



Monsters

Emerald Fennell

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An alternative cover for this ISBN can be found here

A blackly comic tale about two children you would never want to meet.

Set in the Cornish town of Fowey, all is not as idyllic as the beautiful seaside town might seem. The body of a young woman is discovered in the nets of a fishing boat. It is established that the woman was murdered. Most are shocked and horrified. But there is somebody who is not - a twelve-year-old girl. She is delighted; she loves murders. Soon she is questioning the inhabitants of the town in her own personal investigation. But it is a bit boring on her own. Then Miles Giffard, a similarly odd twelve-year-old boy, arrives in Fowey with his mother, and they start investigating together. Oh, and also playing games that re-enact the murders. Just for fun, you understand...

A book about two twelve-year-olds that is definitely not for kids.

Monsters Details

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Author : Emerald Fennell

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From Reader Review Monsters for online ebook

megs?(*`?`*)?? says

I've been trying to wrap my head around this for a few days now, and trying to pick the right words to describe my feelings and this book. I love Miles, I love his character. He's creepy, but I adore him. The way he was fascinated by something that happened to the narrator (I won't spoil) was so so odd and weird but, I loved it. I loved the way the narrator said things. I love the way the author wrote this book.

I don't recommend this book to kids though, because without them directly coming out with their problems, there are sensitive topics in this BUT it connects to the story and the characters and it explains why the characters are the way that they are. Personally, I would rate this book the full 5 stars. It didn't even need to have constant events going on, the narrator draws you in with every little detail.

I would LOVE to reread this. I can't fully express my feelings about this book, it stunned me, and left me kind of speechless, I honestly don't really know what to say, I love it, and I hope that my fellow readers love it too.

Claire says

I didn't know what to expect from Monsters when I started it. I've had it on my review pile for a while.

I loved the setting of Fowey. I imagined the quintessential seaside town with the little independent boutique shops and local museums. I loved the idea of Mr Queen's sweetshop, I could feel my poor teeth rotting at the thought of it! But this little unassuming coastal town is packed with rather interesting characters from the mayor down to the local business people and beyond.

The main character is slightly disturbing, an unusual outlook on life. Even from an early age, she perturbed me, whether this is her actual nature or her way of getting her parents' attention.

“Everyone is always describing me as ‘peculiar’”

I was intrigued who was the killer but this isn't really about the investigation, it's about how murders in a seaside town affects the town and our protagonist. And it's about this odd young lady finding possibly the one person her age who gets her. Many of the characters are shocked how interested the children are in the murders but I wasn't much older when I developed my fascination for true crime which has dwindled over the years and my love for adult crime fiction has grown.

I wasn't entirely sure who this book is aimed at. The main characters are two 12/13 year olds but the writing isn't what I'd expect for a book aimed at that age or possibly even as a YA book. It's a strange book. There isn't a pace to this tale, there isn't blood and gore but that didn't seem to matter, I kept clicking through the pages to the end.

Jules says

Monsters is a wonderfully unusual read. It has left me with a sort of stunned smile on my face and a teeny weeny sensation of pure horror.

I'm finding it slightly hard to categorise. I guess a '**darkly comic mystery thriller**' is probably reasonably accurate. Some have referred to it as Young Adult, which I can understand, as the main character is a 12 year old girl, but as someone who isn't a huge fan of YA, I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed this book, so deem it perfectly suitable for aging adults like myself.

I found myself reading this, taking things quite seriously, then the next sentence would make me gasp with surprise or smile with humour. I saw a tiny bit of me in the main character early on in the book, so I couldn't help but smile to myself at some of the things she said.

To give you an idea of her personality and the style this book is written in, here are a couple of quotes:

"My parents got smushed to death in a boating accident when I was nine. Don't worry - I'm not that sad about it."

Describing her Granny - *"...she lets me sit up with her and watch gory films while she picks the polish off her nails and feeds it to her dog, John. John is permanently at death's door but never actually hobbles through it."*

I also absolutely loved her description of people. For example - *"He is as round and oily as a doughnut, with toasted brown cheeks from standing over the oven."*

I loved the Cornish setting and the variety of quirky characters. Living in Cornwall myself, I related to the community feel of Fowey. It was lovely to see Daphne du Maurier get a mention too.

