



## **The Beautiful Evil**

*Robbi Bryant*

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How well do you know yourself? If forced to either face your inner demons-escaping with a secured, inner peace or the possibility of complete emotional ruin - how would you fare?

The demons? They dwell in all of us. They watch us from our shadows. They ride us-oh, yes, they do-whispering in our ears, tempting us with our own darkness. In the end, many succumb. And you?

The Beautiful Evil takes readers through the tumultuous consequences of one woman's journey into a dark, personal hell in the pursuit of passion, hope and serenity.

Scarred by the death of her father at a young age, Constance is a heartbroken child with no place to turn for emotional support. Any discussion regarding her father's mysterious final days and his scandalous death are forbidden by her cold and distant mother, Madeline.

Instead, Madeline dedicates herself to the mission of turning her daughter into a proper debutante. Madeline chooses Constance's friends, activities and clothing according to her rigid, high society standards. Devoid of self-expression, Constance's only true friend is her reflection in a bedroom mirror.

Her adult life, however, proves to be just as passionless and controlled. Constance believes her life will stay this way forever, until a purchase of an antique vase changes everything. When she opens the vase, demons storm into her life. Like bloodthirsty parasites, they dig into her, quickly attaching themselves to her psyche; quietly sucking away her soul.

But one of the demons, Tisiphone, befriends Constance-offering Constance a way out of her shut-down heart and emotionally bereft life. Desperate to feel anything, Constance's decisions catapult her into a shadowy world of untrustworthy men, illegal drugs and murder. In the mists of the wreckage, Constance finds herself staring into the abyss, forced to make one, final heart-rending decision if she is to find peace.

A captivating thriller that will keep readers questioning reality until the final ultimate act, The Beautiful Evil is a surreal and tense journey into the darkest recesses of the human psyche.

## The Beautiful Evil Details

Date : Published August 1st 2011 (first published July 2nd 2011)

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Author : Robbi Bryant

Format : Kindle Edition 335 pages

Genre : Suspense, Fiction, Mystery, Thriller, Psychological Thriller

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## From Reader Review The Beautiful Evil for online ebook

### Vicki Scullion says

I have to say that I didn't like this book because I never managed to find a connection with the main character. I felt that Constance was whiny and weak, and that the terrible things that happened to her could easily have been avoided if she had found a backbone. Although it is understandable that her dysfunctional childhood would have had repercussions, allowing herself to be taken over by an "alternate personality" was simply another way of avoiding dealing with her issues. Constance - and this book - left me unmoved.

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### Charles Markee says

The book title is perfect. Reading it was a crazy ride, tense and exciting and not at all what I expected. But who knows what to expect from a narrator who is a little psychotic, well maybe, a lot psychotic. Meet Constance, a shy troubled person, and Rose, who is at least flamboyant if not nasty wild, and Thisiphone, your local neighborhood nymph. Look her up. She's a piece of work. From beginning to end, this trio keeps you on your toes, mentally that is. And the characters that Constance meet fit right into the story. To say much more would be a spoiler.

The first three or four chapters didn't pique my interest the first time I read them, so I put the book down for a month. But something about the story bothered me. I wanted to know what Constance was doing, so I read past the initial chapters and was hooked. I couldn't put the book down—took it with me everywhere until I finished it. Yes, it was a page-turner.

It's an adult story; drugs, sex, music and occasional violence, all mixed with the supernatural, just the things that keep the pressure on the protagonist as well as the reader. The writing is good, descriptions are creative, figurative language is used effectively and the book is cleanly edited. More than a good read, I recommend this book to open-minded adults.

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### OrchardBookClub says

This story follows Constance Jacobson throughout her troubled life. She seems to be in a constant state of mourning over her deceased father. She becomes estranged from her mother who does not approve of her marriage. A marriage itself that is riddled with issues. It isn't until Constance is on a business trip with her husband that she buys a Grecian vase that changes her life. Three wasplike creatures emerge from the vase and blur the lines between dreams and reality for Constance. They cause her to do things that she wouldn't normally do. She encounters family secrets and has to deal with her problematic marriage. And seemingly, all of this came about due to this ancient curse from the vase she couldn't live without. This isn't my typical fare for a book, but I did enjoy it. Sometimes it's good to go outside your comfort zone a little. I felt like the story was vivid enough to paint a picture of what was going on and that really helped me enjoy it. I recommend this book to anyone who enjoys a thriller.

