



# Monsters

*Peter Cawdron*

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Monsters is a dystopian novel set against the backdrop of the collapse of civilization.

The fallout from a passing comet contains a biological pathogen, not a virus or a living organism, just a collection of amino acids, but these cause animals to revert to the age of the mega-fauna, when monsters roamed Earth.

Bruce Dobson is a reader. With the fall of civilization, reading has become outlawed. Superstitions prevail, and readers are persecuted like the witches and wizards of old. Bruce and his son James seek to overturn the prejudices of their day and restore the scientific knowledge central to their survival, but monsters lurk in the dark.

## Monsters Details

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Author : Peter Cawdron

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## From Reader Review Monsters for online ebook

### Jason says

Monsters is a fascinating story about a dystopian future in which the very thing that we are reading is not allowed, and the very act of reading is a crime. Can you imagine a society where there are no books and reading is an offence punishable by death?

But that is only one aspect of Monsters, the other aspect of this thrilling tale is that there are actually Monsters.

A comet has caused significant changes to the Earth, not only atmospheric changes, that change the weather conditions, meaning that Humanity destroys most of the books in an attempt to stay warm, but it also causes Gigantism in most of the animal species, resulting in most of the animals to grow to huge sizes, and all of a sudden, Humanity is no longer the dominant species on Earth.

So with the changes to the weather, and the subsequent effects to the Earth's climate, humanity suffers. Humans turn on Science and Technology as they believe it couldn't save them. And in the meantime, the Monsters rise and start to prey on Humans.

Cawdron has created an utterly extraordinary dystopian world for this book, and then filled it with some exceptional characters. The story follows Bruce Dobson, who, in his travels, meets a woman, Jane, and discovers that she is a reader. Bruce is somewhat different to the rest of the population, and wants to be a reader himself, and thus begins his exploration of a wider world, and the start of an incredible story.

In the middle of this, there is the story of the actual world around them, the struggles of a world without all the modern technologies at war with Monsters – animals like Wild Dogs, Wolves, Bears, even the big Cats that have all grown to huge sizes and hunt Humans.

As with all of Cawdron's tales, there is a real depth to this story though. The title does not just elude to the creatures that stalk you through the woods. The title refers more to those that walk with you. For as Humanity devolves due to the loss of its technology, so too does the moral compass that guides Humanity, and it is quick to see that it is not just the creatures that are the Monsters.

Cawdron is such a powerful writer, the story he conveys with 'Monsters' is one that we miss on a daily basis, that it is so easy to get lost in various causes, or beliefs that we can get swept up in things, and soon become far worse than what we were once fighting against.

As with all his stories, the characters in this tale are wonderful, beautifully created, from the quite, but worldly Bruce, who has seen too much of some things, but not enough of others, to Jane, who is the true embodiment of don't judge a book by its cover, through to James and Lisa, both young at heart and full of adventure, wanting to change the world for all the right reasons. There are many other characters that I don't want to give away, but they are all equally brilliant.

This is a truly exceptional book, one that you will not be able to put down, compelling and creative in its story telling, and totally riveting. An absolute must for any Cawdron Fan, fans of dystopian or Sci-Fi, or anyone who just loves a good story.

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### Don Oberg-Hauser says

Good book on post-apocalyptic world where animals revert to ancient mega-fauna forms.

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### Mukta Mohapatra says

I enjoyed a lot of things about this book. It is a story about power struggles and human nature. I didn't glean

a lot of depth in the characters, but that wasn't necessary to move the story forward.

The first quarter of the book was the most poignant. How fast civilization can devolve after a natural disaster and how our nature will quickly ruin us all. When science fails to save us, people quickly turn on it and knowledge in general. With the decline of science comes the rise of superstition. This was a good moment for introspection. I don't know the science behind how my favorite devices work and with the demonizing of scientists, those devices are lost to the ages.

If you want to demonize the science behind vaccines, space travel and other discoveries, don't sit there with your smart phone and internet having no idea how either of those work.

