malformed body. After a few months, she and Mr. Merrick are visited by several female ghosts, the recent victims of the new serial killer Jack the Ripper. These visits sap Mr. Merrick's strength and he begins to decline rapidly. If Evelyn doesn't resolve the final wishes of these women, Mr. Merrick will die. As Evelyn appeases each victim, Mr. Merrick improves. However, the latest victim has other intentions. Using Evelyn as a vessel, they follow the Ripper's tracks and find that the killer is really a psychopathic midwife. During their pursuit the midwife is killed in an accident and the ghostly visitations finally end.

Kirby's story is a supernaturally satisfying thriller certain to keep readers up through the night as they follow Evelyn's misadventures. Life has not been kind to Evelyn. London's brutal streets has cost Evelyn her family, her face, and her happiness. She comes to the London Hospital hoping to hide her own pain as she helps others to heal. When Evelyn is given the position as Mr. Merrick's maid, it turns out that her own marred looks lead to a strong friendship with the misunderstood Mr. Merrick. He teaches Evelyn that there is still hope and beauty in the world, even if people reject or shun her. This sensitivity draws the wandering Ripper victims to Evelyn and Mr. Merrick. Mr. Merrick cannot physically handle their ghostly presence and he begins his own decent to death's door. The thought of losing her friend spurs Evelyn on to face the unforgiving London streets again. This time she is armed with insight to know who the real monsters are in her world. A rich murder mystery for ages fourteen and up.

*Contains mild violence and mild graphic images