



Beauty Queens

By Libba Bray

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From bestselling, Printz Award-winning author Libba Bray, a desert island classic.

Survival. Of the fittest.

The fifty contestants in the Miss Teen Dream Pageant thought this was going to be a fun trip to the beach, where they could parade in their state-appropriate costumes and compete in front of the cameras. But sadly, their airplane had another idea, crashing on a desert island and leaving the survivors stranded with little food, little water, and practically no eyeliner.

What's a beauty queen to do? Continue to practice for the talent portion of the program - or wrestle snakes to the ground? Get a perfect tan - or learn to run wild? And what should happen when the sexy pirates show up?

Welcome to the heart of non-exfoliated darkness. Your tour guide? None other than Libba Bray, the hilarious, sensational, Printz Award-winning author of *A Great and Terrible Beauty* and *Going Bovine*. The result is a novel that will make you laugh, make you think, and make you never see beauty the same way again.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

From bestselling, Printz Award-winning author Libba Bray comes the story of a plane of beauty pageant contestants that crashes on a desert island.

Teen beauty queens. A *Lost*-like island. Mysteries and dangers. No access to email. And the spirit of fierce, feral competition that lives underground in girls, a savage brutality that can only be revealed by a journey into the heart of non-exfoliated darkness. Oh, the horror, the horror! Only funnier. With evening gowns. And a body count.

A Q&A between Author Libba Bray and... Libba Bray



Q: Hi Libba. I understand that today I have the opportunity to interview you. Er, me. Us?

A: Will this be on the test?

Q: God, I hope not. How about I'll be "Q" and you'll be "A."

A: Sure. Figures you'd get to be the exotic, Scrabble-tastic letter. Mom always liked you best.

Q: So your new book, *Beauty Queens*, is about a plane load of teen beauty queens who crash on a "deserted" island, which turns out to be the location of a rogue operation running a super-secret arms deal. Hijinks ensue.

A: Wow, that's exactly what *I* would've said.

Q: Admit it: This was your chance to scratch your James Bond itch.

A: Well, you may only live twice, but I've seen all the Bond movies about a dozen times. I like it when things blow up. If they can blow up with sequins, so much the better.

Q: The book satirizes consumer culture, reality TV, politics, rom-coms, the beauty industry, and religion while exploring issues of gender, race, sexuality, beauty, and identity.

A: And things go 'splodey. Don't forget.

Q: And things go 'splodey. In more ways than one. What was the inspiration for this book?

A: I signed a contract, for starters. The less prosaic answer is that years ago over lunch, my editor David Levithan said, "A colleague and I came up with an idea and you have to write it: A plane carrying teen

beauty pageant survivors crashes on an island. And...scene!" I thought it sounded like great, campy fun—a chance for a feminist take on *Lord of the Flies*. The intervening years have seen some pretty profound and depressing setbacks for women, not just legislatively but in entertainment, too. We went from "Norma Rae" and "Mary Tyler Moore" to "Keeping Up with the Kardashians" and "Bride Wars." I was at the store, and even the product names suggested we were broken in some way—"repair" "correct" "age defying." I think there was one product targeted for men and it had some really straightforward name like "Moisturizing Lotion. For Men." No judgment just, "Oh, hey, you have dry skin? Here's a product to help with that, dude." The end.

Anyway, I kept coming back to *Lord of the Flies*. Golding paints a pretty grim picture of humanity. Without the trappings of civilization, the boys devolve into savagery. But for the girls in *Beauty Queens*, it's almost the opposite: Without the expectations & pressures of civilization, they have the freedom to be themselves—or at least to start figuring out who they might be. Mint?

Q: Thank you.

A: You're welcome. This is so Meta, isn't it? Seems like James Franco should be here.

Q: I'm starting to understand what people mean when they say you're odd and a little annoying.

A: Harsh. I don't treat you this way. Remember, I'm a delicate flower. You know, like the Venus Flytrap. Or Audrey II.

Q: Moving on. I know you like to create a playlist for everything you write. What was on this one?

A: Oh. You know. (knowing wink)

Q: Er, yes. I do. But maybe other people would like to know.

A: Oh. Sure. No problem. There were thirty-six songs, including: Beauty Queen/Roxy Music, Mystery Girl/The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Guyana Punch/The Judys, Paper Planes/M.I.A., Diamonds Are Forever/Shirley Bassey, Porpoise Song (Theme from "Head")/The Monkees, Teenage Dream/T-Rex. And of course, Ladybird by Nancy Sinatra in honor of Ladybird Hope, one of the many characters readers will meet in *Beauty Queens*.

Q: Speaking of Ladybird Hope, presidential hopeful and the most famous Miss Teen Dream who ever lived, author of *Get Scared, America!*—any truth to the rumor that she bears a passing resemblance to a certain former governor from Alaska?

A: Sorry, I can't answer that. I just put food in my mouth.