Reviewed by Crystal

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## **RL Gray says**

Excited about reading this one. I met the author on twitter :-)

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## **Barbara Watkins says**

Title: The Beautiful Evil

Author: Robbi Sommers Bryant

ISBN# 978-1460998243

“A Mind Blowing Experience”

‘The Beautiful Evil,’ by author, Robbi Sommers Bryant, takes you on a trip down a long dark path through madness. Under the control of a domineering mother, added to the loss of her father, Constance fights the demons that lurk at every corner.

Ms. Bryant manages to weave a story of psychological suspense using characters that are disturbingly real, and distressing situations that while maybe the reader cannot relate to – will certainly sympathize with. The author asks, “How well do you know yourself?” We all have our inner demons – no question of that. It is how we react to our evil thoughts that are of great importance. Why are some of us able to control our demons and others not? What happens when the mind loses all sense of reality? Insanity.

Constance Sartone Jacobson is a young woman struggling to find her identity. Stripped of all self-respect, taunted, and mentally abused from a young age by the hands of her mother, she desperately searches for inner peace – but to no avail. Grieving for her deceased father for whom she had thought was a saint, she finds out even he was not without flaws. When she visits an antique shop, she is mysteriously drawn to a Greek vase. After a strange encounter with the shopkeeper – a peculiar recluse of sorts, she purchases the vase and retreats. Upon opening the vase, she sets free ‘Beautiful Evil.’

‘The Beautiful Evil’ is a riveting, hypnotic tale – one of which I believe its presentation is unique and genius. Bravo Ms. Bryant – Bravo!

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## **G.E. Johnson says**

This story is deeply disturbing and stuck with me a few days after I finished reading it. That is why I am rating it 5 stars! Rarely have I come across a psychological thriller that explores a character's psychosis in such a vivid way that I felt like I was living in the character's mind. This is what author Robbi Bryant accomplishes as she takes us along for the manic journey of Constance, the main character of this book.

The mythological aspect of the story adds an extra layer of interest, but I think that with or without this layer, Constance would still have suffered a psych. break as she seemed on the edge from page one. This

characterization makes the story highly believable despite the fantasy spin. As a bonus, there is plenty of action, suspense, and truly frightening moments to keep you turning pages rapidly to the end. I highly recommend this for fans of Stephen King type novels.

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### **Elayne says**

When Constance was five her father died tragically in a car accident. Her mother took to her room for weeks in grief leaving her in the capable hands of their housekeeper. When her mother emerges Constance becomes her sole focus, to be the perfect daughter and a proper lady is her mother's desire for her.

Years later with her marriage in trouble Constance comes across a curio shop on a business trip with her husband, when she sees the Grecian vase she has to have it. Back home again curiosity gets the better of her and she takes the lid off the vase.....her life will never be the same again....

A well written book that I found to be compulsive reading...a look into a disturbed mind...of someone who has been dominated by a mother, then a husband...and maybe some supernatural mixed in.

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### **Sara says**

The story here was utterly ridiculous and the protagonist was extremely unlikable and completely static. I forced myself to finish it just to see if the ending redeemed it, and it didn't at all. I still feel unfulfilled.

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### **Loni Engledow says**

I enjoyed this book although I felt I was on a roller coaster ride. There were so many things going on in this novel and I didn't know who was the good guy and who was bad. Constance loses her father to a car accident when she was quite young. He has his mistress with him at the time of the accident and she is severely injured. Candace is her daddy's darling and she idolizes him. After he dies her mom refuses to discuss anything about him with her daughter. This makes Constance even more defiant and she makes friends with an image that she sees in her mirror. Her mother finds out and has the mirror removed. Constance feels a great void in her life. She marries a man against her mothers wishes and they become estranged. Her mother warns Constance that she sees evidence of her father in her actions. On a business trip to Chicago with her husband Constance decides to take a walk around the shops while her husband is at a meeting. She is caught in a rain storm and her sights fall on a vase in a window. She has to have the vase. The old lady who owns the store try's to talk her out of the vase, but Constance just must have it. She spends over eight hundred dollars for the vase and decides she must hide it from her husband. He finds out and they have an argument and she walks out on him with the vase. She only goes as far as the boat house and it is there that she opens the vase to release three tiny sprites who begin to take control of Constance's life. The sprites offer her the image of her friend back that she saw in the mirror as a child. We find out this "friend" is Rose the woman her father was having the affair with on the night he died. The sprites allow her to "keep" Rose as long as she does not put the lid back on the vase. This is where things get really hectic for me because Constance takes on the personification of Rose and Rose had been a "dancer" and appeared to be rather risqué. So much is going on during this time that I really become muddled a little. She is having these dreams where her father is calling to her and her husband is looking for her, but he is involved in something that is not on the up and

up. Then there is still the issue between Constance and her mother. There are so many avenues to go in and yet each one I find hard to find closure in. I think with the wind up of some of the details I would have enjoyed the book even more. I was just left confused and wanting more answers. It is a good read for those of you who like the paranormal. Thanks for the ability to read this story.

