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Tartabull's Throw



Synopsis

In the summer of 1967, Cyrus Nygerski, nineteen and "the best left-handed second baseman in Wisconsin," unsuspectingly meets his first werewolf. Six hours later, she is sitting next to him in Comiskey Park, watching the Red Sox play the White Sox on August 27th, but by the time Boston outfielder JosÃ© Tartabull fires his famous, game-winning throw to home, the mysterious beauty is suddenly disappearing into the crowd. Nygerski is frantic. The next morning he reads about her in a Chicago paper, though not by name: there's no mention of Cassandra Paine-only of a vicious murder back in Beloit of a man who, in another version of events, appears to be very much alive and out for Nygerski's blood. Among Cassandra's abilities is time travel. Nygerski learns of this later (or is it earlier?) on the seacoast of Maine where she introduces him to her family and the tantalizing legend of Howley's Deep Hole, a portal into an alternate time line that sweeps him to the heights of rookie season stardom. It's then-and at a terrifying cost-that he earns the nickname "Moon-dog." Even Cassandra can't foresee the prophecy in that. Henry Garfield interweaves a classic Red Sox pennant race, the supernatural, a love and coming-of-age story, and a memorable cast of earthly and unearthly characters into a treat for baseball fans, horror buffs, devotees of science fiction, and lovers of suspense.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Tartabull's Throw by Henry Garfield continues the story of Cyrus Nygerski, begun in Moondog and Room 13, and combines the Red Sox 1967 race for the pennant, time travel and a crush on a mysterious werewolf named Cassandra. (The author, by the way, is the great-great-grandson of the 20th U.S. president, James A. Garfield.) Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Gr 9 Up-This story begins in the late summer of 1967, as Cyrus Nygerski, a .175 hitter, is released from his minor league baseball team in Beloit, WI. However, the novel's focus soon shifts, as Cyrus meets Cassandra, a girl fresh from the Summer of Love in San Francisco, whom he is convinced he has met before, and who may be a werewolf. After this meeting, readers are propelled on a wild ride from Maine to New York to Chicago and California. Along the way, they encounter a time portal that allows for parallel lives lived in alternate time lines, and shifts in narrative voice and point of view, with a few fairly graphic sex scenes and some gruesome encounters with violent humans and werewolves thrown in. It becomes a little confusing until the extremely dense and detailed explanation comes at the end. However, the parallel stories are put together with the intricacy of an elaborate jigsaw puzzle, and the author evokes the feel of the country in the late '60s, the uniting spirit of a tight pennant race, the coast of Maine, and the scruffy life in the lower minor leagues. And fans of the two other books about Cyrus Nygerski (Room 13 [1997; o.p.] and Moondog [1995; o.p., both St. Martin's]) will enjoy this prequel. It's an unusual and challenging mix for fantasy/sci-fi and sports fans.Todd Morning, Schaumburg Township Public Library, ILCopyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"Tartabull's Throw" is the weirdest novel I have read since "It Happened in Boston." It is a very entertaining genre novel, but what genre? There are werewolves, there is time travel, there are alternative time lines, and there's baseball. Being a fan of the 1967 Boston Red Sox helps, since one can spot at a glance which scenes are from the "real" timeline and which are from an alternate timeline. (Billy Rohr pitches a no-hitter in the book, sometimes Jose Tartabull's throw catches the runner at home and sometimes it doesn't, and tragically Tony C. still gets beaned.) Most of the book is told in the third person, but some chapters are told in the first person by a secondary character. In other words, this book basically breaks all the rules of how to write a novel. The characters and situations are compelling and keep the reader guessing, and the pages keep on turning. If you're looking for an entertaining read with some supernatural elements, you'll like this book, but don't expect it to make a whole lot of sense.

Can the outcome of a throw to home plate on a hot August day in 1967, by a Boston Red Sox outfielder of minimal talents, affect so many lives? That is the premise of a remarkable novel, *TARTABULL* by Henry Garfield. This prequel to Garfield's earlier novels, *MOONDOG* and *ROOM 13*, skillfully melds the crack of a bat on a baseball, the howl of a werewolf to the full Moon, and the stunning silence of time/dimensional travel into a unique coming-of-age story. Cyrus Moondog's Nygerski's love for the enigmatic Cassandra, for baseball in general, and for the Boston Red Sox in particular make for an unforgettable read. Is the runner safe at home plate? Yes. Is he out? Yes. Is Cyrus, as Garfield says, "The best left-handed second baseman in Wisconsin," called up to The Show by the Chicago White Sox? Yes. Is he an error-prone player who can barely hit his weight and is released by the low minor league Beloit Turtles? Yes. But how can all of this be? Believe me, Garfield pulls it off. If you like baseball, suspense, science fiction—or merely just want a rollicking tale—you can't miss *TARTABULL*.

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As someone who once lived in Wisconsin and has since moved to Maine, this book was very enjoyable to read on multiple levels. Garfield managed to take two cliches—sports fiction and science fiction—and turn them into a genre of his own. From the beginning of the novel Cyrus is a

character that you can relate to, and the introduction of concepts such as time travel and werewolves come as both a surprise to the main character and to the reader, making it a delightful read.

Tartabull's Throw by Henry Garfield (pages 262). The book's settings are from Wisconsin, Illinois and Maine in 1960's. Some other settings are the baseball stadium where the main character played baseball. Cyrus Nygerski a minor league baseball player that has been released and is trying to understand all the events that occur. The character Cassandra is shown to be a werewolf that has been running away from home. There are problems of there being too many twists and paths in the plot. Some twists are going back into the past and then going to the present. Also that it talks about the main character's baseball career than it talks about his life and even werewolves. Also the author builds a plot that not only makes you to the characters he has created, but makes you one of them, as you join his protagonist. This baseball novel turns out to be a sci-fi book even if it talks about real events in baseball. Since the story does not have a clear plot it is difficult to have a good understanding. Also that it contains many baseball records that the book goes over.

Tartabull's Throw by Henry Garfield is impossible to put down, once you begin the journey from Wisconsin to Illinois to Maine and back. The author builds a plot that not only endears you to the characters he has created, but makes you one of them, as you join his protagonist, Cyrus Nygerski in trying to understand all the events that transpire. To read a baseball novel that turns out to be a sci-fi book is in itself a surprise that makes this a worthwhile read. But it is the careful way he unfolds his story through time and space that makes this book and this author special.

As a 19 year old girl in college I was wary about reading a book about baseball and werewolves, considering neither of the two really interest me. However, after persistent recommendations from my peers I opened the book and couldn't set it down. The story line is not only intriguing but incorporates everything I love in a book into one. There are side stories which incorporate love, drama, fear, faith and excitement into one flowing fictional work. I really enjoyed it, and highly recommend it even if it sounds like something far off from your usual book choice.

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