



[Home](#) > Geis: A Matter of Life and Death

Geis: A Matter of Life and Death

Books Reviewed:

[Geis: A Matter of Life and Death](#) [1]

Issue:

[220](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Clive Barnes](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

You might have noticed that Alexis Deacon won the Observer/Cape/Comica graphic short story prize in 2014, with an entry entitled *The River*; and that he said he had entered because he had loved comics since he was a child and he wanted to prove that he could write them. Now, two years later, here is a full length graphic fantasy, that proves, should anyone have ever doubted it, that he can. Set in a medieval world of struggle between death magic and life magic, it begins as the realm's greatest men and women gather around the death bed of their dying chief to see which of them will succeed her. To their horror and dismay, they find her body has been inhabited by a sorceress who, as a first test of their fitness to succeed, casts them all away from the castle with the injunction to return by daybreak. The story then follows the fate of a handful of characters as they face various dangers which reveal aspects of their characters, focussing on the two youngest, a boy and a girl. They are the only ones to know the full truth about the contest: that all will die except the chosen one. Deacon expertly traces the separate narrative strands that gradually merge, mixing humour with horror, and moving from night to day with an unsettling palette of pale cold colours dashed with acidic lemon and orange. The whole is a perfectly realised shadowy nightmare from which a question is already taking shape: what will prove stronger, the ruthless selfish will to power or courage, compassion and solidarity?

Source URL (retrieved on Oct '21): <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/220/childrens-books/reviews/geis-a-matter-of-life-and-death>

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[1] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/geis-a-matter-of-life-and-death>

[2] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/220>

[3] <http://pop.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/clive-barnes>