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### **Deborah Hughes says**

A fascinating tale of one woman's descent into madness. I found myself horrified by the character's actions and yet understood why she made the crazy decisions that she did. The entire time I couldn't help but wonder where the story was going...how was it going to end. The conclusion the author came to seemed the sad, logical choice. Great writing!!

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### **Shanda Kerschner says**

#### **Very Strange**

Very Strange book with lots of twists leaving the reader confused. The main character is whiny and annoying. Waste of time.

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### **Matt Schiariti says**

This book reminds me very much of Sara Gran's 'Come Closer'. It's similar in that a character who's life is pretty structured, pretty consistent slowly but unarguably starts to slip away as they descend into madness...In Beautiful Evil the catalyst for the descent is a vase that Constance buys in a curio shop. Once she buys the vase nothing for her is ever the same again. She begins to walk on the dark side and begins to walk away from everything she's known for years..or everything she's thought she's known.

I had a few issues with the book that kept it from getting a higher rating.

First off, the main character. There really wasn't much about her that I actually liked. I didn't actively dislike her either. I guess I should say I was luke warm to her. To sum her up, she comes from money. She loves her father. Her mother, formerly poor who came into money by marrying Constance's father, was overbearing. Always belittling Constance and acting as if she were some kind of burden growing up. Constance seems to be able to do nothing but watch cartoons all day, even though it's never described what her husband does for a living. Also, Constance seems to complain a lot about people and how they treat and hide things from her when she's done some pretty awful things herself. I can't say much more without spoiling everything.

Secondly, I thought the book tended to be overly verbose at times. There are really only a handful of 'scenes' in the book and the author takes a while to tell them. In the end it seems like it's rambling. It's not that the writing is bad. The writing is good. Sometimes it's as if Bryant decided to take the long way around on the trip.

As far as the ending, I feel as if nothing is ever resolved. There are a few lines of dialogue that confuse things even further and keep the book from being resolved a little more neatly.

I liked being in the character's head--I always think first person narrative is best for that sort of storytelling. It can get really dark and creepy rather quickly which is good. I liked the take on the whole pandora's box mythos.

Overall not a bad book. It just had a few issues that kept it from being really good. Just my humble opinion.

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### **Krisci Keley says**

Haunted by the death of her father, whom she lost at only five years of age, and ever since then feeling unloved and unappreciated by her secretive and domineering mother, Constance Jacobson has grown up to be an emotionally distraught woman with little sense of self or self-esteem. Rebellling against the husband she believes no longer cares for her and determined to be master of her own destiny, she gets her wish in a frightfully fateful way when she becomes obsessed with a Grecian vase she sees in a curio shop window and decides she must have it at any cost. But once this Pandora's Box is opened and Constance's inner demons are set free, her terrible choices lead her into a darkness that may be even worse than insanity.

One of the most hypnotically disturbing novels I've read in years, *The Beautiful Evil* brings a depth and horror to the story of Pandora's Box (jar) that I never felt to read the original Greek myth. Mixing a modernized story of Pandora with some further Greek mythology, as well as with other subtle spiritual symbolism and philosophy/theodicy, this is a powerful and frightening novel that will not only keep you guessing as you read, but probably contemplating it long after.

