



Chasing the Moon

A. Lee Martinez

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Unspeakable horrors threaten the earth in this fantastic new comic fantasy from the author of *Divine Misfortune*.

Diana's life was in a rut - she hated her job, she was perpetually single, and she needed a place to live. But then the perfect apartment came along. It seemed too good to be true - because it was.

The apartment was already inhabited - by monsters. Vom the Hungering was the first to greet Diana and to warn her that his sole purpose in life was to eat everything in his path. This poses a problem for Diana since she's in his path...and is forbidden from ever leaving the apartment.

It turns out though that there are older and more ancient monstrous entities afoot - ones who want to devour the moon and destroy the world as we know it. Can Diana, Vom, and the other horrors stop this from happening? Maybe if they can get Vom to stop eating everything...and everyone.

Chasing the Moon Details

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Author : A. Lee Martinez

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From Reader Review Chasing the Moon for online ebook

Mike says

OK, this author is a master of mixing comedy with heart-rending emotion. Reading this you'll be laughing and crying in equal measure. The story starts off with a lot of Lovecraftian stage dressing and then resolves itself into a buddy movie. A buddy movie with all of creation hanging in the balance.

This book is a wonderful work of fiction and a touching examination of what it means to belong and what real friendship is all about. It also deals with perception and reality and what makes a monster or a man. Basically A. Lee Martinez is adept at using layers. There's a lot here in this book and it's woven together beautifully. The comedy and the tension come together to form a poignant story of someone who comes to see the world the way that it truly is...or at least the way it truly is within her current ability to perceive it. She makes friends with the most unlikely of...beings and though they rub off on her, she rubs off on them.

This is definitely a must read. Buy it, read it, love it.

Vfields Don't touch my happy! says

A good book buddy friend suggested I try Chasing the Moon by A. Lee Martinez. So I gave it a chance but alas, this is not my genre. Martinez created a story I still felt compelled to finish. I really thought the monsters were personable and likable, the situations were interesting and number five was not dippy or nutty. I finished the book and for me that was amazing. If The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy was your thing then this is right up your alley.

Lindsay says

Reread for me, first read in 2011. I had such strong nostalgia for this book while reading Peter Clines's 14 that I had just had to do a quick reread.

Diana finds herself trapped as the warden of an extradimensional horror from beyond space/time, but it's ok, Vom the All-Hungering isn't all that bad.

Like all Martinez's books the characters are wonderful, and oddly enough here, so very human. The ultimate plot dealing with the thing that wants to eat the moon, destroy the universe and escape into the multiverse takes a back seat to how great they all are and their observations on what it means to ask unanswerable questions in an existence that makes no sense at all.

I loved it then, and I still love it now. One of my favorites of this author's books.

Mauoijenn ~ *Mouthy Jenn* ~ says

Such a fun and humorous read. I really enjoyed this one of Martinez's. I could not put it down. Looking forward to more stories like this.

TheBookSmugglers says

Originally Reviewed on The Book Smugglers

Diana hasn't exactly been living the good life for the past few years. She's fairly intelligent, decently attractive, amiable enough, and has just enough work ethic and responsibility to get by at her admittedly dead end job (being in department store coat sales is just about as glamorous as it sounds). She's also out of an apartment - so when she comes across a nice, newly vacated spot with affordable rent (and paid utilities), she jumps on the opportunity. Of course, when a thing sounds too good to be true, it often is - and Diana discovers this the hard way. Her new apartment is actually the home/prison of Vom the Hungering (who will eventually devour everything in his path), and Diana unknowingly has just become his new warden.

Diana is fit into a tough predicament: thanks to some interdimensional snazziness, she will never want for anything to eat or drink in her new apartment, and she is, basically, immortal. Problem is, she can't ever *leave* the apartment, unless she decides to open the closet door (that is, the portal to Vom's cell), thereby releasing him and ending her own life. Everyone opens the door eventually...it's just a matter of time before Diana's goose is cooked.

Chasing the Moon is the first novel that I've had the pleasure of reading from A. Lee Martinez, and I daresay I'll be back for more because this book is good old fashioned Douglas Adams/Terry Pratchett-esque fun. This is, in short, an absurd book (and this is the reason I'm using for this somewhat scattered review). There's the situational comedy that Diana begins to find herself in at the onset of the book, the charmingly bizarre space-time analogies (in which the multiverse is explained as a highrise building), the eaters of dreams (to keep us sane, of course), the forlorn Fenrir, the arguments between a monster that can't help but eat everything in his path and another who can't help but spawn every few minutes. Perhaps the most intriguing thing about the novel, though, is how humanized all of Mr. Martinez's characters are - monster, cloak salesgirl, and god-creature alike.