This book gets darker as you turn the pages, so I wouldn't recommend this if you fancy a happy read about Cornwall, but I do think it will appeal to those who enjoy dark twisted thrillers, and fancy something a little lighter than their usual read.

I would like to thank the publisher, Bonnier Publishing, Hot Key Books for allowing me a copy of this book via Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Rizal says

Can I give this book more than 5 stars??? This book is so insanely good and so creepy! PLEASE READ THIS! I highly recommend this!

Lotte says

"What do two monsters do when they pass each other in the forest? Smile."

Murder mystery meets middle grade. The wittiness of Roald Dahl's children's fiction meets the macabre

darkness of Roald Dahl's adult fiction. I highly recommend this!

*4.75/5.

Claire (Book Blog Bird) says

This book has to be one of the big surprises of the year for me. I saw it at the library the other day and was drawn to it by its quirky cover. By the time I'd got it home and was two chapters in, I knew I'd found something a bit special. Chapter Two, for the record, ends with the following sentence:

Jean doesn't approve of twelve-year-old girls drinking coffee, but truly, Jean can get fucked.

Monsters is the story of two children who you really wouldn't want to meet on your summer holidays. The girl (we never get told her name) who narrates the story is an orphan who lives with her Granny and spends every summer in Fowey, Cornwall, with her detestable uncle and quivering aunt. She has a fairly obsessive interest in murder, which tends to disturb most other people and means that she has no friends. Imagine her delight, therefore, when Miles and his mother turn up at her aunt and uncle's hotel.

Miles is a sociopath, also with an unsavoury interest in murder. He and the girl hit it off immediately and decide to investigate a spate of murders that has just sprung up in Fowey.

If I were to list all the things I loved about this book, it would be a very long, tiresome list and also wouldn't make much sense because so much of what I enjoyed is taken within the context of the story. Suffice to say that Emerald Fennell manages to make sociopaths sound like a right laugh, ordinary people sound like a bunch of hypocritical wankers and Fowey (which in reality is a beautiful town) sound utterly terrifying.

For me, this book has the Big Three: great plot, great characters and great writing. The plot doesn't let up for one second: it's in turn a curious character study and a gruesome murder mystery. Miles and The Girl are terrifying and the narrative itself had me laughing out loud.

Plus, never before has an author made a dead cat sound so amusing. Jerome K Jerome came close with his description of a dead dog floating down the Thames, but Fucko the cat knocks Jerome's dead dog into a cocked hat (box).

I can't believe I've never heard of this book before. Seriously, I can think of absolutely nothing about this book that I would change. The humour is so sly, dry and dark and the plot is so intriguing. Just brilliant.

Recommended for anyone with a taste for very dark comedies.

Laura says

Written like a children's book, looks like a children's book, definitely not a children's book.

Maddie says

I'm sorry to say, I really, really didn't like this book. It reminded me of how I felt reading the first 80 pages of 'The Wasp Factory', before I got too grossed out to carry on. Not for me, but if you're looking for something gritty and slightly mentally scarring, look no further than 'Monsters'.

(I love Emerald Fennell, though.)

Ellie says

Is this a story of two budding sociopaths or just a couple of kids with an interest in the macabre? That's up to you to decide. I thought Miles showed more signs of sociopathy than the narrator (I apologise if she has a name but I can't for the life of me remember it). The fact that the narrator hasn't the same social constraints as the adults, and shares some of her less savoury thoughts, means the pages are scattered with a dark humour.

The story feels as if it's from a different era. I think sometimes seaside tourist towns can seem trapped in the past, but there's a clear lack of internet and mobile communication going on. It harks back to the days when children had to make their own entertainment over the summer. It helps that there is a real drama here, but you can imagine it as a game they would make up. Indeed, Miles does invent a rather disturbing game of Murder where our narrator must play the victim. However it does need to at least be in the late nineties as The Lost Gardens of Heligan are no longer lost.