\*\*Possible spoilers\*\*

As the story begins, the main character, Constance, seems to be a paradoxical personality, both self-hating and prideful - arguably not as an unusual and impossible contradiction as it sounds (and some might suggest, the very defect behind the fall of Lucifer and of man - but I won't get too theological because the novel is more subtly sinister and not overtly religious at all). It first appears this personality disorder was caused by her inability to recover from the loss of the father she saw as perfect and her mother's reactionary behavior in response to her daughter's childhood blindness to the imperfections which led to his death. Even before her obsession with the Grecian vase that will bring terrible sorrow, however, Constance's thoughts and behavior already make the reader wonder if her perceptions can be trusted or whether her mental illness started distorting them long before that day. Before her demons are even let loose to wreak havoc, she shows signs of being as selfish, entitled and superior as she is depressed, unfulfilled and mistreated, suggesting the possibility that the vase isn't really to blame. The reader is left to speculate - because of this early sense of her personality and because of the novel's reference to the Greek myths which make Pandora the archetypal "beautiful evil" (read: female) who brings torment to man - whether Constance's personality is really the result of emotional abuse and an over-controlling mother or whether she is somehow inherently prone to evil, due to her femininity or her genes is up in the air. This is a sometimes hard to decipher mix of a nature vs. nurture argument and hints of a radical feminism vs. an understandable response to misogyny/chauvinism argument, neither of which seem to be definitively settled by the story's conclusion. But I'm not certain they were meant to be or even whether any conclusion can be reached on what the story says about choice and free will - and it is partly these unanswered questions which make the novel so disturbing. It also may be that the book simply needs multiple readings to pick up on all the symbolism and requires time spent reflecting on what it says about these subjects, but the painful and often seedy and violent situations Constance becomes involved in after she opens the vase and the fact that she is, at times, not likable at all might make this difficult for a lot of readers. I thought the novel was extremely well-written and fascinating but, at the same time, I'm not sure it's a darkness I'd want to visit again and again.

Overall, I think the novel is an impressive work, making the ancient myth even more interesting and approachable for modern readers, as it brings to the tale present-day views on mental illness and emotional neglect and/or abuse and reflection on whether certain ideas of personal freedom and happiness are really only a dangerous illusion. The author did an amazing job of creating her main character's voice and inner world and the story is told in a unique style. The short, staccato thoughts and impressions, mixed into the longer, more complex prose and the flashes from present to past to dream (and the tense changes from present tense for past and dreams to past tense for present action) are a little challenging at first, but the voice is so original and real, it soon makes Constance a living, breathing personality all her own and punctuates her fast downward spiral.

For those who like the more thoughtful, literary thriller or horror story, this is definitely a creepy, dark and nightmarish tale not to be missed, though be warned you might be left with the feeling you didn't just take a journey with someone descending into madness, but were brought along on a descent into hell. (Note: some descriptions of sex and violence may not be for every reader.)

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### **T'ana says**

I'm not entirely sure how I felt about this book. I either really like a book or I hate it, this one I was kind of indifferent to. I didn't really care about Constance, or liked her much. It seemed at some points as if the author never really followed through with any of the thoughts. Things seemed to be left hanging and I never really caught much of a motivation for Constance's actions before the finding of the vase, or for the author. It seemed at a point as if the author just wanted to get to what they saw in their mind with no real regard as to how they were going to get there.

I read this book because it was free on Amazon, but I doubt that I'll even remember it in a week.

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### **Rachelle Ayala says**

Oh goodness! Where can I even start? Constance Jacobson, the protag, has such a vivid voice. On the surface she is the bored wife of an executive, hobnobbing with their wives at a boring convention. But she sees visions, has dreams about her departed Daddy and has an imaginary friend named Rose.

While the convention proceeds, Constance goes on a side street and spies a curio shop owned by a gypsy. A Greek vase catches her eye, not the least because it had appeared in her dream, a dream that convinces her it would lead to her Daddy.

An evil is unleashed, but an evil so beautiful, as of fairies and sprites, and friendship and the promise of love, boldness, freedom and a new life. Constance, now called Rose, spirals into an imagined world of ecstasy full of dangerous hot men, parties, and excitement.

But scratch the surface and ugliness and horror appear just around the corner.

Ms. Bryant's descriptive language is lucid and colorful.

His silvery voice wove through the spiced scent of his cologne and wrapped around me like creamy satin.

Bryant, Robbi (2011). THE BEAUTIFUL EVIL (Kindle Location 1565). . Kindle Edition.

I was an orange sunrise soaking the sky. I was a flurry of autumn leaves in a vortex of wind. The stomping of a vigorous flamenco. The sharp turns of a matador.

Bryant, Robbi (2011). THE BEAUTIFUL EVIL (Kindle Locations 1650-1651). . Kindle Edition.

I burned. Purple passion engulfed me. A dance in the dark. Rose's wild excitement lashed at me in whip-like snaps.

Bryant, Robbi (2011). THE BEAUTIFUL EVIL (Kindle Locations 2185-2186). . Kindle Edition.

The first person narrator's voice draws you deep into the darkness of her mind until you're not sure what's real and what's imagined, and at the end, despite the ugly revelations and the sickening truth, the fantasy wins and you are left with a satisfying numbness.

Beautiful and evocative! Beautiful Evil... so tempting and alluring but scratch it and beware.

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