I loved the impossible insertion of different dimensions overlaid on our own Universe, as seen through Diana's newly broadened perceptions. I loved the relationship between Diana and her monstrous charges. I loved Diana herself, with her charm and ability to adapt to the insane things thrown in her path - while keeping her own sanity in check (mostly), even when other mere mortals around her fall apart.

Of course, a large part of the draw to the novel is Mr. Martinez's writing style, which is surprisingly restrained. With a plot that revels in the absurd and strange, it seems like it would be easy for the writing to be similarly hyperbolic - but it's not. Martinez's prose is sparse and direct, lending a stability to what otherwise could have been a truly over-the-top novel. Also on the plus side, the story progresses in a logical, linear fashion, and doesn't go on for hundreds of pages (which would quickly become tiresome). Like any good comic, Mr. Martinez knows when to embellish and, more importantly, when to stop.

Honestly...it's hard to really talk about this book because the joy of *Chasing the Moon* lies in the discovery of

all the strange, quirky things that befall our reluctant heroine. To borrow from one master of the weird to apply to A. Lee Martinez, *Chasing the Moon* is, simply, ineffable.

Absolutely recommended.

Chris King Elfland's 2nd Cousin says

*NOTE: This was originally posted at **The King of Elfland's 2nd Cousin** on 5/24/2011. Check out the blog for more reviews like this!*

A. Lee Martinez' books are characterized by their serious plots, sympathetic characters, and an infectious humor that bubbles out of the cracks in his characters' fictional lives. His latest novel, **Chasing the Moon** is a solid, enjoyable book that continues to showcase Martinez' facility with genre tropes.

Chasing the Moon follows Diana, a vaguely-down-on-her-luck coat salesperson, who manages to land a great apartment. However, that apartment opens up Diana's mind to all of the dark, Lovecraftian monsters that have stumbled into our reality. Diana must deal with the creatures in her apartment, the twisted realities of her entire apartment building, and ancient gods who want to devour the moon. All in a day's work, right?

Martinez' singular strength lies in portraying normal people in absolutely extraordinary situations. His ability to depict humanity, with all its shortcomings and strengths, is what imbues his books with humor. For Martinez, every monster – however alien, however monstrous, however evil – is just trying to get by, like you or me. Sure, that may mean destroying our universe, or devouring anything and everything in its path, but hey – nobody's perfect. Martinez' humor bubbles out of the clash of expectations created by these characters. Genre fans will expect the eternal embodiment of hunger to devour everything. That he might view his hunger as an eating disorder is unexpected, refreshing, and makes the character instantly sympathetic. Martinez places his heroes – human and inhuman alike – squarely before the abyss, and time after time he perfectly nails that moment when a nice person would reach out to shake the abyss' hand.

While Martinez often gets compared to Douglas Adams or Terry Pratchett, I think a better comparison might be Tom Holt. Like Holt, Martinez tightly controls the lunacy of his worlds. *Chasing the Moon* – like Martinez' earlier books – lacks the gonzo anything can-and-probably-will happen world-building of Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. And while it shares Pratchett's serious-story-grounded-in-a-comedic-setting framework, Martinez' world is more firmly grounded in our reality than *Discworld*, where everything becomes grist for Pratchett's parody mill. I would argue that *Chasing the Moon* is not a parody at all, but that Martinez uses humor to show what makes us human.

While I greatly enjoyed *Chasing the Moon*, there were two aspects that left me vaguely unsatisfied. It'll be a little difficult to explain without giving any spoilers, but here goes nothing:

The speed with which one of the principal secondary characters gets shuffled out of the story left me a little surprised. I suspect that was partially Martinez' point: that someone we have invested in for much of the book, someone who bears under the strain for a while, may suddenly crack, or that the cracks might have been there all along and then suddenly give way. I also understand the need to contrast that character's attitude and approach to the heroine's. But that being said, the resolution to their interaction struck me as rushed. I would have preferred to have lingered on it a little longer, to explore that secondary character's evolution a little more deeply. It was a choice, and I don't necessarily think Martinez made a bad one. Just one that left me a little dissatisfied (which might equally well have been his point).

