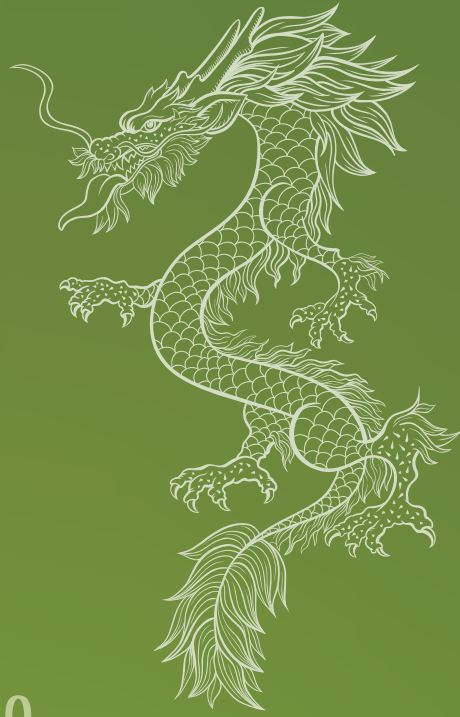


# THE BEAST PLAYER

By  
NAHOKO UEHASHI. TRANSLATED BY CATHY HIRANO



## SUMMARY

Elin's mother has the important responsibility of caring for the fearsome water serpents until the Toda's mysteriously die. When Elin's mother is sentenced to death as punishment, Elin tries to save her. With the Toda's closing in, Elin's mother does something she swore never to do. But it saves Elin. Safe but far from home in an unfamiliar land, Elin learns a new way of life. Curious about all living creatures, she discovers that she can communicate with both the Toda and majestic Royal Beasts that guard the queen. But if the wrong people know she has this skill, they will try to use her as a tool in their treacherous plots. Can Elin save herself and her beloved beasts or will she be forced into a war that will destroy the land?

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## REVIEW



In this complex fantasy world with awe-inspiring beasts, Uehashi's story primarily develops Elin's perspective. But there are some alternative perspectives in order to build the history and conflicts of the world. These alternating perspectives allow the reader to grow up with Elin as she becomes a quiet, thoughtful, and courageous young woman. *The beast player* is not an action-packed fantasy adventure. But it is a page-turner because we want to see if Elin will be able to stay true to her beliefs as the powerful push her to go against what she believes to be right. Beautifully written, the novel develops these themes: the importance of knowing what you stand for, the danger of unquestioning loyalty, and the power of kindness over violence.

