

Ratha's Creature - More Reviews

Rebecca Ford
Excerpt from Book Talk
2/3/85

One of the things that distinguishes good fiction from mediocre fiction is the "realness" of the characters. In ways that are difficult to realize, the writer of quality fiction works his or her magic, producing characters with a bright spark of life that ignites genuine feeling and profound recognition on the part of the reader.

Fantastic wild cats who speak, haunting moonlit nights, lush primeval for-ests – you'll find them in Clare Bells beautifully written novel, *Ratha's Creature* (Atheneum). Set 25 million years ago, the story centers of a she-cub named Ratha, a member of a band of intelligent talking cats called the Named, who have developed a society based on the herding of forest animals. Governed by laws and leaders, these civilized cats live at constant war with a group of predatory cats, her raiders who know no laws and have no names. The Un-Named are pushing the Named close to extinction when Ratha tames a creature no other animal has dared to confront – menacing, all-powerful fire.

This novel is at once a wonderful fantasy and an intricate allegory comprising carefully woven universal themes. Corruption of power, individual freedom, and fear and hatred of the unknown are motifs played out against a fabulous world so rich in texture and color as to be almost tangible. The great wild cats, themselves a mixture of human intelligence and animal instinct, lend the story a visceral power that is impossible to ignore. *Ratha's Creature* is a graphic rendition of the clash between the best and the worst of civilized society. All in all, it is a remarkable book. (Ages 16 and up).ÿ