



## The Beckoners

*Carrie Mac*

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## **The Beckoners Carrie Mac**

When her mother suddenly moves them to a new town, Zoe is unhappy about leaving behind what passes for a normal life. And when the first person she meets turns out to be Beck, who rules her new school with a mixture of intimidation and outright violence, she is dismayed. But she has no idea how bad things will get. Unsure of herself and merely trying to fit in, Zoe is initiated, painfully, into the Beckoners, a twisted group of girls whose main purpose is to stay on top by whatever means necessary. Help comes from unlikely quarters as Zoe struggles to tear loose from the Beckoners without becoming a target herself, while also trying to save April - or Dog, as she is called - from further torment. A chilling portrait of the bullying and violence that is all too common in schools, The Beckoners illustrates the lure of becoming tormentor rather than victim, and the terrible price that can be exacted for standing up for what is right.

## **The Beckoners Details**

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## From Reader Review The Beckoners for online ebook

### Lena says

This is one of those books I've picked up several times at the library, but never opened it because I'd never heard of it. So even though it sounded good, I'd end up reading something else I got at the same time. Silly me.

Here is this undiscovered gem of a book. All I kept thinking as I listened to it was, HOW THE HELL IS THIS BOOK NOT A PRINTZ AWARD WINNER!!!!???? It is so good, and exactly like what they always pick. Except way better. I know it doesn't have the best reviews, but THIS BOOK ROCKS!

It was so grungy and grimy and sad and brutal and depressing and just all around...amazing. One of those books that, as I read, I kept thinking, "Man, I wish I'd written this book." Not in the way of, "I could have done it better," but in the way of, "I wish I was Carrie Mac."

I will never understand why this book isn't rated higher. I loved it. I loved the characters, I loved the evilness of children portrayed here. It's like a modern Lord of the Flies, about bullying and bad parenting and reality. And girls. And cruelty. And conformity. People have complained that it's written strangely, but I had the audio and couldn't tell (and sometimes, you can...ahem \*sarahdessen\*). It sounded great to me. I liked the reader, and the prose flows well. People have also complained that it dealt with too many issues, but I didn't even notice. I was too busy going squee squee squee all the way home.

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### Todd Lavilla says

I think that this book was a bit slow in the beginning, but towards the middle of the book it got more interesting. The things that the main character, Zoe, went through was picture clear. The thing I most enjoyed about the book is the ending. She was given a sword which I personally think translated into courage. She used her sword to stand up and fight against the bully group, The Beckoners. I think this is a great ending because she was able to free her friend from the group. Especially with her sword, it shows that Zoe is truly a hero for standing up against these bullies. I also enjoy the character development. Zoe at first, was very quiet and listened to everything that she was told to do by the beckoners. But towards the end of the story, she was brave enough to stand up for herself.

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### Sara says

The action in this book propels you forward through the raw violence. A very powerful and brutal story - but I wonder if Carrie Mac tries to do too much. It's almost as though you could run down a check-list of all the YA literature themes: bullying, gang violence, animal cruelty, abandoned father, irresponsible mother, alcoholism, caregiver to younger siblings, homosexuality, rape, etc. All that aside, this would be a definite winner among YA audiences - definitely a page-turner.

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### **Shannon Rickert says**

Ok so Im astounded by this book. I, I, I this was an awful book to read. I mean you read or some of us read of bullying all the time, but this Oh MAN this is unbelievable. How did the Beckoners (group of girls) get away with so much dreadful, hateful crap especially in school. Holy Moly!!!! I just im in shock right now. I don't know if i should cry more or sit here with my mouth hanging open. When I mentioned to Shane about some of the stuff in the book, he wanted to know what type of person could write something like this. They way they just kept escalating and graphic and . Ok so yes this goes on in real life I get it but whoo hoo, I don't ever want to read this books again. I can't believe I read the whole thing but I wanted to make sure that April would be ok and that the Beckoners would be brought to justice.

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### **Trudi says**

This book made me so uncomfortable for so many reasons...gritty, raw, powerful. At times I almost felt complicit in the brutality and dehumanizing actions of the Beckoners. Mac's immense talent is obvious; she remains in total control of her narrative and I as a reader was swept along for the ride, grimacing, white-knuckled, and nauseated, all the way to the bitter end. My one criticism is that the ending seemed a little too "and they all live happily ever after" for me. Perhaps Mac felt she had put the reader through enough and this was her way of apologizing...of offering a message of hope and optimism. But for me the almost trite resolution seemed out of place in a novel so fierce in its unflinching look at teen violence -- how savage, tribal and unrelenting it has become.

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### **Tina Ihas says**

My son read this book in grade 9 English and hounded me to read it.

Im giving it 4 stars even though I did notice some grammatically imperfect sentence structures and I pretty much hated all the characters it did involve a powerful response and I know I'm going to think about it going forward.