A less significant concern for me was the aspect of horror in this novel. Martinez clearly knows his science fiction, fantasy, and horror tropes, having played them like a violin in his earlier novels. The influence of H.P. Lovecraft and Clark Ashton Smith on *Chasing the Moon* is clear. But while Martinez manages tension very adroitly, that tension never veers into the gut-wrenching, abyssal horror that was emblematic of the classic *Weird Tales* pulps. Perhaps I'm a little jaded, or perhaps Martinez' heroine is a little too plucky, a little too ready to deal with the horrors she faces. The tension escalates nicely, but I found myself reading it more like an adventure story than a cosmic horror tale. That being said, it reads as a very strong adventure story.

Overall, I strongly recommend **Chasing the Moon**. It is a fast-paced, really engaging read. Much like life, it has its moments of laugh-out-loud humor, coupled with moments of deep emotion. If you enjoy Tom Holt, John Scalzi's *Agent to the Stars*, or Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett's *Good Omens*, I expect you will get a particular kick out of it. It's a great summer book, perfect for reading on the beach...although beware of tentacles reaching up from the depths.

Samantha says

A. Lee Martinez is an author I don't see floating around much, but has some really great stuff out there. His books are humorous fantasy and all standalones. This is great if you're looking for something light to read that doesn't mean diving into a new series.

In "*Chasing the Moon*", we follow Diana as she moves into a new apartment and immediately discovers that the amazing flat comes with a hidden cost. Tenants of the building are burdened with some sort of supernatural job. Whether it's hosting a bat creature in their body, being held prisoner by a tiny hellhound, or (in Diana's case) having to share the flat with Vom; a monster who's an unstoppable eating force and liable to devour her some day.

"*Chasing the Moon*" is the fourth book I've read by Martinez and I'm detecting a bit of a theme. While his novels are humorous they tend to have endings that are happy, but a little bittersweet.

The first part of the book is a little meandering, but I was enjoying myself too much to care that the plot didn't seem to be going anywhere. It's mostly Diana adjusting to all the new weirdness in her life, which was a lot of fun. Once the plot did get going, I almost missed the random craziness of Diana just dealing with Vom and all the other oddities in the apartment building.

I also really liked the theme of this one, which seems to focus on how actions can unintentionally cause massive chaos and being mindful of how you're impacting those around you. It was interesting to watch the different interpretations of this based on the characters' powers. Diana, who usually meant well, was continuously causing destruction and striving constantly to fix them. While some other characters caused chaos on a much larger scale and took a bit of a "c'est la vie" attitude about it. So it was interesting watching them, for one reason or another, slowly start to take some care.

If you haven't checked anything out by this author yet, he's well worth the try. Especially if you're in the mood for something on the lighter side.

Veronique says

3.5

“... it always gets better. One way or another.”

“One way or another?”

“Oh, you know. Crossword puzzles. Pornography. Video games. Knitting. Madness. Death. We all find a way of coping, Number Five.”

Quirky read :O)

As the blurb shows, this comedic fantasy is firmly set in the realm of the strange and ridicule. What do you expect, not only sharing an apartment with monsters that want to eat you, but all of a sudden being able to see different dimensions and their inhabitants. Exactly! Having said this, Martinez does pull it off by keeping the writing style and narration ‘straightforward’, which strikes the right balance.

Diana is a great character, and I enjoyed witnessing her reactions to extraordinary and absurd events. The rest of the cast is colourful, of course, and I particularly loved the banter between the monsters, behaving very much like unruly kids.

In this genre, I prefer Scalzi's Agent to the Stars and The Android's Dream, but that is just personal taste :O)

Laura Martinelli says

We’ve gotten a lot of A. Lee Martinez’s books in at work over the past few years, but this is the first time that I’ve actually sat down and read one of them. (My boss passed a couple to me in the save bin, basically saying “Here, I think you might like these. It’s your sense of humor.”) He’s another one of those authors that I’ve always eyed, but wasn’t quite sure if I was going to actually like the books or if the synopsis was just a lot of hype.

Chasing the Moon was a pretty good introduction to Martinez’s humor and writing style, although I’m not entirely shouting up and down about how you should go read this right now. There’s a lot of really good ideas, and the humor’s decent, but for what this is about, this didn’t feel like it had enough heart to it.

