



Creatures of Want and Ruin

Molly Tanzer

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Amityville baywoman Ellie West fishes by day and bootlegs moonshine by night. It's dangerous work under Prohibition--independent operators like her are despised by federal agents and mobsters alike--but Ellie's brother was accepted to college and Ellie's desperate to see him go. So desperate that when wealthy strangers ask her to procure libations for an extravagant party, Ellie sells them everything she has, including some booze she acquired under unusual circumstances.

What Ellie doesn't know is that this booze is special. Distilled from foul mushrooms by a cult of diabolists, those who drink it see terrible things--like the destruction of Long Island in fire and flood. The cult is masquerading as a church promising salvation through temperance and a return to "the good old days," so it's hard for Ellie to take a stand against them, especially when her father joins - but Ellie loves Long Island, and she loves her family, and she'll do whatever it takes to ensure neither is torn apart.

Creatures of Want and Ruin Details


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Author : Molly Tanzer

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From Reader Review *Creatures of Want and Ruin* for online ebook

Kamisha says

Thanks to the NetGalley and the publisher for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for an honest review!

I really enjoyed this strange, but entertaining speculative fiction story! There were elements of this that nodded to Molly Tanzer's previous book, *Creatures of Will and Temper*, which I also really enjoyed so that was fun!

Just as in *Creatures of Will and Temper*, humans can commune with demons through the ingestion of certain foods or liquids specific to said demon, in *Will and Temper* it was ginger, and in this story it just so happens to be a special mushroom-based moonshine! This is a fitting libation because this story takes place on Prohibition-era Long Island. In *Want and Ruin* the story primarily revolves around Ellie West, a young baywoman who is Long Island born and bred, she fishes and crabs during the day and distributes bootlegged moonshine at night. Ellie is desperately doing everything she can to help her family send her younger brother off to college to become a doctor. She is so desperate in fact, that one night she agrees to supply libations to a few of the wealthy elite in town, throwing in some strange moonshine that she procured in not-so-ordinary circumstances. Unbeknownst to Ellie, this moonshine is distilled by a cult of diabolists on the island who have started to gain power, and drinking the booze causes consumers to have terrible visions of the destruction of Long Island.

I loved reading along as Ellie tried to make sense of the supernatural and sinister goings-on around her. *Want and Ruin* also took a way more diabolical bent than *Will and Temper* in my opinion, with lots of xenophobia, racism, religious prejudice and misogyny thrown into the inner belief systems of the diabolists. In both of these books I really felt like Tanzer did a great job of showing that though there is a strong sense of the supernatural in her world, true evil occurrences always stem from the power (via prejudices and other vices) that everyday people supply to the demons. As scary as this book was in parts, some of the key points were very relevant to the world that we live in today.

Another thing that I really loved about both *Creatures of Will and Temper* and *Want and Ruin* are the amazing main characters in both stories. Molly Tanzer's characters are always so beautiful and diverse, and open. I loved the two female leads in this story even more than I liked the two leads in *Will and Temper*. Every female character that she writes always ends up being a complex individual in their own right. I really enjoyed both Ellie and Fin in this story, but for very different reasons. Ellie is strong, independent, stubborn, clever, and remarkably self-sufficient. We also get to see that Fin has all of these qualities as well, but has been tamped down and demeaned by her friends and husband so much so that she has become insecure. I ended up loving Fin the most throughout the story because she just makes such tremendous growth and truly comes into her own by the end of this book.

Overall I really enjoyed this sinister story with its intriguing characters and amazing setting. And I can't leave this review without saying that both the covers for this book and for *Creatures of Will and Temper* are some of the creepiest, most gorgeous covers ever!

Lauren Stoolfire says

I received an ARC from NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

My first introduction to Molly Tanzer was with last year's *Creatures of Will and Temper* and I was really impressed by her Dorian Gray inspired tale. Of course as soon as I caught wind of her newest release I knew I had to try it as well and luckily for me I managed to get approved for it via NetGalley. This new companion story (you don't need to be familiar with her previous release, but it will certainly make things much more interesting if you already are) is also a historical horror fantasy set during the Roaring Twenties in New York which has to be one of my favorite genres and time periods to read about. I couldn't help but think of *The Diviners* series by Libba Bray while I was reading this novel. Anyway, my favorite aspects of this slow burn novel are Tanzer's eerily lush world-building and visual descriptions. She does a magnificent job of making the era and the characters come to life. The only issues were with the characters themselves, while they were all intriguing to follow none of them exactly grew on me. I wasn't particularly interested in any of them. Overall, if you're looking for a new fantasy novel with set in the 1920s during Prohibition with just the right amount of atmospheric horror, you'll absolutely need to try Molly Tanzer's *Creatures of Want and Ruin*.

