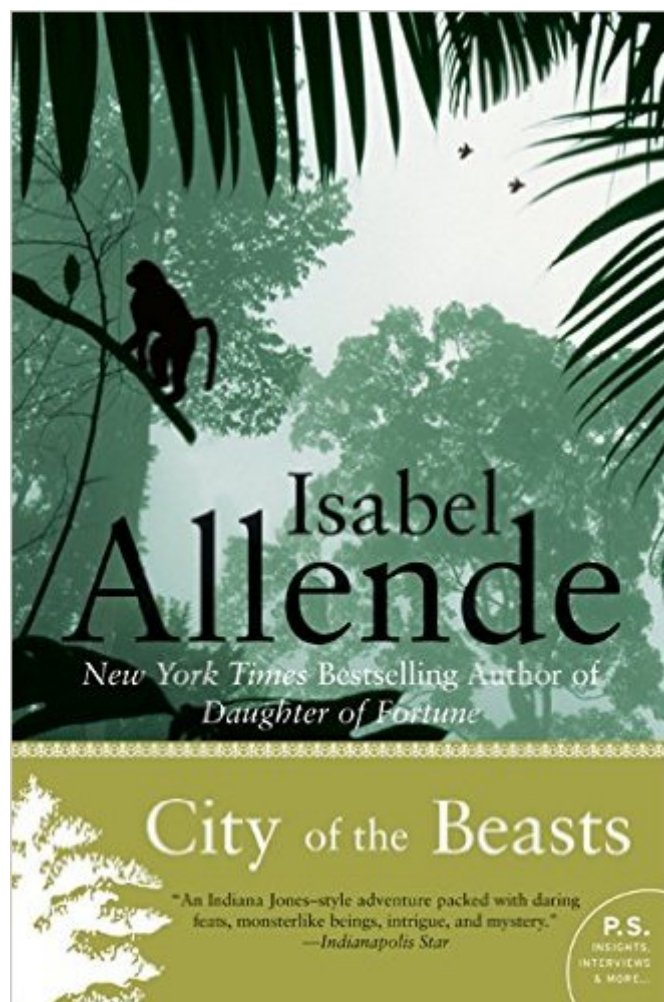


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# City Of The Beasts



## Synopsis

Equal parts magical realism and deft political commentary, *City of the Beasts*, the first novel of Isabel Allende's page-turning adventure trilogy, takes young Alexander Cold on an adventure in the to find the legendary Beast and its home, El Dorado. Available in trade paperback for the first time, this exciting coming-of-age novel from Allende, acclaimed author of *The Sum of Our Days* and *The House of the Spirits*, is an "Indiana Jones-style adventure packed with daring feats, monsterlike beings, intrigue, and mystery." (Indianapolis Star)

## Book Information

Paperback: 448 pages

Publisher: Harper Perennial; Reprint edition (November 3, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0061825115

ISBN-13: 978-0061825118

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (139 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #92,860 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Central & South America](#) #37 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Caribbean & Latin American](#) #1733 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Action & Adventure](#)

Age Range: 12 - 17 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

## Customer Reviews

This story follows a somewhat formulaic path for children's fantasy-- unfamiliar lands, mythical creatures, the skeptic that doesn't believe in said mythical creatures, the caricatured villain that you know is the culprit, a people that need to be saved, and the all-important prophecy about the chosen children. This in itself doesn't make the book bad of course, since a good writer can make even formulas entertaining. Allende is a decent enough writer that *City of the Beasts* is an enjoyable read. The invention of the beasts definitely shows imagination. If you're looking for a good, subway read, this is it. There are a couple of overall flaws however that stunt its potential.<sup>1</sup> Allende misses out on some of the nuances of a good resolution (see Diana Wynne Jones' *Power of Three* or *Homeward Bounders* for an example of such resolutions), which are vital to the best fantasy. Part of Jones'

secret is that she demystifies the fantastical, without taking away its danger or magic. A less-skilled fantasy author depends heavily on mystique to hide the formula.<sup>2</sup> Allende doesn't transfer to children's books what she understood perfectly well in *House of Spirits*--that readers will be drawn to hard characters without token words of kindness to soften them up. We don't have to like characters like Kate. We have to react to them. Overall, the book is imaginative, but in the post-Dahlian age of Tim Burton and *Shock-headed Peter*, softening a book for young readers is out of place. Summary: *City of the Beasts* opens with Alexander Cold resenting the changes in his family now that his mother has cancer. His parents send Alexander to stay with his anti-cuddling Grandmother Kate while his mother undergoes chemotherapy.

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