It is a sad a disturbing book with, to me, and unsatisfactory resolution. If you have kids this book is going to bother you like a mosquito that buzzes around but never really lands.

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### **Alicia says**

The opening bullying scene is shocking and a little gratuitous although I understand the shock value and when Zoe gets involved and becomes a "Beckoner" (one of the girls in Beck's posse) she realizes that it was a mistake. Their overt disgust for another classmate, their tendency toward violence and aggression and their attitudes are enough to scare anyone and hope that there really aren't teens out their like them.

It's a sick story of bullies, specifically girl bullies who will stop at nothing to torture others. The middle gets a bit dramatic, but in the end, the good guys win (sort of).

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## **Sarah says**

Well, I didn't blog about this for a few days and I've already forgotten most of what happened. A girl moves to another town, again, but this time she falls into the wrong crowd. Beck is the ringleader and she is the type of bully who is the most popular girl in school. She's cruel and takes out much of her frustration on a mousey girl nicknamed Dog. Dog and the main character are forced together by house proximity and working on the newspaper. When the main character attempts to "get out" of the Beckoners, she finds that it's very difficult. The bullying and hazing seemed real--but the very end of the book doesn't seem like it would work. You'll see what I mean. I loved the cover and back-piece of the book, but Orca still needs to work on typeface and text placement on the page--it just doesn't feel comfortable. I felt like I was reading an advanced reading copy instead of a published book.

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## **Victoria Waddle says**

Everyone calls April "Dog." She's been bullied all through high school. From being forced to eat a whole box of dog biscuits and retching in the hallway to being beaten within an inch of her life, April has endured the unendurable quietly, hoping to disappear from the Beckoners' radar. The only good thing in her life is her real dog, Shadow, who follows her everywhere ('shadows' her) and loves her without reserve.

Zoe is the daughter of an alcoholic mother (Alice) who jumps into and out of relationships with various men. She spends a lot of time listening to self-help tapes and uses the jargon not to help herself, but rather to point out how others can help her and themselves at the same time. Along with Zoe's baby sister Cassy, the family of three is always on the move. Zoe is primarily responsible for Cassy as Alice is usually off with a man, hung over, or at work.

When Alice moves her family of three to Abbotsford, Zoe is picked by the Beckoners, headed by Rebecca "Beck" Wilson, to be one of their gang. The fact that Zoe falls in with them is a matter of circumstances. She never wanted to be a part of a gang, and she is sickened by some of the vicious things they do, particularly to April. But she's afraid not to join, and, once in, she doesn't know how to get out without risking her life. The last girl to try had her head shaved and tattooed, after which she disappeared.

Zoe is able to make a few real friends. There are Simon and Teo, a gay couple who have their own set of problems fighting prejudice, but who understand just how much trouble Zoe is in. And there's also Leaf, the editor of the school newspaper. When Mrs. Henley, the English teacher, has an anonymous essay contest to pick the next editor of the paper, April wins. This throws Zoe and April together, even though Zoe has helped to antagonize April in order to stay in Beck's and the other Beckoners favor.

Mac does a great job of building the tension in *The Beckoners*. What happens to Zoe and April continues to build in danger as Beck appears to be something of a psychopath. The final torment of the girls, particularly April, is tragic. This is a true bullying book and very realistic. I recommend it for all teens.

High school housekeeping: Carrie Mac is the author of several books in the Orca Soundings series for reluctant readers. *The Beckoners* is a step up in difficulty from these books. For teens working to improve their reading skills (Read 180, etc.), reading this novel is a great opportunity because you'll have an author

that you know and like, a subject that is riveting, and you'll see how well a character can be developed in a work that's a bit longer. This is a great read for all teens, but I'm particularly going to talk it up to those working on improving their reading skills.

One minor criticism (and it is minor): I think that two of the main characters have names that are too much alike—Alice and April. Sometimes I was reading and then realized I had the wrong character in my mind's eye. My reading of the book would have been smoother with different character names.

NOTE: This review is also posted on my blog [School Library Lady](#).

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### **Me says**

The only reason I really read this is because it was on tumblerreads.

I've already read *The Opposite of Tidy* by her and didn't particularly like it. Once again I didn't really like this book.

The plot was hard to believe, and the character's POV made absolutely no sense. Why Zoe's POV, it really lacked a lot. Plus there are these words in the writing that I saw that were just there to create a 'teenage' feel which was very fake.

Next time I will find something else to read.

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### **Faith Daugherty says**

The main character is very brave to deal with what she deals with throughout this story

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### **Samantha says**

I really like reading bully books. This might sound really weird, but bullying is just such an interest topic to me. I love getting a look into the brains of the tortured and their tortures (although most bully books are in the point of view of the bullied). These are usually the books that I don't want to put down until I know every last detail. *The Beckoners* by Carrie Mac took the world of bullying to a whole new level.