Alan Baxter says

Brilliant fun. A wonderfully written dark weird adventure built around prohibition era moonshine running in Long Island. Recommended. ?

Devann says

I received an ARC copy of this book from Edelweiss

I really enjoyed *Creatures of Will and Temper* from this author, but I had a bit of trouble getting into this one. This isn't a sequel really so you don't need to have read the first book to enjoy it, although I think they might have name dropped a few characters briefly. This story blends the supernatural elements of weird plants and demons with an unfortunately still all too realistic preacher who basically wants to 'make Long Island great again'. It's both an interesting piece of historical fiction and an incredibly relevant commentary on our society today. I honestly don't know why I had such trouble getting into it - it took me over two weeks to read - but I feel like if I was in a different mood it would have easily been a four star book. I would definitely recommend it to people who like historical fiction with awesome female protagonists.

Deborah Ross says

My introduction to the work of Molly Tanzer was her novel, *Creatures of Will and Temper*, a 19th century urban fantasy revolving around *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, and demonic possession. *Creatures of Want and Ruin* takes place in the Roaring Twenties on Long Island, New York. The common thread between the two books is the role of demons controlling human lives. Demons take possession of people who freely agree to

the arrangement, granting their hosts long life, wealth, beauty, or in this case the ability to detect falsehoods and to compel others to tell the truth. In exchange demons receive various experiences that can come about only through physical incarnation. Some demons are benign, but others are highly malevolent. Demons pass summoning instructions through generations or encoded in children's books, as is the case here.

In this story two women from very different walks of life encounter unsettling changes in the sleepy community of Amityville. (The Amityville Horror, it should be said, lies decades in the future and does not play a part in this story.) One of the women is a boat woman engaged in the moonshine smuggling trade during Prohibition. The other is the wife of a newly wealthy Gatsby type of social idler who finds herself increasingly alienated from her husband and his party loving, booze zwilling friends. Spooky things are afoot: illegal liquor that causes most people to hallucinate. a preacher who gathers bigger and bigger crowds, bent on ridding their community of immigrants and anyone who isn't a white Protestant. And creepiest of all, slimy fungus growths that appear and spread.

As in the novel the characters are engaging and the story moves right along. The creepiness grows, step by Lovecraftian step. Just when you think nothing more terrible could happen, something else goes disastrously wrong. Stopping the white nationalist mob and defeating the fungus-monster necessitate finding out the truth, which is where the bargain with the demon comes in. There are moments of sweetness, of courage, and of terrible but necessary choices. I loved every page of it and I'm eagerly looking forward to Tanzer's next.

The usual disclaimer: I received a review copy of this book, but no one bribed me to say anything about it.

Alex Can Read says

Creatures of Want and Ruin is a sex-positive historical magical realism novel set in the roaring twenties. Creatures of Want & Ruin is apparently a sequel to Creatures of Will and Temper but stands alone perfectly. (I have not read Creatures of Will and Temper and never felt like I had missed anything.)

Creatures of Want and Ruin is a book about watching people change around you. That bewildering feeling where you turn around and suddenly people you thought you knew are almost strangers and the dawning horror that when you give it some thought, you can see the slow evolution of how they came to be this way, but there wasn't anything you could do to stop it.

Ellie is a strong woman, working hard to put her brother through medical school. She fishes and crabs and runs liquor on the side. Her father surprises her one day by spouting terrible things about how women should be in the home not working and her shock is palpable – after all, he taught her everything she knows.

Fin is the rich wife of a new money man who quits his law job to be a party boy. Her friends are perfectly happy to while away the hours having a grand old time and Fin can't seem to go along with it all. She misses philanthropy and making a difference. Over the course of the story, she has to confront both her own privilege and her own happiness.

Creatures of Want and Ruin may be set in the roaring twenties, but it felt like it was mirroring political feelings today. One day you know someone and then suddenly they start spouting things that feel uncharacteristic and suddenly you question if you ever really knew them at all or if they have been possessed.