Now that our technology is back to the stone age and reading equals witchcraft, we meet our main characters. They are readers and they eloquently expressed why reading captivates me the way it does. Everyone will learn something different from reading the same thing. It promotes strategic thinking and understanding. It also keeps history alive by giving you a glimpse into the author's soul.

The readers use books to further their knowledge and improve lives. Their adventures in their world take up most of the book, but it didn't engage me. Finding a man who wants to write a future instead of the just reading the past intrigued me. The mind of a dictator was shown on a superficial level, but it was still interesting.

There will be large animals in this book called Monsters. There will be men who use ignorance to keep people down and seize power. There will be a cheesy line about that man being the real monster, but who cares.

You currently have the ability to learn about any subject you want. Use your time wisely in this life so that people crueler than you can't use your ignorance to keep you down.

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## **Jeff Oaster says**

I've become quite a fan of Peter Cawdron over the past year. Typically, he has written rather plausible Space Opera. This time, with *Monsters*, he takes a bit of departure into a devolved dystopian novel that doubles up as a love letter to literacy and knowledge. After a near miss with a comet has some catastrophic events, including a drastic increase in size of many of the planet's fauna, Earth is plunged back into the dark ages. Books, science and knowledge are shunned, and literate people are tortured and killed as examples to others. Yet some struggle to learn. A very entertaining read, with lots of action, interesting characters and just a fun story to read.

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## **Andy Coleman says**

A SIMPLE MAN'S REVIEW:

First off, the prologue is a book I would read. The story of how we got to such a dystopian future was fascinating and I hope Cawdron considers a prequel for this book. But on to the main story...

My feelings toward this story were all over the place. I was on such a high from the prologue that the main story seemed to start off a bit slow. The background is set up and we start to meet characters, but then, out of nowhere, comes a beautiful discussion on the value of reading and books. Some of the remarks were so insightful that I was sending them to my English-teaching friends.

And so the story continues and is pretty good as the characters' lives unfold. But then with the jump forward in time, the story becomes very familiar, especially if you've read or watched any dystopian stories before. Granted, if we ever enter a dystopian age, I have no doubt that some power-crazy guy is going to start a community and demand total loyalty. I'm just a bit tired of reading about it.

But then, as with many of Cawdron's books, the ending makes up for any negative feelings I might have had before. I loved how it was set up and executed (no pun intended) - leaving the reader with closure but also an avenue for a possible sequel (although a prequel would be much better!).

Read it!

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## So, I Read This Book Today says

Edit:

After speaking with Peter, I do feel that my take on the second half of the book may have been too harsh. He does make a good point that it was important to learn about how humanity begins to change, how they begin to find their way. I did some rereading and decided that I have a better grasp of where he is going and what he was doing with his characterizations. I am leaving my previous review in place - others may find that the information is useful, but I do want to note that I have raised the book's review status by a point based on our discussion and a rereading of the second half of the book. Either way, I don't regret reading the book, and his world development was spectacular, something that is always important to me. Read it. You will draw your own conclusions.

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The fallout from a passing comet contains a biological pathogen, not a virus or a living organism, just a collection of amino acids, but these cause animals to revert to the age of the mega-fauna, when monsters roamed Earth.” Part of the blurb from Monsters by Peter Cawdron

“And so, when the fall of man came, the Luddites rejoiced. For them, man’s demise was a vindication of their ideals, a moment full of spite and bitter rejoicing.” Peter Cawdron-Monsters

“Reading is far more than picking words off a page. It is to breathe in another soul, to walk in their shoes. When you read, you lose yourself and inhabit another’s life, the life of one that went before you on this Earth” Peter Cawdron-Monsters

I was originally drawn to the book by its cover. A simple pen-and-ink sketch of the skull of a Smilodon, a Pleistocene epoch saber-tooth cat, it caught my attention as the description of the book drew me in. For the first third of the book, I was not disappointed.