*The Beckoners* is about sixteen year old Zoe whose slightly unstable mother moves her family around A LOT. With another move comes another new school. Zoe kind of falls into this vicious clique (or small gang, whichever you prefer) called, you guessed it, *The Beckoners*. Lead by the always brutal Beck, this group of high schoolers teeter on the fine line between bully and criminals. Zoe quickly realizes she does not want to live the life of a sixteen year old gang member. The need to get out is intensified by her growing friendship (?) with *The Beckoners* favorite victim, April (also known as Dog). However, once initiated into *The Beckoners* it's not so easy to get out.

This book had me pacing and clenching my fist the whole time I read it. I am a big fan of a book that stresses me out (in a good way) while I read it. If I am so invested in a book that I don't even want to sit down then

it's a good one.

I have never read characters as crazy as Beck and her followers. I had to keep reminding myself that these are 16 YEAR OLD GIRLS. What? That's insane. I have never in my life met a 16 year old girl as intense and terrifying as Beck. Maybe I just grew up in a nice little happy bubble with nice bullies? No, I just think these girls are psychotic. That being said, they were so interesting to read! Also, Zoe was a great main character. Mac really captured the thoughts of a girl who is used to moving. A girl trying to muddle through high school and the dilemma of which side of the line was better to be on: the victims or the bullies. Mac shows that not everything is as black and white as it may seem. We get to see Zoe's whole thought process. Zoe had to learn who she really was and what she wanted to stand for. Although, Zoe does have a little life in the Beckoners I think she is a great role model.

The plot of this story was great. There was never a dull moment. Like I said, I was literally pacing while reading parts of this book. The book opens with an introduction to Beck and Dog before launching into Zoe's story. And it's probably one of the nicer things she does to Dog in the whole book. It's a great introduction to just how crazy the book gets.

I give *The Beckoners* by Carrie Mac 4 out of 5 stars. I would highly recommend this book.

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### **Laura Lynn says**

This book took me long to finish, simply because every time I'd pick it up to read it was just too negative and violent and I didn't want to be in the head space. Sure, that's a personal thing, but as someone who was bullied throughout childhood (thankfully not as violent as in the book), it brought back a lot of memories I've tried hard to forget. Really wasn't happy with the way it ended, too depressing. I understand that (unfortunately) stuff like this happens in real life, but I felt like it was way too much for such a short book. I also couldn't connect with the main character. Why would you purposely go straight to the gang - lead by the same girl who was threatening toward you and your baby sister a day or two before - and join them? I had a feeling I knew how it was going to end, and sadly I was right. I was dreading reading that part.

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### **Danielle says**

What I didn't enjoy about this book was how stubborn her mother, Alice, was for not taking Zoe's opinion for staying at one house until she graduates from high school. I also disliked the bullying of the beckoners for Zoe to join their "group" and become one of them. This made Zoe take risks such as branding herself as one of them and starting bad habits.

What I enjoyed about this book was the tension between Zoe and her mother. She dumped her old boyfriend before they moved and started a new romance behind her back. Also, I liked how throughout the story you found out more of the beckoners past and how they joined the group. Zoe's best friends, Simon and Tio, always have Zoe's back and help her realize who her real friends are. Lastly, I love Zoe's secret romance that brews up with a guy named Leaf and he helps her to get out of the beckoners group and to live her life.

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## **Maya Martin says**

I read the prologue of this book and was blown away by its naked and raw approach in showing bullying. I connected with the protagonist/ victim "Dog" and found the four or so pages truly heart wrenching. Therefore, I couldn't wait to read on and finish the book because I thought, as would be expected, that if the prologue was that good, the rest of the novel would be even better. I was sorely disappointed. As I read, my heart sank. For although the plot line of a gang of girls who torment a shy outsider is semi-interesting and the character "Dog", who, strangely enough, isn't the protagonist throughout the rest of the story, is intriguing and captivating as your inner voice (you know, the one that has the strong need to give advice to the characters in the novel you are currently reading, in order to create the ending that you think is appropriate) urges her to stand up for herself, and find a way out of this school-age hell, the real protagonist, Zoe, a new girl, has a weak voice as a narrator that thinly strings the story along. I found the descriptions vivid, but not beautifully written. The book was lacking something that I could never quite put my finger on. Overall, I think the book might have been more interesting if the point of view had switched off between Zoe and "Dog," For I realize that the aspect of the book that made it so interesting and different was that the narration came from not the victim, but the person caught in between being a victim and the bully. I really wanted to like this book, the concepts behind the story were interesting, but they weren't executed properly. I find it odd that a novel could have such a good prologue and such a bad rest of the book. Maybe it should have been a series of short stories.

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