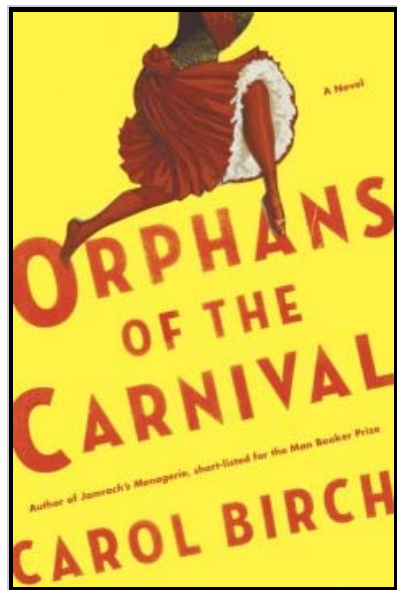


[Home](#) > [Top Picks: All Books](#) > Orphans of the Carnival



Orphans of the Carnival

by Carol Birch

Price: \$27.95(Hardcover)

Published: November 08, 2016

☆☆☆☆☆


Rating: 0.0/5 (0 votes cast)

From the Publisher: From the Booker short-listed author of *Jamrach's Menagerie* comes the extraordinary, moving, and unsettling tale of a woman, branded a freak from birth, who becomes an international sensation but longs for genuine human connection *London had the best freaks, always had. The Egyptian Hall, the Promenade of Wonders, the Siamese twins, pinheads, midgets, cannibals, giants, living skeletons, the fat, the hairy, the legless, the armless, the noseless, London had seen it all. In the Hall of Ugliness the competition was stiff. But noone had ever seen anything quite like Julia . . .* Pronounced by the most eminent physician of the day to be "a true hybrid wherein the nature of woman presides over that of the brute," Julia Pastrana stood apart from the other carnival acts. She was fluent in English, French and Spanish, an accomplished musician with an...

[More](#) 

Rate This Book


☆☆☆☆☆ | [Rate/Review](#)

 [Add To Wishlist](#)

[Add To Bookshelf](#)

Get This Book

Go to your preferred retailer, click to choose a format and you'll be taken directly to their site where you can get this book.

	<input type="button" value="BUY"/>		<input type="button" value="BUY"/>
	<input type="button" value="BUY"/>		<input type="button" value="BUY"/>
	<input type="button" value="BUY"/>		<input type="button" value="BUY"/>

[Personalize / Add More Choices](#) 

Share This Book

About The Author

Carol Birch

CAROL BIRCH is the author of eleven previous novels, including *Turn Again Home*, which was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, and *Jamrach's Menagerie*, which was a Man Booker Prize finalist and longlisted for the Orange Prize for Fiction and the London Book Award.

Release Info

List Price: \$27.95 (Hardcover)
Published: November 08, 2016
Publisher: Doubleday
Pages: 352
ISBN 10: 038554152X
ISBN 13: 9780385541527

What We Say

Freaks have always fascinated and the memorable Julia Pastrana is unquestionably a freak. Born in the mountains of Mexico, she is sheltered by a local bigwig and grows up mostly hidden from the world. But the world comes to her and wonders, is she human? Animal? The Missing Link? Some deviant spawn of a man and an orangutang? For Julia speaks several languages, sings and dances quite well and is as hairy as an ape, sporting a face that makes people gasp in its simian appearance. Is she real? Julia wonders herself. In Carol Birch's quietly unnerving novel, Birch does one thing in particular very, very well: she never lets us forget for a moment that both Julia and everyone around her is always aware of her appearance, either

studiously avoiding comment or delighting in it or disturbed and obsessed by it or a million other reactions. But indifferent? Never. Not a page goes by without some comment or action, some word or gesture, some stray thought by Julia and strangers or even friends ("That mouth! Those lips!") which reminds you again and again that she is ineluctably different. It is exhausting and pitying and sad and one never becomes inured to it, any more than Julia can. She travels the world and finds fame and fortune and even happiness of a sort -- sort of -- with her manager Theodore Lent, who is as uncertain of his own motives as Julia or anyone else. Author Birch gets under your skin and remains there without ever becoming sentimental or letting you off the hook by striving to see "beyond" who and what Julia is -- she never can, so why should we? There's a minor, secondary plot set in the present that ties in both symbolically and literally to this tale. It's not a flaw, but I was never quite convinced it was necessary, either. The novel is based loosely on a real woman named Julia Pastrana, as an end note tells us. And if that doesn't send you to Google where you can call up her image and stare and stare, well then you're a better person than me. -- Michael Giltz

What Others Say

An IndieNext List and USA Today Pick

"Think *Love Potion #9* meets *The Night Circus* and yet wholly unique and fantastic in its own right."
--*Marie Claire*

"If readers can resist looking Pastrana up on the internet before finishing the novel, they will be rewarded by the sort of bizarre twist that can happen only in real life. ...enjoyable and moving"
--*The Financial Times*

"Roll up, roll up, for a beautifully written novel about the poignant inner life of 19th-century touring freakshow attraction Julia Pastrana"
--*The Guardian*

"Birch's novel does more than tell the story of a woman and performer, it brings to light the dangers of exploitation and dehumanization. With great sensitivity and compassion, Birch reclaims Julia Pastrana's humanity and offers an opportunity to see this woman the way she should have been seen more than 150 years ago."
--*Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*

"A strange, transfixing novel....gorgeously written...*Orphans of the Carnival* is about how we can find humanity in all fellow creatures, which is surely a message worth pondering now..."

[More](#) 

What You Say

Filter by

No Reviews Found