Creatures of Want and Ruin is on shelves now!

Thank you to John Joseph Adams/Mariner Books for providing me with an eARC in exchange for my honest review.

Kam says

This review is based on an ARC given to me for free by the publisher via Edelweiss. This does not in any way affect my review.

This novel is slated for release on November 13, 2018.

Despite those Lovecraftian trappings, this novel goes in the complete opposite direction from Lovecraft's politics. Instead, it tackles the notion of privilege, and the many, varied ways it can harm others – sometimes in ways that a person can be aware of, but oftentimes, in ways a person is not aware of. This is a thematic thread that runs through the novel, played out in the way characters talk to and interact with one another, but also in the historical context and the worldbuilding. Someone always has some ideas about the way the world should be – usually in a manner that privileges them, even at the expense of others. That is why the rich can afford to throw boozy parties while the less affluent need to scrimp and save for a few tubs of ice cream; why a man can operate a fishing trawler whereas his own daughter, no matter how strong and competent, can't do the same without “damaging her reputation”; and why a black woman, no matter how intelligent, can't escape the cycle of systemic poverty and racism that keep her and others like her from living a better life. This novel, then, shows that it is important to check one's privilege before making assumptions, because what one sees as right or normal might not be right or normal when viewed within a wider context.

In line with that, there is a second, parallel theme: that of taking action. Knowing something is wrong is one thing, but just knowing and not doing anything about it is just as bad as actually doing that wrong thing. If the world is to change for the better, there needs to be more than just pretty platitudes and positive statements: there needs to be concrete action. Of course, that kind of action is not easy nor comfortable – but then again, so is choosing to throw off one's comfortable worldview in favour of the truth.

Full review here: <https://wp.me/p21txV-Gp>

Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says

I have waited for a sequel to Creatures of Will and Temper for a year now! I was very excited to be able to read it, and very thankful to both the publisher and Molly Tanzer herself who was so sweet to help me out to procure a review copy as an international reviewer - considering how NetGalley makes us nearly invisible. ***I enjoyed the book for sure, although my heart still belongs to part one - Creatures of will and Temper*** - both because of the lighter nature of the book, and the characters involved, who were just more relatable to

me personally, as well as of the time period. Despite that, *Creatures of Want and Ruin* is a great read that I can truly recommend. ***And now let me give you several reasons for reading it!***

Molly Tanzer Writes Strong Females So Well

I love Molly's strong female characters - in the last novel, we had a sword fighting and headstrong independent girl, plus a rebellious and flamboyant younger sister, and this time we have a few girls who are just as strong - a bootlegger street kid who is quite tough and a married archer who finds herself in the wrong society. Those are not all the strong females though! ***There are male characters, of course, but the driving force of the story lies in the women's hands. Molly succeeds wonderfully in giving young women a voice - and I have to say, not just plain old young women, but diverse young women*** - queer (even poly!) and straight, rich and poor, black and white. It's truly wonderful.

And it's not just that these women are diverse, and that's all. These women are also immensely CAPABLE. They are physically strong - one used to take boxing lessons, another is good at archery, the third can defend herself with a crossbow. They are all physically capable and do not set the example of cowering behind a man - they're more likely to defend a man. And that's not all! ***These women are nearly all, with an exception of one who is wealthy, gainfully employed or even have their own businesses, despite the odds and the oppression.*** They won't let themselves be put down. they are inspiring.

Relevant Topics: Immigration and Minorities

The main theme in the book focuses on hate crimes and oppression of non-locals, or simply people who have a different heritage. These themes are so important right now, in the current political climates. One of the things that really touched me was how the bigots of Long Island claimed that they wanted to return to the "good old days" when the land was "theirs", because they came first. ***Except, no - you didn't come first, people. The Indigenous came first.*** Americans never remember that. I wish that had been touched on in this book - in fact, that would have brought it up to five stars for me. But the racial and national minorities talk still remains very important and I'm really happy that the book was centered around it.