Q: But... you're typing these answers.

A: mlwmwhahhadkeow.

Q: Hoo-kay...there are commercials for TV shows in the book, like "Pirates Bodacious IV: Badder and More Bodaciouser", and products like Lady 'Stache Off and Maxi-Pad Pets, *the revolutionary fashion maxi-pad that makes you feel like you've got a special friend in your pants*. Were you drawing on your former life as an advertising copywriter?

A: No. I just really like writing about maxi-pads.

Q: You also recorded the audio book for this one. Was that a fun experience?

A: Very much so. I'm indebted to the amazing team of director Bob Deyan, producer Paul Gagne, and engineer Mark Ahronson, who really led the way. In the booth, I discovered that my New Zealand accent stinks, my English accent isn't any better, and by hour eight or nine, even my American accent wasn't too keen. Also, in the future, I will only be writing three-word sentences. I'm sorry.

Q: Miss Texas plays a prominent role in the book. And you're originally from Texas. What is it about Texas and beauty queens?

A: I'm from the hometown of two former Miss Americas. Gotta say, I've got a soft spot for women who can twirl flaming batons to "Cotton-Eyed Joe" while wearing non-flame-retardant sequined leotards. It's our version of *Fight Club*. We also have the highest number of state executions. I'm sure those two facts aren't related, though.

Q: Okay, I'm cutting you off. One last question: What's the single best thing you've ever read about your writing?

A: After *The Sweet Far Thing* (the third book in the *Gemma Doyle Trilogy*) came out, a very sad reader wrote to voice her opposition to a choice I made near the end of the novel. "I know why you did it. You are an eco-friendly fembot who survives on the tears of teen girls. With the tears I have shed, you will live forever." I swear I wanted to cross-stitch that on a pillow. It's awesome.

Q: Thanks for talking with me today, Libba. (Me? Us? Oh, I'm so confused...) Anything else you want people to know about *Beauty Queens* before we go?

A: Yes. It will soften your skin while you sleep!

Q: That's a lie.

A: Fiction is made of lies. And pretty fonts.

Q: Say goodbye, Libba.

A: I just did. Whoa. This is doing my head in.

Review

Praise for *Beauty Queens*:

"*Beauty Queens*' is a madcap surrealist satire of the world in which her readers have come of age – reality TV, corporate sponsorship, product placement, beauty obsession – but ultimately, it's a story of empowering self-discovery." – *New York Times Book Review*

* "Readers will come for the twisted fun and walk away with a whole banquet of questions." – *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, starred review

* "Whip-smart social commentary, surreal plot elements, and feminist themes come together in this bizarre and brilliant story.... The empowering theme of self-acceptance and the affirming message that women should not underestimate themselves or others makes this novel a potentially life-changing book for budding feminists." – *School Library Journal*, starred review

"Though the jokes fly thick as unplucked brows, Bray also goes deeper into each character to show how our

culture's insidious focus on female perfection keeps girls from being who they are. ... Escaping civilization—the best thing that could happen to a teenage girl? Sure looks that way.” – Horn Book

“Bray spins this hilarious romp into an examination of femininity and feminism, sex and sexuality.” – Booklist

About the Author

Libba Bray is the author of the 2010 Printz Award winning *Going Bovine*, and the acclaimed *Gemma Doyle* trilogy. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Wood:

The book *Beauty Queens* can give more knowledge and information about everything you want. Exactly why must we leave a very important thing like a book *Beauty Queens*? Several of you have a different opinion about e-book. But one aim which book can give many information for us. It is absolutely correct. Right now, try to closer with your book. Knowledge or data that you take for that, you are able to give for each other; you may share all of these. Book *Beauty Queens* has simple shape however you know: it has great and massive function for you. You can appearance the enormous world by start and read a book. So it is very wonderful.

Kevin Mabry:

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Tanya Nolan:

The feeling that you get from *Beauty Queens* is the more deep you excavating the information that hide inside the words the more you get interested in reading it. It doesn't mean that this book is hard to be aware of but *Beauty Queens* giving you buzz feeling of reading. The writer conveys their point in particular way that can be understood by simply anyone who read it because the author of this reserve is well-known enough. This specific book also makes your own vocabulary increase well. That makes it easy to understand then can go together with you, both in printed or e-book style are available. We advise you for having this specific *Beauty Queens* instantly.

Sara Matthews:

In this age globalization it is important to someone to obtain information. The information will make a professional understand the condition of the world. The healthiness of the world makes the information much easier to share. You can find a lot of references to get information example: internet, newspaper, book, and soon. You will see that now, a lot of publisher this print many kinds of book. The book that recommended to you personally is Beauty Queens this e-book consist a lot of the information with the condition of this world now. This kind of book was represented so why is the world has grown up. The words styles that writer use for explain it is easy to understand. The particular writer made some exploration when he makes this book. Honestly, that is why this book suited all of you.

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