



Stinger Stars

Paul A. Bussard

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Stinger Stars is the story of mankind's first contact with another intelligent species—a man-made species that can enable humans to regenerate lost or damaged body parts. Tragically, the intelligent creatures must be repeatedly maimed in order for them to produce the regenerative agent that makes them so useful. Set in a world of rival genetic research companies, ruthless alpha males, unauthorized experiments, and industrial espionage, Stinger Stars follows Maria de la Cruz, a lowly biology student with a stunted arm, as she struggles with the very personal moral and ethical issues—whether to protect the intelligent animals from cruel exploitation or benefit from their suffering to regain the use of her arm.

Stinger Stars is a captivating tale of mystery, intrigue, romance, and ethos that will engage your mind and warm your heart.

"Paul Bussard's Stinger Stars is a superb science-fiction drama you won't soon forget. It's unique, exciting and thought-provoking. Infused with innovative genetic engineering, ethical dilemmas, romance and betrayal it's an outstanding debut."

H. W. "Buzz" Bernard,
best-selling author of Eyewall, Plague and Supercell.

Stinger Stars Details

Date : Published November 5th 2013 by Montag Press (first published October 1st 2013)

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Author : Paul A. Bussard

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From Reader Review Stinger Stars for online ebook

Kari says

A brilliant hard science adventure of discovery.

J.A. McLachlan says

Stinger Stars by Paul Bussard is a unique "first contact" novel in which the sentient beings are human-engineered clones - although their intelligence was not an intended result. In fact, only two young scientists, Alex and Maria, realize that they are sentient.

The "stinger stars" are complex and engaging, and their emerging intelligence is skillfully portrayed. The novel raises interesting ethical questions around genetics and cloning, whether a sentient species has rights if we created them, and how far do our human rights extend? What if we can improve the lives of humans at the cost of the freedom and rights of sentient clones?

The book is fast-paced and interesting, and I was intrigued till the end. My only criticism is with the somewhat simplified characterization of the humans in this book. I get the feeling the author was so fascinated in portraying the creatures - and he did a fine job of them - that he rushed over the complexity of human motives and emotions. Maria's concern that her uncles will not allow her to marry anyone not Spanish doesn't ring true when she does, and they don't even show up to question her decision. Alex's proposal, based as far as I can see on the fact that they had two meals together at their office desks and seemed to enjoy them, doesn't seem realistic either.

Nevertheless, this is an interesting book and an enjoyable read!

Gigi Sedlmayer says

A most intriguing first contact read,

When I bought Stinger stars as kindle I didn't know what I was to expect. Definitely not what was coming up. A new species and an intelligent one as well. Maria made the first contact with that creature with her friend Alex. I nearly couldn't stop reading, I had to know what was coming and how it would end. I was captivated from the first and second page.

It was a wonderful, interesting and very enjoyable read, and I think I have to read it again, one day. Loved it Paul Bussard is such good story teller. Thank you.

Nobody Loser says

Genetics is the foundation for human self catalyzed evolution. Through no other field can we improve upon our natural being without the help of robotics or implants, and we are the only species upon the Earth capable of such a feat. Or are we? It's been a subject for debate for the longest time and will continue to be, out into the universe and beyond, until we are an omnipotent and omniscient people. For now, however, genetics is the future. It's no different in this science fiction piece written by Paul Bussard.

Stinger Stars is all about two young scientists, Maria and Alex, on the verge of being written into the history books, or maybe into the science books. Maria, a young Spanish woman who is still clinging to the ancient idea of arranged marriage for reasons not immediately defined, has a deformity, an underdeveloped arm that sends men running. The arm also happens to be the reason she decided to switch her field from physician to geneticist. She is very pretty, very intelligent, opinionated, and very perceptive. In fact, she seems to have the good eye that keeps making all the discoveries.

Alex, on the other hand, although smart, seems a tad less perceptive. Maria's discoveries aren't immediately noticeable to the man. He's intelligent and yet seems a few steps behind Maria, even though he is established, accomplished, and has his doctorate—all things Maria, as a student, is lacking. One thing they share in common? They both have googly eyes for each other. Even with her deformed arm, Alex thinks Maria is a fine "specimen."

When the two stumble across a small parasitic animal clinging to a worm they are using for regeneration experiments, they make a discovery that may turn the scientific community on its head. Why? Well, the new undiscovered animal appears to belong to a new phylum, a discovery that borders on the impossible. It also turns out to be better than average at regenerating parts and might have an unmatched intelligence as far as most animals are concerned (including humans). A downside is that they are meat eaters and cannibals, which means, if their own kind are on the menu, then what about humans?