The Book Is Very Dark

I don't know if this is a turn-on or a turn-off for you. Most likely, you will like it being dark! I am at a place in my life right now where I don't enjoy dark and that might have influenced my rating. As I've mentioned before, *Creatures of will and Temper* had its darkness - demons after all, right? ***But it was also very whimsical. Creatures of want and Ruin is not.*** It's dark in a much more serious way, where loss and death are real, and so is the hate. Judging by the book's name, this was the plan! I would say it's executed well, the demons are believably dark and evil, as is their plan.

Connections To The Previous Book

What I liked most of all were the connections to Creatures of Will and Temper! I'm sure there were more of them than I even noticed, as I read the sequel a year later. But we do get to see the demonic entity from the first book, as well as mentions of the "family unit" from it. The lore in this one is much darker than in the previous one, and it's interesting to compare.

But Beware Of The Triggers

Triggers include (view spoiler)

Overall, I definitely enjoyed it, although it was a little bit hard to get into it at first, because it has quite a lot of characters. ***Readers of the first book will definitely enjoy Creatures of Want and Ruin, and I must say it can be read as a stand-alone as well*** - although I definitely recommend reading the first one, because it's simply brilliant! You can find my review of ***Creatures of Will and Temper*** [here](#).

I thank HMH Books and Molly Tanzer for giving me a free copy of the book in exchange to my honest opinion. Receiving the book for free does not affect my opinion.

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Sh3llraiser (grumpybookgrrrl) says

RELEASE DAY!

Review also found at:

<https://grumpybookgrrrl.com/2018/11/1...>

Creatures of Will and Temper: ★★★★★

Follow me at Twitter.

RELEASE DAY: Tuesday, November 13, 2018. I really liked *Creatures of Will and Temper* and this new release is a stand-alone set in the same world! That means more diabolists and demonic shenanigans.

Ellie was a great female lead, and there is another female character, Fin, who couldn't be more different. But the two join forces and there is a lot of girl power. You can tell the author is forward-thinking and there aren't any stereotypes to be found here. It's unconventional and exactly the kind of book I love to read.

The demon in this one is very different than the one from the previous book. The extremist group working for this malevolent entity provides an ironic (or maybe it was intentional) backdrop for what is going on in America right now.

To sum it up, it's a fun-to-read romp involving bootlegging, religious nutjobs, and two young women who will do whatever it takes to save their home. Throw in some mushrooms with bad juju and a demon or two, and it's a paranormal historical fantasy you shouldn't miss!

Thank you Edelweiss and publisher for providing an eARC for an honest review.

Previous Post:

ERMAGHERD. So excited!

Michelle says

I wanted to like this so much. The storyline was intriguing, the cover was fantastic...I couldn't wait to read it.

But then I started it...and it went downhill from there. It took me ages to get through it because it felt like a chore. I ended up skimming it around 35%.

The characters are unlikable. The conversations seemed forced and often uncomfortable. Actually the entire book was uncomfortable. Which could be purposeful, but it didn't work for me. I think this may be a sequel, but this is my first book by this author.

Thank you to NetGalley and the publisher for the ARC.

Annie says

It's hard out there for a young woman with a bitter, disabled father who has to support her family and help pay for her polio-stricken brother's medical college fees. Her only marketable skills are her ability to pilot a ship around Long Island and a certain disregard for being strictly legal. Fortunately, with Prohibition in place, a woman like Ellie West can make a fair amount of money running alcohol if she's careful. And, indeed, Ellie is muddling along quite well until a storm at sea causes her to bump into a supernatural problem way above her pay grade. *Creatures of Want and Ruin*, by Molly Tanzer, is the sequel to *Creatures of Will and Temper*. When I reviewed *Creatures of Will and Temper*, I called it a very slow burn of a novel. *Creatures of Want and Ruin* starts with a bang and never slows down. This book is a fantastic ride...

Read the rest of my review at A Bookish Type. I received a free copy of this book from the publisher via NetGalley, for review consideration.

Joe Crowe says

(Review thanks to a very early advance copy.)

Author Molly Tanzer could have easily done a reprise of her first novel and that would have been awesome - *Creatures of Will and Temper* is excellent. Check it out -- it's a reimagining of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, but with cults and fencing.

But Tanzer does the unexpected here for the second novel in a series. The first one was in Victorian London. This one is set during Prohibition, and diabolists make moonshine that causes people to have terrible visions. (In other words, just like real moonshine! I'm from Alabama. Trust me.)

