



Dear Creature

Jonathan Case

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Deep beneath the waves, a creature named Grue broods. He no longer wants to eat lusty beachgoers, no matter how their hormones call to him. A chorus of crabs urges him to reconsider. After all, people are delicious! But this monster has changed. Grue found Shakespeare's plays in cola bottles and, through them, a new heart. Now he yearns to join the world above.

When his first attempt ends... poorly, Grue searches for the person who cast the plays into the sea. What he finds is love in the arms of Giulietta—a woman trapped in her own world. When she and Grue meet, Giulietta believes her prayers are answered. But people have gone missing and Giulietta's nephew is the prime suspect. With his past catching up to him, Grue must decide if becoming a new man means ignoring the monster he was.

Rising from a brine of drive-in pulp and gentle poetry, Jonathan Case's debut graphic novel *Dear Creature* is the love story you never imagined!

Dear Creature Details

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Author : Jonathan Case

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From Reader Review Dear Creature for online ebook

Keli says

What a hilarious love story between a mutant sea monster who speaks in iambic pentameter and an agoraphobic recluse. The art is detailed and the story is full of real whimsy. You have the traditional 1950s B horror movie playing out in the background with the bizarre love story taking the main action. Very clever and tons of fun!

Brenda says

What can I even say about this gem!? It is everything I've always wanted in a romance, lol! It was perfect! Humorous and exciting, thought-provoking and so very sweet and sincere. I need to add this to my collection to reread at my leisure. This graphic novel makes me incredibly happy. I want to find Mr. Case and hug him for writing this.

And the art! The inking! I adore black& white comics - this was drawn with whimsy and attention to detail and I loved the style. It was almost a nod to the old pulp stories without ever coming across as sarcastic or ironic. The stark pictures were never unclear or obtuse. Really really enjoyed this book!

Mark Victor Young says

So much good stuff here! Great artwork, funny dialogue (even the Shakespearean stuff), talking crabs... but the story felt wrapped up rather than finished. Look forward to other work by this artist. Read this one entirely on the strength of the intro by Craig Thompson. He was right about the art and the creativity. Just wish it had a more satisfying ending.

Christian Lipski says

Portland author and illustrator Jonathan Case probably has a quick pitch handy when asked what his new book Dear Creature is about, but it's doubtful if there's any one sentence that can capture everything about the story. "A mutated sea creature who learns about human life from scraps of Shakespeare plays sealed in bottles and eats young teens who draw him in with their hormones falls in love and risks everything" isn't perfect, but it's at least getting close.

Case's monster Grue is an emotionally tormented beast, filled with unrequited love and nobility while at the same time driven by his desire to eat humans. His highbrow aspirations are balanced by his three crab companions, more interested in their next meal than the next page of *The Tempest*. The earthy trio are reminiscent of the bats from Walt Kelly's *Pogo*, B. Witchd, B. Othered, and B. Mildred. Their conversations with each other and with Grue provide a counterpart to the monster's flowery speech.

Although Grue is besotted by the Bard, he is no perfect character, being a stranger to the ways of real-world

humans. The creature finds himself making plenty of wrong turns in his attempts to locate the source of the literary soda bottles. And then there's that whole "eating people" thing to contend with. But no one in Dear Creature is exactly what they appear to be, so why should Grue be any different?

Case presents Grue as one of the oddest sympathetic characters in comics, whose single-minded courtship is aimed not only at his mysterious benefactor, but at the reader as well.

The art of Dear Creature is sharp and effective. Case's use of only blacks for shading is a tricky road to head down, but it works to grand effect. Santa Lucia captures the spirit of a 1960s seaside town perfectly, and especially monster movies of that era.

Grue's cartoony features make it easy for Case to have fun with expressions, such as a wide-mouth "ta da!" for a recently-unconscious cheerleader, but his human faces are equally as emotive, their facial details standing in contrast to the simpler lines of the monster. There's a touch of John Severin there; a combination of contours and white space.

There's not one boring panel in Dear Creature -- Case knows how to add eye candy in the background when the foreground is static, and the reader will enjoy re-reading for details later.

For a creator with relatively little on his comics resume -- a segment in Comic Book Tattoo, last week's Green River Killer -- Case has started off at full speed. Dear Creature hits each mark it aims for, and makes the reader hungry for more.

(reprinted from <http://www.examiner.com/comic-books-i...>)

Sandra says

One of the stranger things I've ever read...

Joe says

Great idea, but it felt a bit rushed. Could have definitely used a bit more character development. I really wanted to enjoy Grue...but there just wasn't enough there for me to care about him.

Crystal says

A quirky, quick little read.

I thought there could have been a little more build up explaining Grue's learning English and understanding of Shakespeare. How could he understand written language by finding it in a bottle with nothing to model from?