In many ways, Monsters starts off in an unusual but very interesting manner, as apparently ancient newsprint becomes the introductory vehicle for the history of the collapse of man. This is not your typical dystopian novel, where zombies rule the earth. Instead, the story starts out innocuously, as a passing comet, Comet Holt, appears in the night sky. Fragile bits of newsprint recount how Holt grows in the sky, and lit up the sky,

its twin tails “breathtaking to behold”. The subsequent breakup and dispersal of over half of the comet into the Sun came with volatile disintegration across space, and the subsequent showering of the Earth with tiny, breathtakingly beautiful showers of dust lighting up the stratosphere.

Cawdron’s description of these events is beautifully done, and pulled me deeper and deeper into the tale, as the biological pathogens in the cometary dust, “The Sparkles,” for all their breathtaking beauty, begin an insidious correction to life on Earth. The subsequent changes to the world economy are only the beginning, as dust in the upper atmosphere wreaks havoc with the weather, bringing on a new ‘mini ice age’, dropping humanity further and further back into a new stone age. The outcome of this is as could be expected, as man desperately scrambles to survive, falling back into a medieval superstitions and religious zealotry. Books and science are outlawed, and environmental changes run rampant.

Excellent. The story arc for this part of the book was exceptional, and kept me totally engrossed. There were, of course, problems with the timeline of the fall of civilization and the rapid evolutionary changes, but this is fiction, and these sorts of things are to be expected though not embraced. The rapid disintegration of humans, from sophisticated, thinking beings to savages was much more believable in its rapidity given the very nature of the human animal and it’s natural savagery. As Nazi Germany, the Catholic Inquisition and the reign of Pol Pot attest, man is easily lead and easily drawn into barbaric mob mentality, lacking anything approaching “humanity”. My real problem is that, once the set-up has been done, and we realize what is going on, the book basically takes a 90-degree turn into inanity. While the story of ‘Readers’ draws correlations to the hiding of German Jews and the American Underground Railroad, the story itself degenerates into a rather poorly drawn love story and falls away from there.

In the end, it feels as if Cawdron had a wonderful idea, then a third of the way through the book simply didn’t know what to do with it. In my opinion there is a problem of the authors audience as well. I happen to love action adventure in the vein of James Rollins and his ilk, as well as dystopian and creative science-based novels. This book started out in that category and would have been well served to remain so. There is an audience for that part of the book. The audience for the rest of the book was entirely different, turning into nothing more than a psudo-historical romance with a lot of really big animals running around.

Overall, I was very disappointed to have such high hopes; only to be ultimately disappointed.

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### **Josh Meadows says**

This was very interesting. While I tend to enjoy novels that discuss novels, this particular example that the aforementioned phenomenon does it with style -- with monsters. By using monsters and GREAT PERIL as a backdrop for a discussion of the importance of the act of reading, Cawdron ensures that the message strikes true. Read it!

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### **Kevin Charlton says**

#### **Another winner**

Another captivating read. Thought provoking, interesting, characters you feel for, had trouble putting it down... What more can you ask for? Well done Mr C!

## **Ifor says**

### **Great book**

I liked this book alot. A good story with decent characters and well put together. A good book, give it a go.

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## **Jack Sdraulig says**

Think I've found a new favourite writer. This book was fantastic. It really showed how much Cawdron loves books, and as a reader/writer it made me love the craft even more. The intelligence in the writing and the thought that went into the back story was amazing, and really helped to suck me in. The story was a little jump. I found it went from climax to climax to quickly, as though he was trying to fit in as many as possible in such a short book. At the end of the first half I was disappointed at the main character Bruce being put to the side, after all the build up of character, but I find that with a lot of books these days. The second half was not a disappointment though. Cawdron has a knowledge of hunting and Warcraft to (almost, but not quite) challenge Raymond Feist. Two of my favourite things bundled into such a passionate, believable, dystopian sci-fi. Highly recommended.