I do actually like the concept at the center of the book, that these great eldritch monsters aren’t really meaning to drive the human race insane, they’re just lost and trying to find something familiar in the grand chaos that is the universe. And that maybe, if given the chance, they can learn to live amongst humans—sure it’s hard for the monsters to remember basic human motions most of the time, but they’re doing their best. (And if getting involved in their community means accidentally brainwashing new followers, hey that’s win for the monsters. **ALL HAIL THE MIGHTY GLOW CLOUD.**)

And I do think that Diana is a great character for this whole concept. It’s nice to have a character who’s constantly brushed aside in her attempts to figure out just what the *hell* is going on, and instead of giving up or giving in, Diana finds solutions to her problems. Like magically wishing for stacks of food to at least stave off Vom the Hungering and try to compromise with him. Or treating the various monsters with some decency and respect, rather than just giving into the fear. And I liked that, even though Diana’s find with picking up strays that come tearing through five different dimensions, she realizes that she can’t force that philosophy on her fellow tenants. I did really like Diana, and especially how she manages to find normalcy in this brave new world that she’s been exposed to.

The bigger problems that I had with this book is more of the main plotline and really just the monsters in general. I liked that we do get to see these eldritch beings being forced into the human world, and having to

damper on their powers and not being able to let go, and how that effects them. I like that West lampshades the idea that the universe as we know is usually five minutes away from the apocalypse, and no matter how long he placates his tenants/charges, their ascribed destruction is going to happen one day. But the ascension of Fenris/Calvin and subsequent devouring of the moon didn't feel as organic to the plot to me, and the climatic showdown between Diana and Greg just felt like it came a little too quickly. (Aside note, I love that when we get the explanation of Fenris and his eternal chase of the moon, Diana rightfully points out "Yeah, but that's not what Fenris does." Also the fact that Calvin's followers turn into basically werewolves.)

I also didn't really like any of the main monsters? I get that entities like Vom the Hungering and Smorgaz are creatures ruled by their primary functions, but given that Vom does discuss his transference with Diana, it never felt like the monsters were becoming more human as the book went on. I felt that Calvin and Sharon actually had the most fully formed relationship in the book—that even though Calvin couldn't fully grasp human emotion, he did care for Sharon in a way (as a eldritch entity ripping off Norse mythology can). Sharon was actually one of my favorite characters; I was expecting her to betray Diana at some point, but I really liked their friendship and how it developed. (I'd actually read a sequel about Diana and Sharon's Halfway Home for Wayward Monsters, that'd be really interesting.)

(On a note about the apartment building—much like Diana, I actually got tired of West's continual dancing around of her questions and trying to figure out what the hell was going on. Like, yes, we get it, the universe is full of vast mysteries that Mankind was Not Meant to Know, but if you've been at this job long enough, you have to know something.

On another slight tangent, there's a line near the beginning where West says he has to get an avocado to one of the other tenants or else "California will fall into the ocean." I may have seal bark laughed at that because *you do not mess with sacrificial avocados* .)

In conclusion, I did like *Chasing the Moon*, but there's just something about the book that didn't make me love it. (I'm also not ruling out the last two weeks, because yes my personal attitude does affect my book enjoyment; especially when it's one from the pile.) I'm really curious to check out *Divine Misfortune* now, and see how I end up liking that one.

Libby says

Diana had a predictable life, a boring job, no boyfriend, and worse, no apartment. When she was offered a great apartment at an affordable rent, she jumped at it. There was just one teeny tiny flaw.

The monsters in the closet were real. I can't begin to relate the bizarre adventures of Diana and her otherworldly roommates, but I can say that author A. Lee Martinez has clearly been channeling an entity beyond the borders of Weird. Let's just say that this tale is a little more than half a bubble off plumb. This comes from the fuzzy-edged regions where reality is flexible and rules are arbitrary and subject to sudden change. I liked it. A lot.

Sooooo, do I recommend it? If you are looking for a routine formulaic story, don't go here. It will puzzle and disturb you. But if you prize imagination, this tale has charm, humor and a sort of quirky appeal. It's sorta like a great big, grubby dog that wants to sit on your lap and drool on you. No wait, that's one of Diana's roommates, right?

Katy says

I love A. Lee Martinez's books. They're surrealistic, hilarious fantasy/light sci-fi masterpieces, full of monsters and gods.

This is a story about a down-on-her-luck woman who finds the perfect apartment. The rent is cheap, the former occupant seemingly had the same taste in decor, and there's a jukebox loaded with her favorite music. She even finds a case of her favorite discontinued soda in her fridge. So of course there's a catch. She's told that the only catch is "Don't open the closet".

So OF COURSE she opens the closet, but to her credit, only after the disembodied voice inside promises not to eat her.

Suddenly she's living in a world of multiple realities, and saddled with monsters/gods that it seems only she, and a select group of others, can see.

