



Giants Beware!

Jorge Aguirre , Rafael Rosado (Illustrator) , John Novak (Colorist) , Matthew Schenk (Colorist)

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Make way for Claudette the giant slayer in this delightful, fantastical adventure!

Claudette's fondest wish is to slay a giant. But her village is so safe and quiet! What's a future giant slayer to do?

With her best friend Marie (an aspiring princess), and her brother Gaston (a pastry-chef-to-be), Claudette embarks on a super-secret quest to find a giant—without parental permission. Can they find and defeat the giant before their parents find them and drag them back home?

Giants Beware! offers up a wondrous, self-contained world in the tradition of the very best of Pixar. Claudette and her friends will have you laughing out loud from page one.

Giants Beware! Author Q&A

What was your inspiration for the book?

Rafael: I'm not entirely sure. I recently went through some old sketchbooks of mine and realized that I'd been drawing a character that looked kind of like our main character, Claudette, years before we even began the book. I guess I've had this character of this girl with a lot of spunk in my subconscious for a while. I'm also really into French comics and that influenced the look quite bit.

Which character do you identify with and why?

Rafael: I'm not impulsive like Claudette. I'm probably most like Gaston. He thinks before taking the leap. He worries a lot. That's probably more like me.

Jorge: I wish I could say I was like Marie. Marie doesn't care what other people think of her. In this book, she aspires to be a princess and other kids make fun of her, but she doesn't pay them any attention. She's very confident and smart. I wish I were more like her. I also wish I were like Claudette. She's brave, reckless, and impulsive. But I'm not like her either. Like Rafael, I'm probably most like Gaston. I'm a little nervous and I love sweets.

How did your partnership begin?

Jorge: We've known each other since we were both in film school at the Ohio State University in Columbus. I was in a writing class at OSU, and of all the bad scripts in class, mine was one of the least bad scripts, and so it was chosen to be produced with Rafael as the director. We spent a good month or so filming a very bad film together. That is how we became friends.

Rafael: Fast forward years later to Columbus, Ohio circa 2007. We were at John Novak's house (our colorist and a mutual friend). I told Jorge about these characters I had bouncing around in my head and a story about a giant. I went off and wrote and drew up the ideas I had so far. I gave them to Jorge, and told him to run with it. And he ran.

How did you draw the book? How did you write the book?

Rafael: I drew the whole thing in Photoshop, on a Wacom Cintiq (a tablet-monitor). I like drawing digitally because it gives me a lot of flexibility down the line for edits and moving things around. John Novak and Matthew Schenk colored the book. We used a DropBox to move files around between John Novak and Matthew Schenk (color), Jorge, and me. Jorge and I would meet every once in awhile either in person in Columbus or via video chatting to go over pages and notes.

Jorge: I used Scrivener to collect all my notes, and Final Draft to write the script. I lettered the book in Illustrator, which gave me the chance to do one last rewrite. I'm always rewriting, and I always tried not to send any script pages to Rafael until they were fully baked or else he'd start drawing right away.

What's up with Claudette's dad?

Do you mean like why is he missing his legs and an arm? Well, he fought a battle against a terrible dragon and lost. You always hear about these great warriors who slay dragons. Well, Augustine is a great warrior who had a very bad day. And now his favorite sword is sitting in the belly of Azra the dragon. But that's a story for another day.

Giants Beware! Details

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Download and Read Free Online Giants Beware! Jorge Aguirre , Rafael Rosado (Illustrator) , John Novak (Colorist) , Matthew Schenk (Colorist)

From Reader Review Giants Beware! for online ebook

Charlotte says

This is a tremendously fun book. It has tons of appeal with regard to both story and illustrations.

The story was tremendously satisfying as a story--the introduction of the Danger, the Quest, the mischances along the way, and the final confrontation taking a pleasing twist. But what made me love this one is the characters, who defy the expectations and normative categorizations most beautifully.

Marie wants to be a princess, and Claudette, tomboy though she is, is a supportive friend, agreeing to be a lady-in-waiting. Being a princess, in this book, is a little bit about frivolous things, but Marie is not dismissed as vapid. Instead, she gets to use her intelligence to save the trio from a very sticky situation, and by the end of the book, she's considering become a diplomat. For girls who want to be heros, but like dresses, and know that sword-fighting is not a possibility, Marie is an empowering character.