I do love, however, that the heroine is not a beach bunny, cheerleader, or prom queen. That she is more of an elder Ophelia character...

Leona says

Maybe this genre isn't my favorite? I have to say though, what drew me into this book was the prospect of Grue, a sea creature who normally ate hormonal lovers but now wishes to find a companion of his own. I wanted to know more about Grue, but his Shakespearean vernacular was difficult to understand (haven't been in practice), requiring I either re-read the text or read it slowly.

I also felt that I didn't get to know the characters as much as I like, especially Grue's love interest Giulietta. Is that how graphic novels are like? I'm not too sure, but there's something about the characters I want to know more about... which left me a little dissatisfied.

I do like the concept very much, and hope the humor remains in the next copies of the book (actually there may have been a little too much dry humor in there???)

Mike says

A sea monster who learned to talk like a Shakespearean actor, two crabs with witty senses of humor, and a torrid love affair between a monster and a lunatic - now that's a story! Plus, the artwork is excellent. I cannot wait for more from Jonathan Case.

Jack Haringa says

It's hard to believe something so accomplished in art, design, and writing is a debut work, but such is the case with Jonathan Case's *Dear Creature*. It's a beautiful love letter to B-movie plots and monsters, to Shakespeare, and to comics themselves. The glorious black-and-white artwork evokes both the '50s creature features that serve as the underpinning of the story and the classic horror comics of the same era that provide its template. You can't go wrong with this wonderful work.

David Schaafsma says

I think this sounds a little bit better than it actually is; or another way to say it is that it has a lot of great moving parts that don't quite add up to a great whole. What is it?

*A graphic novel, with clear and strong black and white drawing

*An homage to late fifties/early sixties B horror films and comics

*A love letter to film actresses of that period, in particular Giulietta Masina, great actress and Federico Fellini's wife.

*A tale of an atomically mutated sea monster named Grue who comes out of the sea to devour young lovers on the beach, but who is also a romantic, who wants to be redeemed through the love of a woman.

*A tale of agoraphobic recluse Giulietta (Juliet!) who sends scraps of Shakespearean plays to Grue, who hereafter speaks in iambic pentameter

- *A tribute to Shakespeare, with references and allusions throughout
- *A torrid love affair. Grue has to overcome his gruesomeness to become Giulietta's lover. So it's a monster-human romance (though without tentacle sex). More along the lines of Swamp Thing, or Beauty and the Beast.
- *A tale of two witty crabs who provide comic relief
- *A tale of the past coming to haunt the present. Tragedy looms. Can Giulietta accept the monster he once was, or forgive? Can you believe I am even wrote that line, seriously??!

And a whole lot of weirdness, some uneven writing and lack of characterization. A quirky romance, truly original, Case's debut novel, re-released in this deluxe hardcover with a few appendices. I'd say 3.5, rounded up for surprising first novel illustration quality and originality.

Pauline says

I was extremely excited to win this as a Goodreads Firstreads giveaway. I love graphic novels and the content of this graphic novel sounded really interesting. When I finished it I thought it was a fairly cute and interesting story-nothing astonishing. The reason behind this was the simple fact that I didn't like Grue as much as I should have. This can be attributed to the fact that I thought his character was not as developed as I would have liked it to be.

There should have been a bit more on Grue's decision of whether or not to continue eating humans. This is a big part of his life and I felt that it was not handled well. Also, the sudden decision that Grue was in love with Giulietta was sudden. I can see if this was taken from Shakespeare and his tendency to have people fall madly in love at first sight, but in this case I was left disappointed.

Rick says

In his love letter to the 50s monster movie, first time graphic novelist Case introduces a unique protagonist. The amphibious mutant Grue speaks in Elizabethan iambic pentameter. As with many characters that speak Shakespeare, the creature develops a romantic attachment for a damsel in distress. Aided by symbiotic crab companions, Grue moves beyond his beastly nature, morphing into the hero no one thought he could be. Case's witty script, combined with his comedic art, ideally emulates his source material with action, adventure, and romance. The entertaining volume concludes with the amusing "An Invertebrate's Guide to Iambic Pentameter."

Kristen says

Such a fun read. I described it to donee as "kind of like if Ariel was a man eating monster, and had a better vocabulary."

Tristan Yi says

This was definitely a quality graphic novel about love, language, and life. The protagonist, a carnivorous and eloquent sea mutant, was surprisingly relatable, and the whole story was intriguing. Dear Creature is a very funny and strangely honest portrayal of outcasts in society who just want to celebrate their love and eat horny teenagers. Dear Creature is entertaining and memorable. The writing is fluid and electric, and the art is exquisite. The whole medium was just great. This is a book for anyone who likes Shakespeare, love stories, monsters, or all of the above. Delicious!

I received a free advance copy.
