



# BEASTARS

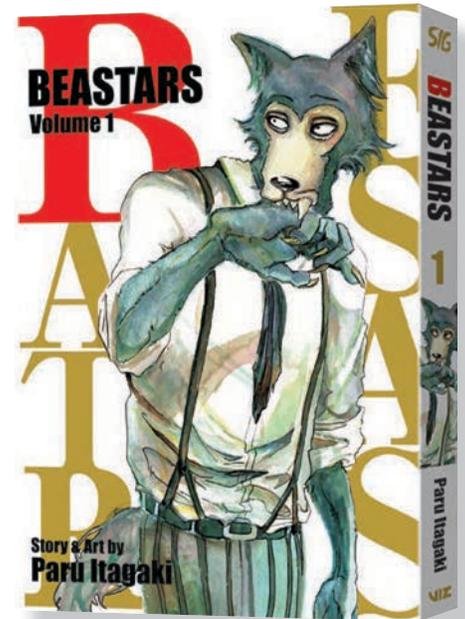
## Reading Group Guide

CREATED BY: POP CULTURE CLASSROOM

### Overview

*BEASTARS* Vol. 1, written and illustrated by Paru Itagaki, tells the story of Cherryton Academy, a school where students are divided into two groups: herbivores and carnivores. After an herbivore student and lead actor in the school play, an alpaca named Tem, is found murdered one night, tensions between the two groups reach an all-new high. With the killer still on the loose, mistrust and fear spread like wildfire through campus—and everyone is a suspect.

This is especially true in the Academy's prestigious drama club, where herbivore and carnivore classmates are working together on the school year's first play. As opening night nears, they are forced to push through their suspicions and act as a team to realize their goal. Through the eyes of the main character, Legoshi, and his classmates, we gradually learn more about the relationships, hopes, and fears that drive many of the students and maintain the shaky peace between them. Yet despite their differences, they all share the same dream: to become a "Beastar," a hero that can transcend conflict and mistrust and lead their society to its full potential.



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### How to Read Manga

In keeping with the original Japanese comic format, manga is read from right to left—so action, sound effects and word balloons are reversed to preserve the orientation of the original artwork.

### Key Themes

- Prejudice
- Self-Control
- Collaboration
- Pride
- Nature vs. Nurture
- Fate vs. Choice

### Key Characters

- **Legoshi (Gray Wolf)** is the brooding and misunderstood protagonist of this story
- **Louis (Red Deer)** is the lead actor of the drama club and is widely expected to be the next Beastar
- **Haru (Dwarf Rabbit)** is an herbivore whose run-in with Legoshi one night sparks something unexpected in both of them
- **Tem (Alpaca)** is found murdered early in the book and sets off the major events of the story
- **The Drama Club** is made up of various herbivore and carnivore characters, including:
  - **Leadership:** Sanu (Pelican), club president; Shelia (Leopard), choreography director; Mokichi (Badger), music director
  - **Actors:** Els (Angora Sheep), Zoe (Goat)
  - **Crew:** Kai (Mongoose), Domu (Peacock), Fudge (Red Panda)
- **Legoshi's Roommates** include his closest friend, Jack (Labrador Retriever), as well as Koro (Old English Sheep Dog), Boss (Fennec Fox), Durham (Coyote), and Miguno (Spotted Hyena)



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## Discussion Questions

- Does the divide between carnivores and herbivores remind you of anything at your school or in the world today? What similarities and differences do you notice?
- Why do you think that the author chose to create these characters as animals rather than humans? How does this change your reading experience? Does it help you relate more, or less, to the characters? Why?
- Rather than being drawn as animals as you'd see in the natural world, the characters in this volume walk, talk, and act much like humans. What do you think about this narrative device? What impact does it have on your reading experience?
- Why do you think Els is so suspicious of Legoshi at first? How would you feel in her situation?
- Does your opinion of Legoshi change after you find out his real reason for meeting Els at the beginning of this volume? Do you think that Els' reaction to him was justified at first?
- Legoshi believes that people fear and hate him. Why do you think he believes this? Do you think he's justified in his belief?
- If you could be any animal at Cherryton Academy, which species would you choose? Why did you make this choice? Did the relationship between carnivores and herbivores have an impact on your choice?
- The author shows different characters' points of view throughout the book. Which of these characters do you relate to the most? Why do you think the author constructed the book this way?
- Legoshi must suppress his instincts when he traps Haru outside the school. Have you ever struggled with self-control, or had to work extra hard to stay in control? What strategies do you utilize to help maintain self-control?
- How does the artist represent Legoshi's instincts in the scene with Haru? What do you think the shadowy figure represents in this scene?
- The reader is not introduced to many of the teachers or authority figures at Cherryton Academy. Why do you think this is?
- Why is becoming a "Beastar" so important to certain characters in the book? Do you think there is anything in your world that might fit this description? How so?
- Overall, what message(s) and value(s) do you think the author is trying to convey through the first volume of *BEASTARS*?

## Activities

- **Keeping the Peace:** Clearly, maintaining good relations between herbivores and carnivores at Cherryton Academy and society at large is a lot of work. For example, the drama club students help ease this tension by working together to put on a play with a meaningful message. If you attended Cherryton Academy, how would you use your skills and talents to contribute to a peaceful environment and equality for all animals? Come up with a plan that includes strategies of how you would bring people together and keep the peace, and details of how these strategies would be put into practice.
- **Character Comic:** In volume 1, readers meet over fifteen different characters. But what are their stories? Write a comic that tells the events of *BEASTARS*, Vol. 1 through the eyes of another student in the school, or even a teacher.
- **Enroll in Cherryton Academy:** Imagine you are a student enrolling at Cherryton Academy. First, pick your species. Be specific, and do research as needed about their habits and appearance. Then, draw yourself as that character! Second, write a backstory for your character. Where are they from? What are their goals, interests, and skills? And what positive and negative character traits might they have? Finally, consider the benefits and drawbacks you'd face living as your chosen species. Do you think your character has what it takes to become a "Beastar"?



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