Gaston is timid, and starts at shadows, but is forced to be incredibly brave to save the others--fairly standard. What is less typical is his burning interest in haute cuisine, celebrated by the other characters, combined with a longing to learn the craft of sword making at his father's side.

And as for Claudette--she is, to a large extent, the stereotypical tom-boyish girl who wants to be a warrior, but that stereotype ends up being subverted--violence is not the answer to this particular problem.

My boys have read it multiple times, and love it too!

Kelly says

My 7 year old daughter loves this book so much, she carries it around with her wherever she goes. The protagonist is spunky, but flawed. The 3 main characters grow as the story progresses. I hope there is a sequel--there are a number of things that are mentioned, but never fully explained in the book. Here's hoping that's not just a flaw in the plot, but a promise of things to come!

Misty says

How am I the first to add this book? It looks so cute!

Wandering Librarians says

Claudette has big goals of becoming a giant slayer. Unfortunately for her, there are no giants to slay in her very safe walled city. Ever determined, Claudette sets out on an adventure with her friend Marie, who wants to be a princess, and her little brother Gaston, who wants to be a sword maker/pastry chef. Their quest: find and slay the baby-foot eating giant.

I don't know if I have to words to express how much I loved this. LOVED. It was smart and sweet and adorable and teaches about friendship, determination, and that bravery comes in all forms, and that it always pays off to be smart.

Claudette is very bold girl. She doesn't care that the stories that are told are scary. She's not afraid of giants! Gaston, on the other hand, is very timid, something he knows disappoints his father. Marie is Claudette's unlikely best friend and her complete opposite. Her goal in life is to be a princess, but just because she has princess dreams doesn't mean she isn't smart or brave.

The three sneak out of their walled city, after Claudette convinces Gaston that their father will be so impressed with him, he'll teach him the sword making craft, and Marie has been told that slaying a giant means "automatic princess-ship from the princess certification board." So off they go. Claudette might be the brave one, but it's Gaston who gets his courage up to save Claudette and Marie from the Apple Hag, and it's Marie whose smarts get them out of a jam with the Mad River King. When Gaston and Marie realize Claudette tricked them into coming, Claudette discovers it's hard to be brave all by herself.

And of course, the baby-foot eating giant is not what they were expecting at all.

It was so great, seeing Gaston learn to stand up for himself and for his friends, Marie showing she's more than just a pretty face, and Claudette realizing how important and valuable her friends are.

The dialogue was smart and snappy and the pacing was great. Jorge Aguirre's illustrations were bright, cute and cartoony and fit perfectly with the story.

If you're brave and true and have good friends, you'll be OK!

Betsy says

It shouldn't be this hard. I know why it is hard. I acknowledge that I could never do it myself. I submit to the understanding that when it comes right down to it, few have the talent, wherewithal, drive, and chutzpah to get it done. Still and all there's this little part of my brain that wonders why there aren't more really drop dead spectacular full-color graphic novels for kids out there. The Bone series raised the bar and since its publication we've seen a significant increase in kids' interest in reading novel-worthy graphic texts. Still and all, when kids come into the library each week and ask me where the new graphic novels are, I have to throw up my hands and confess that publishers just aren't churning out really top-notch full-color comics of The Secret Science Alliance and Jellaby ilk at a sufficiently rapid rate. Part of this just comes down to cost. Full-color comics are pricey after all. Part of it also comes down to the fact that it's difficult to find authors and illustrators that are really good at telling a kid-friendly visual narrative. So when I discover someone new I've a tendency to overreact. That said, I don't think I'm being ridiculous when I gush to you about Jorge Aguirre and Rafael Rosado's *Giants Beware!* Perhaps the first in a series, perhaps a single stand-alone title, all I can really say is that it is chock full o' charm. Good for boys, great for girls, fabulous for gatekeepers, this might even win over those folks who don't normally go in for comics. Great GNs for kids may come out once in a blue moon, but when they're as good as this little number you may decide that it was worth the wait.