If you need to like the characters in order to enjoy a book, you might want to pass on this one. However I had a lot of sympathy for the narrator. It didn't sound like her parents had a lot of time for her when they were alive and now she is a victim of abuse. My heart bled for her when her period starts and no one has ever really told her about it. At times I felt the monsters weren't the children but the people around them.

Some of the people of the town come across a bit caricature like but it kind of adds to the charm. The styles is a little like that of a "cosy crime" mystery even if the main characters aren't all that cosy. I've seen a few reviews saying it's not for younger readers but I loved Point Horror as a pre-teen and I don't think this is any grizzlier, though perhaps better written!

Review copy provided by publisher.

Jessica says

Very nearly a 5 star! This one genuinely surprised me. Sinister, original, and creepy as shit.

A young adult story centred around a troubled, spiteful child, witnessing a string of murders whilst spending the holidays by the sea with her aunt and uncle. This book is hard to categorise as although I guess it's aimed at older children, it's almost adult in its execution.

I really enjoyed the writing. The fact that such disturbing things are thought of by a young girl, but are

written about so nonchalantly, really worked in this book's favour. The characterisation of our protagonist was very well done. Her relationship with Miles - a similarly troubled boy of the same age - added a whole lot more depth to the already eerie narrative.

Honestly, even though I was enjoying the story, I thought I had the mystery all figured out - but the twist at the end was a good one. Having said that however, I still feel like the ending was wrapped up far too quickly, it felt rushed and could have been developed a little more for greater impact.

Especially loved the quiet English seaside setting, and pleasantly surprised by this read regardless!

Powered by Reading says

I received a copy of this book from the publishers via NetGalley in exchange for an honest review.

This book is described as darkly comic. It is certainly dark. It is not comic. The first few chapters were entertaining, and I thought I was going to enjoy it, but as it progressed I found it more and more disturbing. I'm really not sure who this book is for. The main protagonist is age 12 but it certainly isn't for that age group, despite the retro cover reminiscent of Enid Blyton type books. Fundamentally my concern is this: the main character is a vulnerable and lonely 12 year old girl who subjected to what can only be described as abuse, as is her aunt - that isn't a comic subject. Animals are killed, as well as people. None of the characters are likeable. The themes are similar to *We Need to Talk About Kevin*, but at least the disturbing subject matter of that book was clear. Judging by the positive reviews perhaps this simply wasn't for me, but I'm surprised that it hasn't caused more concern. My least favourite book for quite some time, misjudged and unsettling,

but it was well written.

Brittany (UnderTheRadarBooks) says

This book has one of the most interesting protagonists I have ever read. It is thrilling and disturbing; exploring the darkest corners of humanity. Highly recommended.

Charlotte says

YES. Bloody marvellous.

I sort of ended up reading this book by accident and I am so glad I did because it was bloody wonderful.

Monsters by Emerald Fennell was made available to everyone on Hot Key Books' blogger mailing list when they joined NetGalley recently. I hadn't heard of it before and so I didn't really have any plans to read it anytime soon but after finishing *Night Film* by Marisha Pessl (which was fantastic, but quite a serious book) I was in the mood for something a bit lighter so I decided to take a chance on it. As it turns out it isn't particularly light at all, – in fact it is pretty grim in places – but it was still a very quick, enjoyable read.

The story follows our nameless 12-year-old narrator who is spending the Summer at her Aunt and Uncle's

hotel in Fowey, Cornwall. A few years before the book starts her parents are killed in a freak accident and she has become obsessed with murder and all things macabre. During her stay the body of a young woman washes up on the beach and naturally she can't help but get involved. She befriends the molly-coddled son of a hotel guest and together the two (slightly odd) children set out to solve the murders on their own.

