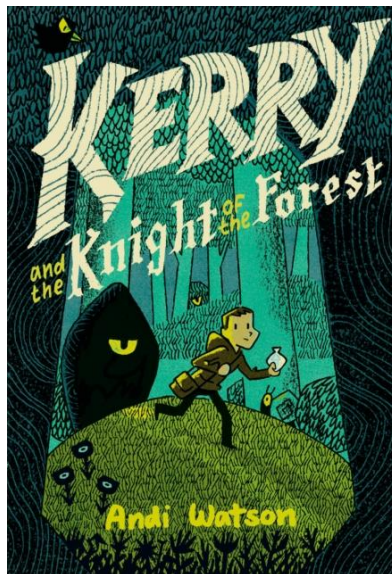


Kerry And The Knight Of The Forest by Andi Watson

[Intermediate]



“I fear your trust in others will be your undoing.”

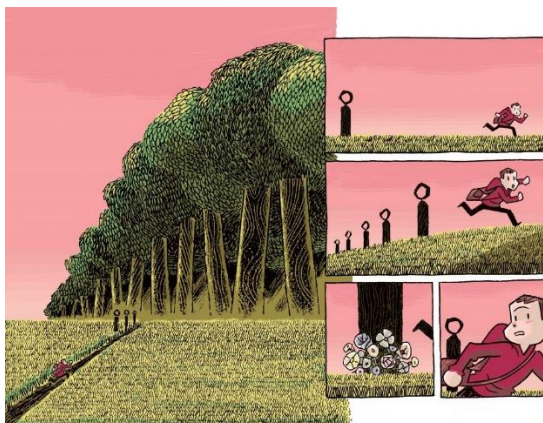
So speaks the monocular floating Waystone of the cover and the self-styled Knight of the Forest.

He has observed that young Kerry's most courageous quality is to invest a little kindness and compassion, even in those whom others deem a threat. It's an instinctive act of faith on Kerry's part which so often overrides his well-founded fear. Kerry hopes for the best; the Waystone fears the worst.

FAQ: “What more would I fall for if I adore Luke Pearson's HILDA?” Answer: Oh, so very much this!

The imagination on display and the spectacle on offer are both phenomenal!

Kerry is racing frantically home through golden fields with a satchel full of medicine to cure his ailing parents, but is lured into a vast and all but impenetrable, shadow-stricken forest by the yellow glow of a girl and the prospect of a desperately needed shortcut. Almost instantly Kerry is lost in its overgrown briar tangles, the spectral girl leaving nothing behind except a hand-held mirror. But it's upon helping a screaming snail escape the claws of a ravenous crow that Kerry's woes *really* begin.



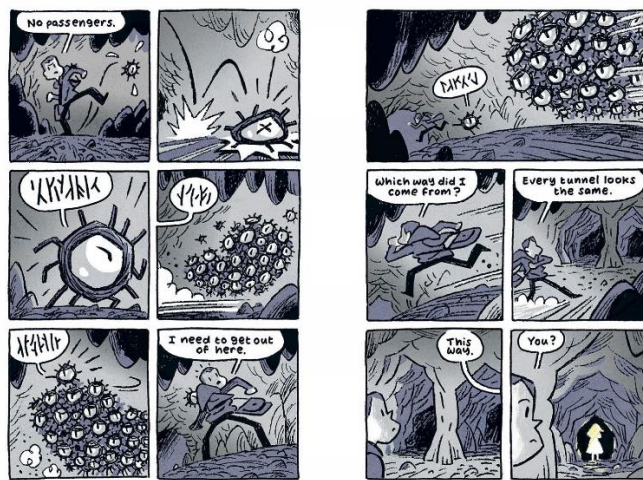
From Andi Watson, the creator of adult fiction THE BOOK TOUR, LITTLE STAR, DUMPED, all-ages GLISTER and so much more, KERRY AND THE KNIGHT OF THE FOREST is a belter of a book. At over 250 full-colour pages before the extra activities in the back, the multiple mysteries at the heart of what's happened to render both this forest and its denizens so very treacherous are given all the room that you could hope for to be explored in their interconnected depths.

Key words: interconnected, mysteries, multiple, heart, treacherous. I don't type these words randomly, you know.



The design is delicious, with angles, shapes, colour, light and long, long shadows providing far more than atmosphere, but narrative cues too, with sudden striking shifts denoting imminent danger.

Birds, spiders, bushes and bats... every beast lurking within is monocular. That's immediately alien and unsettlingly "other" because two eyes is the very minimum requirement you'll encounter in nature outside Greek Mythology (and its Cyclops wasn't exactly the most endearingly well-behaved host). Until you've attempted to create nuance on the page with anything fewer than two orbs then you might not understand the problems it poses for any artist brave enough to attempt this – their juxtaposition, in harmony or otherwise, is everything – yet astonishingly Watson wrings maximum narrative expression from every single eye.



But let's cut to chase and get back to the hunt, for Kerry's multiple trials run from tricky navigation, astute observation and ingenious problem solving to close-quarter combat. Far more central to Kerry's success, however, will be the moral choices he makes. Temptations lurk around every corner, and not just for our plucky protagonist.

Now, where did we come in? Ah yes, Kerry's compassion.

"You would feed yourself to the wolves if you heard their stomachs rumble."

Some people's censures, in my experience, are the greatest compliments in the world.