Claudette's lot in life chafes her something fierce. If she had her way she's be out there, sword in hand, battling baby-feet-eating giants and sea creatures and dragons and who knows what all. Instead she's stuck living in a village with her best friend Marie, a girl who aspires to be a princess, and her little brother Gaston, a pastry chef in the making. When she can take it no longer, Claudette decides that she needs to plunge into

an adventure of her own. Tricking Marie and Gaston into accompanying her, she sets out to destroy the mythic baby-feet-eating giant that terrorized her villagers in the past. Along the way she and her pals get in and out of various scrapes before at long last discovering that sometimes “monsters” aren’t all they seem to be.

The trick to any good graphic novel is the melding of text and image. In this particular case the book got a leg up when Rosado and Aguirre worked together to come up with the story. So while the general plot is familiar (girl learns that prejudices can be dangerous, yadda yadda yadda) the delivery is original. I know I’ve seen character types like Claudette, Gaston, and Marie but there’s something about them here that seems one of a kind. There’s a lot to be said for their relationship too. You really definitely have the feeling that these three have been together for years. Their relationship is friendly and comfortable. It doesn’t hurt matters any that their dialogue is fabulous. Whipsmart and clever, it flows beautifully from page to page.

As for the art, the style is vaguely reminiscent of Joann Sfar and his ilk, though perhaps even more kid friendly. Rosado also has a particular gift for the wordless gag. At one point early in the tale a rowdy boy lofts an insult in Claudette’s direction. Her two panel reaction is perfect. She takes two fingers and points them at her eyes, then points those same fingers at the boy. The message is clear. I’ve got my eye on you, sucker. Watch yourself. A lesser artistic team would have wasted time and space with dialogue and copious images. Here, the succinct storytelling allows the creators to pack a huge amount of story in a tiny space.

You know how movies will sometimes be held up against The Bechdel Test and fail miserably? The test is pretty simple: Does this work contain two female characters with names that talk about something other than boys/men? You can pretty much call *Giants Beware!* one of the most successful children's comic books to pass that test in years. Claudette to begin with is fantastic. She’s your average spunky redhead, but with a healthy bloodthirsty streak you can’t help but appreciate. Lots of books have girls like this but few take the time to give her a female friend. Either you’re a spunky loner or you’re a non-spunky friendly sort. The great thing about Marie is that she’s a girly girl who gets along like gangbusters with Claudette. Sure they have different life goals but they’re pals through and through. It’s like the friendship between Juno and the cheerleader in *Juno*. Best of all, while Claudette doesn’t go in for any kind of princessy stuff she’ll defend Marie in a heartbeat when other folks make fun of her. “At least Marie has a career goal!” she shouts. I’m a sucker for mutual respect.

The book ends with several small mysteries left suspiciously unsolved, which leads me to think that a sequel should be imminent. Unfortunately I know how long these kinds of books can take and I suspect that in the event this book proves to be the hit it deserves to be, there may still be a lag time between this and subsequent episodes. That’s okay. The nice thing about *Giants Beware!* is that its storyline really is self-contained and doesn’t need a sequel to be thoroughly enjoyed. Adventure and friendship and jokes and more are the name of the game in this rousing little adventure. Consider pairing it alongside Barry Deutsch’s *Hereville: How Mirka Got Her Sword* for a particularly good girl-with-sword epic graphic novel pairing. For kids of all ages, a real treat.

For ages 9-12.

Dolly says

This is a fun and adventurous tale that breaks gender stereotypes and features brave female protagonists (one princess wanna-be and a warrior wanna-be), a cowardly pastry chef little brother, and a stinky dog.

The full-color illustrations are terrific and will appeal to children of all ages. The plot leaves a few things unresolved, so I am sure Claudette, Marie, Gaston, and Valiant are bound for more adventures.

The story is a fun, fast read and I see that a second book in the series has recently been published. We'll have to look for it at our local library.

interesting quotes:

"Life should be savored, not scarfed." (p. 21)

"Being brave means that even if you are scared, you can still look fear in the eyes and tell it...I'm going to kick your ever-lovin' butt!" (p. 92)

Mary says

This book has everything comic book readers from ages 8 to 12 could ever dream of: Adventure! Laughs! Non-traditional gender roles! Peaceful conflict resolution! ...wait, what? That's right: *Giants Beware!* is not your typical comic book, but its unique qualities make it all the more special.