My opinion of Stinger Stars is that it was quite good. The book is fairly well written and hard to criticize, but I do think that, with the book being as short as it is, it didn't give me enough time to relate to the characters. I could have understood the plight of Maria more if he had delved deeper into her emotions. I also would have liked to have seen more in the way of espionage wars. I did find the office politics/ethics in corporate genetics to be static fun. The discoveries pertaining to the "Stinger Stars" were another plus, slowly feeding me more and more, which I really got into. The relationships between enemies definitely made me smile, and I think Paul Bussard is on to something with this read. I hope he continues to write more literature with Stinger Stars' spirit. Let me know what you think downstairs!

<http://www.fanboysanonymous.com/2013/...>

Virginia Kohl says

A Sci-Fi novel is not my usual book of choice. However, I am glad that Mr. Bussard's Stinger Stars was my introduction to the genre. This tale had intrigue, good character development, and a sprinkling of romance throughout.

For a non-Spanish speaker, I had a hard time with some of the foreign words and phrases. I wish the author would have either weaved explanations within the narrative or included a glossary at the end.

I love epilogues because they give us a glimpse into the characters' future lives. Although, a brief epilogue

was included, I found it too vague. For some characters/plot points their new roles were not explained enough whereas others were ignored completely.

Overall, an enjoyable read that I would gladly recommend to others.

Clare O'Beara says

Top marks for realism in this entertaining and daring science thriller. I had first read *Beyond Hercules* by this author, which made good use of his aerospace and communications tech background. Now those have been swapped for biology and data theft.

Maria de la Cruz from a strict Spanish background works as a doctoral student for M-Gen in south Texas. She is sure that watching and recording starfish and lizards will help to create regeneration cures someday, but she is horrified when Doug, the sullen son of the company owner, starts mutilating the little creatures to observe the regeneration of limbs. She's not going to work in that kind of lab. Alex, a qualified researcher, likes Maria but she keeps carefully apart, surrounded by white male PhDs. Alex blames the cut starfish on Doug, now in Peru.

Peru is well described; hot, steamy, sticky, slimy, thorny, full of the flatworms Doug despises but needs to collect. Maybe he'll even discover a new species of flatworm. Hold on, there's an attractive woman in the bar, far more deserving of his attention.

Actually, what Doug sends back includes a flatworm being preyed upon by a tiny creature with triangular sides, not an insect or worm but something amphibious and minute. Maria and Alex are the ones who identify it as something new to science. A little genetic manipulation later they have a tank full of the 'stars' which are bigger, just large enough to observe properly and maybe even intelligent to a degree. Maria, with the woman's better ability to distinguish colour shades, realises that she can tell some apart and they are not just camouflaging but communicating. Can the creatures help with the regeneration treatments? Are they in jeopardy if Doug decides to start cutting limbs off them? And is anyone else in jeopardy if the stars retaliate?

This story engages attention fast and we easily feel sympathy for the main characters. Maria has a slight disability which could be helped by M-Gen's research but her thoughts are more for her elderly grandmother who has given her a home and a measure of independence. Alex and even Doug have reasons for their attitudes and misbehaviour. I couldn't make my mind up about the sneaky but conflicted person who tries some valuable industrial espionage. While the topic is potentially vast the story remains at the personal scale, keeping our interest and showing how much is at stake.

I love the demonstration of the mindset and communication of the stars. We know octopi are intelligent and change colours fast, so that's my best guess for aspects of the new tetrahedral creature. The rainforest does contain many more species than have yet been observed - as does deep ocean - so goodness knows what we might find.

Mature young adults and adults who enjoy well-grounded speculative fiction should enjoy *Stinger Stars*, especially anyone interested in biology or corporate espionage.

Gigi Sedlmayer says

When I bought Stinger stars as kindle I didn't know what I was to expect. Definitely not what was coming up.

A new species and an intelligent one as well.

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I nearly couldn't stop reading, I had to know what was coming and how it would end. I was captivated from the first and second page.

It was a wonderful, interesting and very enjoyable read, and I think I have to read it again, one day. Loved it.

Paul Bussard is such good story teller. Thank you.

Alan Black says

Should man play with genetics and cloning?

What do we do if we make another intelligent species?