I appreciated the fact that we don't know the main character's name- presumably a nod to Daphne du Maurier's novel *Rebecca*, as *Monsters* is set in the town where the author lived and she is also mentioned several times. In that book we never find out the name of the narrator and it only added to the mystery and suspense of the novel. I think that Emerald Fennell did a pretty good job of recreating that feeling in *Monsters*. You never really warm to the girl telling the story and she always feels like a bit of an enigma, which is fitting as it's often hard to tell if you are supposed to be sympathetic towards her or not.

This book is not for children. Usually when the main characters in a story are 12 years old you would expect that the target reader is a similar age. That is definitely not the case with *Monsters*, as the sentences are peppered with bad language and the book has some pretty dark undertones.

“Jean doesn't approve of twelve-year-old girls drinking coffee, but truly, Jean can get fucked.”

Yeah, not really something for the little ones. It's quite a strange reading experience because the way it is written makes it feel like a children's book but then the content is far too mature for younger readers. I'd recommend it for older teens and adults- I'm 28 and I loved everything about it. It's dark and disturbing but it's also very funny. I found myself smirking to myself at some of the observations the protagonist makes about the people in the village.

“Everyone keeps saying ‘God rest her soul’ every time they talk about the dead woman, especially when they say something rude about her... She was a bit of a trollop (God rest her soul), according to something I overheard in a conversation.”

If you appreciate dark humour and are intrigued by sociopaths and the minds of truly messed up individuals then I really urge you to check out this book. The characters are all despicable but so interesting and well-developed that it doesn't matter that there isn't really anyone for you to side with. I didn't like the protagonist or Miles at all but they were both really fascinating people to read about and quite unlike any that I have come across before. That said, the tone of this book did remind me a little of *The Savages* by Matt Whisman which I read (and loved!) a few months ago. I'm not sure what it says about me that most of my favourite books are pretty dark!

Overall this was a fantastically creepy read and it deserves every single one of those five stars. Highly recommended!

Patricia Kaiser says

Maybe I just don't get it, but I did not like this book. When I bought it, I expected something like 'Flavia de Luce'...a teenager who solves crimes but what I got was something completely different: a story about two very disturbed and morbid kids! So sorry to say that neither story nor characters appealed to me and to be honest, I was glad when the last page of this novel was read!

Miss Bookiverse says

Zwei Fast-Teenager verbringen ihren Sommer in einem beschaulichen Küstenort, der plötzlich Tatort mehrerer Morde wird. Doch kein Grund Angst zu bekommen, die beiden leiten lieber die Ermittlungen ein.

In Monsters wird zwar niemand offiziell diagnostiziert, aber für mich sind die beiden 13-jährigen Protagonisten definitiv kleine Soziopathen. Auf den ersten Blick wirken sie nur ein wenig makaber, so wie man sich Tim Burton vielleicht als Kind vorstellt, mit einer Vorliebe für berühmte Morde und einem Hang zum Morbiden. Immer wieder gibt es aber Szenen, in denen alles einen Schritt zu weit geht. In einem Nebensatz werden da Gedanken oder Handlungen geschildert, die einen beinahe nicht schockieren, weil sie so banal dahin erzählt werden. Wer beim Lesen aufpasst, dem weiten sich hier und da vor Schreck die Augen. Dabei war ich stets hin- und hergerissen, denn manchmal habe ich Mitleid für die Protagonistin empfunden, weil sie von grauenhaften (und liebenswerten, aber feigen) Erwachsenen umgeben ist und ihr viel Schlimmes widerfährt. In anderen Szenen hat mich ihr Verhalten schnell wieder an diesem Mitgefühl zweifeln lassen. Am Ende werden die Morde schließlich ziemlich überstürzt aufgeklärt. Die Auflösung war mir zwar zu platt, aber der endgültige Ausgang der Geschichte konnte mich ganz gut darüber hinwegtrösten.

Die Geschichte verbreitet fast unbemerkt eine unangenehme Atmosphäre des Grauens und lässt die Leserin oft zwischen Mitleid und abgrundtiefem Misstrauen den Figuren gegenüber schwanken. So oder so entsteht dabei eine widerwillige Faszination. Definitiv mal was ganz anderes.