Young Claudette is determined to defeat the giants who populate the village storyteller's yarns. She recruits her best friend, Marie (a princess in training), and her little brother, Gaston (an aspiring chef) to charge into the mountains on her quest to defeat the savage giants. None of these three children perpetuate gender stereotypes. Even Princess-to-Be Marie embraces the adventure, and learns that diplomacy is an important part of her royal career goal. Meanwhile, Gaston wants to cook, but he also wants to forge swords. This plucky party will encourage children to follow their dreams no matter what. Meanwhile, young readers also will discover that bluster about battle is fun, but solving problems peacefully is much more rewarding (and safer!)

This title won praise from Jeff Smith, the creator of the popular *Bone* comic series. That means it's sure to be a hit with fans of his work. The girl-power ethos of *Giants Beware!* also will appeal to readers of Jennifer L. Holm's *Babymouse* graphic novels.

Finally, the book does contain some mildly rude bathroom humor about burps, stinky feet and the...presents the loyal dog Valiant leaves in his wake. Such gross, goofy jokes will hook *Captain Underpants* readers while broadening their horizons in the comic-book world.

Mackie Welch says

So good! Claudette kicks major butt and I will be recommending this to girls who want to read about strong girls who don't take and guff from anyone!

Calista says

This story is Feisty!

Claudette looks like a boy, but she is all rough and tumble girl - not afraid of anything. Her brother, Gaston, loves to cook and he is scared of many things. Marie is aspiring to be a princess. They are all outcasts in the village. The village is a place with high walls, lots of rules and protected from Magic and Giants. Claudette wants to kill a dragon and so she convinces the kids to go hunting with her.

Claudette is not afraid of anything, much. Gaston faces his fears and he can whip up a great culinary feast on a road trip. They have many great adventures while the men in the town go after the children. They do find the giant and it is a baby giant.

The artwork is colorful and feisty also. I love the expressions on the characters faces. Gaston has some of the best. I love the characters. They are wickedly funny. This is an excellent story for middle grade readers and anyone looking for an upbeat exciting read.

There is a second one of these at least and I look forward to read it.

Krissy says

Cute! Read with my daughter and we both loved it

Angela says

Claudette hears the same story again and again...how Marquis Pierre XXXII bravely drove away the giant who loved eating baby feet. Once the giant was gone, the Marquis built a great wall around the city. No giants can get in, but no one goes out, either, for outside is a dangerous place. Claudette, a child who could be anywhere between five and twelve (the cartoon style is vague on her age), believes the practically sainted Marquis acted irresponsibly, and that the giant should be killed. She tricks her friend Marie and brother Gaston into traveling with her, promising to fulfill both of their dreams. Marie, who is the granddaughter of the legendary Marquis, wants to be a princess, and Gaston wants to gain his father's approval by becoming a swordsmith, but what he really loves is baking.

The art is fantastic. The style is playful and detailed, with bold lines and colors. The dialogue is a bit old for the characters, but there are some great jokes, and some poignant moments. The characters all have distinct personalities that remain consistent. They face challenges in creative ways. The storyline is fun, too. It takes a typical fairy tale, adds a healthy dose of skepticism, and takes our heroes on a quest that includes some recognizable fairy tale tropes with a spin.

Claudette's father is an interesting character. A former dragon slayer, he has lost both legs and an arm, but with the help of a wheelchair, a metal prosthetic arm, and an assistant, he's still a capable blacksmith who can win a physical fight against a man still in possession of all his limbs. (I'm still figuring out how I feel about the assistant. The only non-white character, he is a black man who wears only a wrap on his lower body. He's eloquent and wise, and though he's clearly foreign in this community, there's nothing to suggest that he's not a social/cultural equal, even though he seems to have an inferior position in the blacksmith shop.)