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## **Colby says**

This is another in a string of incredible stories I've come across through Hugh Howie's recommendations. I really am having a hard time describing how much I enjoyed this book. Cawdron has become one of my new favorite authors with this amazing ode to literacy. In Monsters, Cawdron spins a heartwarming story of a dystopian future where literacy is forbidden. Much like the dark ages, people with the ability to read are viewed as magic wielding threats to the survival of the rest of civilization. Their ideas could cause ruin, so they are destroyed if they are discovered. I don't want to give any spoilers, but trust me when I say this great story will make you proud to be a reader, and even more proud if you have any aspirations of writing yourself. Thanks Peter Cawdron for a truly epic tale that I will read over and over in the years to come.

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## **Debbie says**

This excellent book is going to stay in my head for a long time. For a SF story, it's entirely too realistic for comfort. We all take our civilization far too much for granted, until something comes along to point out for us how fragile it can be.

The first part of the book details with rather chilling logic the slow fall of the world's current civilization. A comet that comes nowhere near our planet leaves debris that encroaches on the atmosphere, with devastating results. A biological agent within the debris slowly alters the course of evolution, until humans are no longer at the top of the food chain. From man's point of view, animals become monsters.

Scientists are blamed for the death and destruction, knowledge is perceived as dangerous, and reading is banned. Reading is a quick way to a death sentence. It's not the first time in human history that reading has

been forbidden - for us, the ability to read is unremarkable, making it easy to forget this was not always so. In this story, when man falls from the height of our technological society, he falls a very long way. Day to day living includes fighting a purely defensive battle against monsters.

The story follows a few characters through this world, and chronicles the defiant learning of those who read. There's a great deal of description, which does slow the story's pace in some spots. I found the images created with the descriptive passages to be very vivid - too much so, sometimes. I'm going to hope I never see a cockroach as large as my foot, or a wasp that has to be killed with a bow and arrow. Note that those are the ones that started out small, then give some thought to a bear. Contained in the story is the point that without knowledge, the humans will always remain the prey, and will always be at the mercy of their environment.

The book's ending is a bit abrupt, but not a cliffhanger. There is obviously room for a sequel, which I hope will be the case. The world built in this book has room for a lot of stories. I'd be very happy to read more of them. After this book, I sincerely appreciate that I can read.

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### **Hayley says**

This is the only book by Peter Cawdron that I didn't enjoy; it started interesting but quickly went downhill. I look forward to reading more of his books.

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### **Chrystal Roe says**

#### **Excellent!**

This is a wonderful book. I loved every second of it. The characters are really interesting people that I liked a lot. The setting is in the future after our society has fallen and literacy has become a crime. Some people will not be stopped however. Readers are a hardy bunch.

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### **AudioBookReviewer says**

**ABR's original Monsters audiobook review and many others can be found at Audiobook Reviewer.**

A large comet passes close to earth and deposits an unknown pathogen into the atmosphere. Most animals mutate into larger versions of themselves, bears, insects, bats, dogs, cats, rats, everything except humans. Civilization shrinks and reverts back to feudal/medieval times. Technology and learning become the enemy. Eventually, ignorance is embraced as people who are able to read are burned as witches. The two main characters are a father, and later, his son, who both fall in love with injured women whom they rescue.

Unfortunately, Cawdron's preaching and pedagogy get in the way of what might be a good story. The listener is bashed over the head about how important books and newspapers are. Hello, we're reading here. It's difficult to get into the story as Cawdron holds our hands through every phrase, repeating and rephrasing every thought, just in case we didn't understand something. It's like being taught physics by a kindergarten teacher. You'll soon find yourself rooting for the giant animals to quickly eat the annoying humans.

The narration is by Josh Carpenter and Michele Carpenter. They might be married, brother and sister, or coincidentally have the same last names, we're not told. There is quite a bit of acting, particularly on the part of Michele Carpenter. If you want a transparent listening experience, you won't like this. There are some long pauses between commas, which can be quite annoying. If you are listening with good headphones, you'll hear the occasional page turn and mouth noises too.

The audience for this book seems to be those who like the idea of fantasy and science fiction, but don't want to read about hard science. The monsters (the large and dangerous predatory animals for whom the book is named) play a very small part in the story, staying more as a backdrop to what is ultimately a romance novel with just a hint of science fiction.

Audiobook provided for review by the author.

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