

FICTION

1. Fiction – Novel

THE BOOK OF BEASTS by Bernice Friesen



In 1965, James, a half-English, half-Irish boy, is taken by his mother on a visit home to her Irish village after years of alienation from her family. She is physically and emotionally scarred from a car accident in which James' little sister was killed. Once home, she decides to leave her husband and stay there. At first traumatized, James finally resigns himself to living there, eventually becoming close to his uncle and his grandmother. His grandmother decides that James should become a priest, and he enters private school and then university to do so, only to lose his faith as he enters adulthood.

Through it all, James is deeply embittered at his father's apparent abandonment. Then, as a young man, he visits his father and discovers that the man has been writing and sending gifts all along and has even paid for James' education. All of which his mother kept from him. Now furious at both parents, he must try and make sense of his life on his own terms. The story of Seamus (James) Wilberforce Young, is beautifully told, and speaks to the isolation and loss of so many children who find themselves in broken families and must struggle to find their way back to wholeness and hope.

PRIZES – Longlisted, Novel category, 2008 ReLit Awards; Winner, 2007 Fiction Book of the Year, Saskatchewan Book Awards; Shortlisted, Saskatoon Book Award, 2007 Saskatchewan Book Awards; Shortlisted, Award for Publishing, 2007 Saskatchewan Book Awards; Listed on the Globe & Mail's "Best of the Year, 2007" as Number 1 First Novel

RIGHTS SOLD: French (Canada)

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