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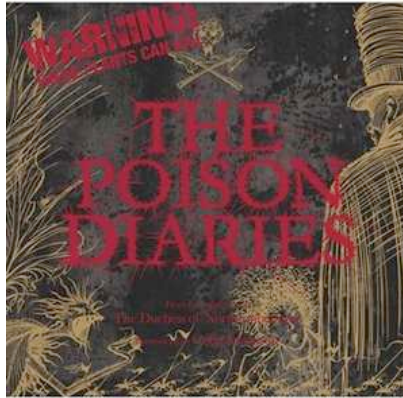
The Poison Diaries powered by BlogBurst

POSTED: Thursday, August 23, 2007

FROM BLOG: [AmoxCalli](#) - Book Recommendations in fiction, non-fiction, graphic novels, children and YA literature and poetry.

The following blog post is from an independent writer and is not connected with Reuters News. The opinions and views expressed herein are those of the author and are not endorsed by Reuters.com.

The Poison Diaries
Author: Colin Stimpson, Duchess of Northumberland, Jane
Publisher: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
ISBN-10: 0810993147
ISBN-13: 978-0810993143



The Poison Diaries is one of those books that you can't help gazing at again and again. Story aside, the book is gorgeous. Rich, pastel like drawings that cover every inch of the page make it captivatingly sumptuous with all the style of an old-fashioned, Victorian herbal.

Each plant is lovingly drawn in great depth and detail and the book appears to be a kind of field guide to the plants in a garden as you first flip through it. Then you start to notice that the plants have almost human characteristics that they appear to be not only alive, but also malevolent. My first reaction was to stop flipping through it and start back at the beginning.

The story unfolds as darkly gothic as something from out of Lovecraft. The story is of an orphaned boy named Weed who works in his cruel master's poison garden tending to the plants. He discovers that he can hear the plants talking and they him.

The plants are evil creatures who adore telling tales of the manner in which they kill. They goad Weed and try and encourage him to kill his master, glorifying murder and offering justification. He refuses to go along with them until one day he finds that his only friend and true love Marigold has experimented with one of the poisons and dies. With Marigold's death, Weed unravels, sinking into a madness that the plants feast on and use to control him into doing what they want which is to kill.

I was completely caught up in the story even though I tend to shy away from very violent books and this is violent make no mistake about this. It is violent and graphically so. Still, the story is a good one, riveting though chilling. I have a feeling there will be more stories about Weed and his plants in the future or at least there should be given that the book left me wanting more.

I'm fascinated by the fact that the author was once a Disney animator. I could completely see this story animated although certainly not for children. It would make a very dark, very interesting film I think. The Poison Diaries comes highly recommended.

Book Description from the publisher:

This truly gothic tale—a "facsimile" of Weed's journal found at Alnwick Castle, in England—is not only a story of the battle between good and evil, but an educational parable of the curative and lethal properties of plants.

Weed—an orphan boy who apprentices with an evil old apothecary—is both used and abused. His journal is part botanical workbook and part diary of his own relationship with poisonous plants.

Weed discovers that he is one of the few people whom the plants talk to, and they try to persuade him that, with their help, his master can easily be disposed of. Although he refuses at first, after Weed's first love, Marigold, experiments with the poisons and dies, he is pushed over the edge and plots to kill his master with a taste of his own evil medicine.

Each chapter of the story begins with Weed's botanical notes: a plant's appearance and properties, where it is found, how it should be cared for, the most poisonous parts, and how

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poison is extracted and administered. Accompanied by Weed's sketches of the plants in their natural form, his diary also reveals the "real" personalities of the plants.

About the Author

Jane, Duchess of Northumberland has long researched poison gardens. She is responsible for creating the Poison Garden at Alnwick Gardens in England, which opened in 2004 to worldwide acclaim. The Poison Garden is the culmination of her life's goal to teach children and adults alike the curative and lethal properties of poisonous plants. Colin Stimpson worked as an animator at Steven Spielberg's Amblimation studio in London and then at Disney Feature Animation in California.

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