If they are not naturally occurring, should we set them free?

Can we continue to experiment on them even after we discover even rudimentary intelligence? And what defines intelligence anyway?

What if we can improve the lives of human by torturing clones? Can we? Should we? Who would know if we did it anyway?

Okay. Okay. Okay. That is a lot of questions and hard ones, but does it change the answer if a billion dollars is involved? These questions and more still rumble through my brain long after finishing this novel. That is the sign of a good scifi book. It is well written, evenly paced with believable characters in a real life setting. This is definitely worth the read.

Ceanmohrllass Ceanmohrllass says

Intriguing idea. I love the thought of regeneration being possible some day. An unexpected ending that I am quite pleased with! Great read!

Amanda says

Near-future books that question where to draw the line in research are a particular favorite of mine. It's a gray area in many people's minds, and scifi lets us explore the myriad possibilities and options at a bit of a

distance, which allows for clearer thought. This book does an admirable job setting up a realistic near-future world to explore this issue, although the characters don't quite live up to the world-building and story.

The near-future world of genetics research is established both clearly and with subtlety early on in the book. There are two competing genetics research organizations, and rather than looking into something monstrous or far-flung, they are looking into regenerating limbs. It's a logical next-step for a near-future book. The research labs themselves, as well as how they are run, including the field-work, have a real-world, logical feel to them.

At first I was concerned from the book's official description that the creatures discovered would be aliens, since alien experimentation would be less of a gray area to explore. They are not, in fact, aliens, they are a newly discovered species originating on Earth. The mystery is whether they were always sentient or if something in the modification and cloning process made them sentient. This makes the conflict of how to use the creatures to help humans without harming them better, because exactly what they are is a bit unclear. It's not as simple as if they were simply aliens or some sort of cute, fuzzy creature. They're these slightly creepy worm-like things with tentacles, and the conflict is do we still respect these kind of ugly, cloned creatures for their intelligence, or do they need to look cuter or more humanoid to gain that respect?

The plot is complex and keeps the reader guessing. Even though I was fairly certain things would ultimately end up ok, I wasn't sure how they were going to get there. This made it an engaging and quick read.

Unfortunately, the characters are rather weak and two-dimensional. I never was able to truly connect to any of the characters. If anything, I connected to the creatures a bit more than the main characters. There are also a few instances that feel out of character for the small amount of characterization done. For instance, Maria thinks she can't date because her family wants her to have an arranged marriage to keep the family Spanish. This type of arranged marriage situation could definitely happen, but I had a hard time believing that a woman so strong in the sciences, with so much agency for her career and for her grandmother's well-being would actually even think about not seeing someone she cares for in order to have an arranged marriage. It felt out of character and simply forced upon her to add conflict. Similarly, there is an incident that at first is considered a rape and then later brushed off as not a rape. Without giving anything away, I agree it wasn't a rape, but I also don't think the character who at first mistook it for a rape would have made that error in judgment. It was out of character for their level of intelligence. This again felt forced to provide extra conflict that wasn't needed. The main plot had plenty of interest and conflict to keep the book going without these out-of-character moments. I also felt the accent written for one of the characters was badly done and distracting. This character is a scientist with an advanced degree, yet he speaks in an informal, unrealistic accent that primarily consists of him dropping g's and using a lot of contractions.

In spite of these characterization short-comings, the book still tells a unique near-future genetics research story with a quick-moving, engaging plot. Recommended to those looking for a scifi-style beach read.

Check out my full review.

Note: I received a free copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Kurt Springs says

Stinger Stars follows the story of Maria de la Cruz, a biology student pursuing her masters degree while

working for M-Gen, a biotechnology firm. Maria is also taking care of her grandmother who is sinking into dementia. She is doing her research on a new species that had been found in South America called stars. When the first stars are lost in an accident, a scientist tries to clone them. As Maria studies them, she realizes that they are not exact copies of the original, but an entirely new species. Moreover, they are intelligent and hold the secrets to regenerating damaged human bodies. However, they must be maimed to release the regenerating agent.

Maria must struggle with very deep ethical and moral issues as to whether to allow the stars to be exploited.

Paul Bussard's *Stinger Stars* explores these complex issues while telling an intriguing story. It is difficult to put down once one gets into it.

Kari says

This delightful read goes to show that you don't have to be monogamous to be an intelligent species. The stars' relationship with each other is touching, and the way they changed the protagonist's life is profoundly beautiful.