Tanzer recreates the era in thrilling style, with all the Prohibition-era trappings. It's an era that few in SF or fantasy ever explore, but it's too late now, because Tanzer beat them to it.

This one is cool and fun, and well worth a re-read. Enjoy it with a lovely Mason jar of moonshine. Preferably

the kind not made by a diabolical cult.

Heather says

Creatures of Want and Ruin takes readers back to the era of pulp fiction with its gothic atmosphere and horror-filled storyline. The main characters are Fin and Ellie, two strong heroes who fight for their homes in the face of demonic evil in prohibition-era Long Island. These two strong female characters are well developed and likeable, but in no way are they perfect. Their faults and weaknesses motivate their actions just as much. Unusually, the secondary characters are also very thoroughly drawn and play a large part in the story.

Tanzer's novel is fantastic and thrilling but doesn't move quickly. Instead of being action-filled, the focus is on the characters and the concept and battle of the over-reaching evil. The setting and time period lend credence to the story and instigate the events at the beginning of it, but are not a major part of the plot itself.

I recommend Creatures of Want and Ruin for fans of 1920's and 30's pulp fiction such as Weird Tales or H.P. Lovecraft.

Erica says

I received an ARC of this novel via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

Ellie West navigates her skiff by moonlight distributing SJ's moonshine liquor to her local customers. Although it's not the safest or most proper job for a young woman, especially during the prohibition, Ellie needs the money to send her brother to medical school. During one of her deliveries a storm diverts her to the cove for shelter. Ellie sees a local man who appears to be injured lying on his boat. Ellie attempts to help him but he becomes violent and tries to kill her. He doesn't appear to be fully human with glowing eyes and black blood and Ellie accidentally kills him trying to defend herself. Uncertain of what she witnessed, she steals a crate of unusual liquor from his smugglers hold and leaves, telling nobody what happened. When Ellie is asked to procure a large amount of booze for a local party, she gives them the strange brew. What Ellie doesn't know is that it has been distilled by an evil cult using some very unusual mushrooms that cause anyone who drinks it to have horrible hallucinations like the annihilation of Long Island. Ellie must take a stand against the cult to protect her home and family before it's too late.

Creatures of Want and Ruin is a fascinating fantasy/horror novel with a rebellious young protagonist who doesn't bend to societal expectations. Ellie's character is young, proud, and self-sufficient but she also has a vulnerability which prompts many of her local clients and friends to want to help her. When a local cult, masquerading as a religious group, converts her father and begins their attempts to eliminate anyone who is not part of the founding community, Ellie stands up to them. I really enjoyed the narrative and the setting of this novel and found it both interesting and entertaining to read. With diabolical cults, demonic accounts, and malevolent deeds, this novel was perfect for my fall reading list.

Anneke says

Book Review: Creatures of Want and Ruin

Author: Molly Tanzer

Publisher: John Joseph Adams/Mariner Books/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

Publication Date: November 13, 2018

Review Date: November 16, 2018

This was quite a bizarre book; a strange combination of genres. It was speculative fiction-sci fi/horror/historical fiction, and at times I was reminded of the Nancy Drew books I read as a little girl. We had a small library in our basement when I was a kid, and part of that library was the entire collection of Nancy Drew books that belonged to my mother when she was a child. Even this book cover reminded me of Nancy Drew books.

The story takes place on Long Island, a little after World War 1, while Long Island was still a wild place, not yet developed and filled with the big estates of the wealthy. There are two protagonists, which I think is hard to carry off. The author managed that aspect just fine, but the mixture of genres was disorienting. There was also a bit more overt sexual scenes than I prefer to read. There was a dysfunctional family, some bits of racism and xenophobia, and some nice description of the nature found in Long Island prior to development.

I abandoned the book at 53% of the way through. I found the story to be very creepy, which I guess means the horror part was well done. Enough that I felt uncomfortable continuing to read the book.

I'm not sure whether to suggest reading this book or not. It might be just my personal preference getting in the way. If you like horror, you might enjoy reading this book. I found all the different genres made a confusing glop, sort of like when cooking, you don't want to use too many conflicting ingredients. The characters were clearly drawn, but the plot was messy and all over the place.

So, I'd give it 3 stars, not particularly recommended unless you like speculative fiction with a dollop of horror added in.

This review will be posted on NetGalley, Amazon, Goodreads, Facebook and Instagram.