Oh, yeah, and the end of the world is coming. Multiple times a day.

It's enough to drive a girl insane.

Algernon says

If you want everything to make sense, you're only going to be continually disappointed.

So give sanity a vacation as you join our heroine Diana into the monster dimensions and embark on a quest to stop Fenrir, the incarnation of a Viking deity, from swallowing the moon and bringing about Ragnarok, the northern mythology version of the apocalypse.

A simple inquiry after a cheap apartment to rent lands Diana into an alternate reality where on the one hand voracious monsters from outer space are out to devour her, and on the other hand, she can do magic just by imagining it.

What would you do, dear reader, if you suddenly were granted the power to make your wishes come through? What would you wish for? Wealth ... Beauty ... Eternal Youth ... World Peace ?

But what if the fickle higher powers are out to prove to you that this wish granting always turns sour on the wisher, in the best "genie in a bottle" tradition from fairytales? What decision is best when you see your best intentions create more havoc and destruction than if you let nature followed its course?

Diana is learning painfully that with great power comes great responsibility. She learns about accountability, moderation and foresight. Her deepest desire is in fact for the world to return to its normal state of being and for all the monsters to go back to their own alternate realities. And a boyfriend wouldn't go amiss in this world gone crazy.

As the engine driving the plot forward, Diana is an easy to like lead as she morphs from an unambitious, underachieving shopping floor girl into a spunky and determinate saviour of the Universe. They say necessity is the mother of invention, and having a bunch of immortal, nightmarish monsters dropped in your lap brings out the best in our lead. Vom the Hungering is the avatar of destruction, the top of the food chain in his own eat or be eaten universe. Unending Smorgaz is his opposite, the incarnation of unchecked creation, frantically spawning clones of itself at every disturbance. Zap the All Seeing is the good old fashioned death ray entity, with added predilection for metaphysics. The dialogue between the horrors are some of the best parts of the novel.

There's more on the monster front, but I should not spoil the more salient parts of the plot. Suffice to say the novel mixes successfully science-fiction tropes about folding dimensions, gateways between universes, human versus alien cultures with Mr. Martinez delightful slapstick comedy, tongue-in-cheek dialogue and

unbridled imagination. After three novels by him, I rate Martinez as a reliable alternative to Christopher Moore, for comedy challenging the established genre conventions while keeping its heart in the right place.

I'll be on the lookout for more from A. Lee Martinez for when I'm in the mood for something relaxing and witty.

Lyn says

Hate to do it, and it's rare for me, but I had to invoke my 100 page rule. Life's too short and I could not get into this at all.

I've liked some other of his books, he has a kooky, bizarre kind of humor and writing style and maybe he ties this up at the end, but I could not get there. There was an absurdist quality that I was trying to like, but just couldn't.

Kind of reminded me the animated show Foster's Home for Imaginary Friends.

Mark says

Granted, Martinez does tend to re-hash the same plot, namely the world is in peril of being utterly destroyed, only to be saved by an unlikely hero. But he does it in such a comic and entertaining style that you don't really care.

In this case our heroine is Diana, who moves into an apartment building that straddles different dimensions. She quickly finds herself with several unlikely flat mates. It turns out those Lovecraftian horrors and eldritch monsters you've read about aren't really all that bad if you take them bowling or to the local all-you-can-eat buffet occasionally.

Join Diana, Vom the Hungering, Smorgaz, and Zap the giant tentacled eyeball, as they attempt to save the world from the moon devouring Fenris.

Hobart says

It's so hard to write anything about Martinez' work, because it's just so weird. And I mean that in a good way. Comic, but rarely laugh-out-loud; SF/Fantasy/Supernatural-ish, but approachable for those who prefer to stay away from that; books that feel like they're the start (or middle of) a series, but are all stand-alones. One thing that connects them all is the humanity of the characters--particularly the protagonists, but not entirely reserved for them. Whether we're dealing with supernatural creatures (vampires, werewolves, etc.), witches, aliens, robots, extra-dimensional creatures, monsters, cult leaders, or just Average Joes/Janes caught up in all of the madness--his characters have heart and humanity that shine through like nobody's business.

In this particular tome, Diana finds the perfect apartment for her needs and budget, almost too good to be true, and jumps at it. Then she finds out that the catch to this deal is that she's just signed on to be the one thing that stands between the world at large and a monster named Vom the Hungering, who will (one day) devour everything in sight. Hilarity ensues.

To say more would ruin this light (but not too light), engaging and very fun read. Do yourself a favor and give it a shot.
