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The Ugly



Synopsis

Muzhduk the Ugly the Fourth is a 300-pound boulder-throwing mountain man from Siberia whose tribal homeland is stolen by an American lawyer out to build a butterfly conservatory for wealthy tourists. In order to restore his people's land and honor, Muzhduk must travel to Harvard Law School to learn how to throw words instead of boulders. His anarchic adventures span continents, from Siberia to Cambridge to Africa, as he fights fellow students, Tuareg rebels, professors of law, dark magic, bureaucrats, heatstroke, postmodernists, and eventually time and space. A wild existential comedic romp, *THE UGLY* tells the tale of a flawed and unlikely hero struggling against the machine that shapes the people who govern our world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Ugly is a really fun book to read. It's true that it is poetic, absurd, full of philosophy and travel and meditations on what it is to be a human in the modern world. But even when it's making serious points or exploring difficult ideas, The Ugly always makes us laugh along.

One of my favorite books of 2016, The Ugly has everything: philosophy, humor, politics, sex, magic, crime, desert car chases, failure, hope, and forgiveness. Epic in scope, a wonderful wild absurdist yawp.

I had the honor of reading The Ugly pre-publication and it is an extraordinary accomplishment. The story is an epic satire not only of American legal education and the American legal system, but of

modernity itself. It is easy to say that we have become complacent by living in an ordered world that we had no role in creating, or that we are out of touch with our animal instincts, but it is very hard to tell us this lesson--and so much more--by making us laugh, think, feel, and weep. The closest comparison I can think of to this book is *A Confederacy of Dunces*--it is a story of an outsider who has a pure heart and a vast mind exposing our comfortable world simply by being forced to live in it. While the book challenges the reader, it does so through humor and a wicked wit, and with great flourishes of language and terrific prose. A tremendous achievement. Read this book now and you will be able to say you were one of the ones who did.

I read an advance reader's copy, and the first thing I noticed is that nearly all of the blurbs from other authors talk about how funny this book is. They are right. *The Ugly* is very funny, in the sort of dry dark humor way that ends up leaving the world slightly tilted by the time you're finished. If Kafka, Joseph Heller and Monty Python all threw boulders at each other in a One-L Harvard Law classroom (or Siberia, the Sahara desert, Everest, or any of the other places the wild plot goes), you'd get something resembling *The Ugly*. It's a bit chaotic and sometimes there's so much going on that it's hard to describe in a review, but somehow it all works. It's smart, funny and a wild roller coaster of a story. And if you're even considering going to law school, read this book.

I prefer my books to be realistic. One of the reviews of this book is from the former president of the American Psychiatric Association. He says, "Boldizar has opened a door into the parallel universe of myth. Out of it has stepped a modern day Beowulf. The author moves from the surreal to the real without ever losing his way." I kind of feel like he should have given the author therapy along with the review. The last line about moving between the real and the surreal is accurate, but I prefer my books to stay more firmly grounded in the real world. It's not the sort of book I would normally read. I got *The Ugly* free on NetGalley in exchange for an honest review--and if I judge it against what I expect in a book, I'd rate it lower. But it's also really funny, I was laughing out loud and finished it very quickly while at the same time thinking the book was crazy. Funny enough for five stars if it had just stayed more realistic instead of wandering into satire. The combination makes it tough to figure out how to rate this, so I'm giving it a middle of the road three stars.

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