However, I'm surprised this book is being so widely praised for children, as it glorifies quite a few negative characteristics. The book itself is driven by violence. Claudette's answer to every problem is violence. She's frighteningly hostile, and even admits—out loud—that violence is the best choice ("Violence is not just

efficient; it feels good, too"). A couple of consequences of this perspective are included, but Claudette doesn't figure things out until the end, and even then, it's a situation-based decision. I figure she's still just as violent. She steals and lies to get what she wants, and recklessly tricks her friends into dangerous situations by tapping into their deepest desires. She only apologizes when she gets caught, but the genuineness of her apology is dubious at best. It would be different if there were a change of heart from our heroine. Also, much of the "bravery" done by this child trio is really just dumb luck. They don't defeat monsters and get out of danger by solving problems; they stumble onto the answers.

I truly suspect that Claudette started out as Claude (she looks like a boy in the artwork) and was given a gender swap because a violent girl is easier to accept than a violent boy. (This concept is a whole different issue, but we see it all too often with our bloodthirsty female lead characters.)

Parents and teachers should be aware that the book does contain monsters, and the situations faced by the characters could call up some frightening images in younger children. In one drawing, a giant takes an infant from its mother's arms and prepares to eat its toes. Thankfully, Marquis Pierre XXXII is there to save this infant, but it's implied that this giant has eaten the feet of other babies. (I think this is supposed to be seen as silly and humorous, but I can't buy in.) Later, an old forest hag has Claudette's dog (a pug named Valiant) by the scruff and intends to cut out his tongue for her spell.

In all, this was entertaining and made me laugh, but the morals leave much to be desired.

- No language or sexual issues
- The use of violence is glorified; nothing bloody/gory, but disturbing images are implied
- Dog poop is a repeating joke

Susan Wojtas says

Well that was fun! I can see why my daughter liked this. Adventure, humor, a girl who wants to fight giants, it's all there. I would definitely recommend this to others.

Lola says

Although this is the first time I read this graphic novel and met Claudette, Marie and Gaston, these characters felt familiar to me, as though I have read about them before.

I haven't. But this feeling overcomes me when I'm introduced to characters that either resemble ones I have been introduced to before, or are so singular that they just feel "right," like they were meant to be written about.

In this case, it's the latter. This friendship trio could not be more perfect... and different. Claudette dreams of adventure and most recently, killing giants. Marie dreams of becoming worthy of being a princess and wishes for her friend Claudette to be by her side always as a lady-in-waiting (as if *that's* going to happen). Gaston, Claudette's little brother, wants nothing more than to bake all day... and learn the art of sword-making.

I never would have thought such distinct people could become best friends, let alone gather themselves to go giant-slaying together. If you had told me, I would have said, "Well that I certainly MUST see." As you

may expect, these three children face many obstacles and stumble into much trouble. Claudette, although courageous and action-driven, is still a child who gets caught and makes mistakes. Fortunately, three people with three different minds may just be enough to complete a quest as dangerous as this one.

I enjoyed myself tremendously while reading this story. It's light and not to be taken too seriously. But it is smart and the "obstacles" rather original. The characterizations are well done and I couldn't imagine anyone else being the heroes and heroines of this series. The ending left me unmoved – I did expect there to be a WOW-factor that never appeared – but I am overall very pleased with this graphic novel. I can't wait for more! Luckily, there IS more!

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Dee says

Having a new baby means one of the first things I wonder is "What should I read to him?" The obliging people at NetGalley let me request children's books too, so here is the first Children's book review at Evolving Books!

drumroll please

Presenting Giant's Beware, a Graphic Novel Written by Jorge Aguirre; illustrated by Rafael Rosado

Call Giant's Beware a kid's book is possibly a misnomer here, this is a comic for all ages. I for one thoroughly enjoyed reading it, and smiled, giggled and D'awwww-d my way through the graphic novel. The story line is simple enough for anyone to understand, and the graphics are AMAZING!

I'm going to stop talking now and show you a strip from the author's website:

Interesting tidbit:

The authors/illustrators etc collaborated using DropBox!

To see the first few pages and to Purchase:

[http://us.macmillan.com/giantsbeware/...](http://us.macmillan.com/giantsbeware/)

Read more at Goodreads

Thanks to NetGalley for the review e-copy.

Green.T. says

My daughter loved this book and I thoroughly enjoyed reading it to her.
