



This World is Full of Monsters

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An alien invasion comes to one man's doorstep in the form of a story-creature, followed by death and rebirth in a transformed Earth.

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This World is Full of Monsters Details

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From Reader Review This World is Full of Monsters for online ebook

karen says

But still the story-creature revealed Itself to me, until I understood that now It covered every surface, every space, and even though I thought I had been alone down in the basement among the rat-things and the other things I wanted very much to be rats and weren't...I had not been alone. The story-creature had always been there, silent beside me, breathing beneath me, waiting for me to wake to its presence, to understand where I really was. But I would never understand. How could I? I had not understood the story to begin with.

i have no idea what i just read, and it made me feel a little dumb, yet i enjoyed it.

review to come (?)

read it for yourself here:

<https://www.tor.com/2017/11/08/this-w...>

Fiona says

I had not been alone. The story-creature had always been there, silent beside me, breathing beneath me, waiting for me to wake to its presence, to understand where I really was. But I would never understand. How could I? I had not understood the story to begin with.

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Sarah says

Can't settle on a rating for this. It started off well but ended up being a bit too vague and abstract for my liking. Maybe one day I'll finally give Annihilation a go...

Gabrielle says

Probably my least favorite of any work by VanderMeer I've read so far. I'm disappointed.

The prose is gorgeous and poetic and I am sure that with a little digging a lot of metaphors and deep meanings could be unearthed, but to be honest, I just don't feel inclined to try...

This short story is the inner monologue of a human who gets attacked and taken over by some unknown

entity that causes him to mutate and transform over and over again, as the world ends and his memories of his old life slowly fade.

Some people have interpreted it as linked to the "Southern Reach" trilogy, which I finished a few weeks ago: personally, I don't see the connection at all.

Well-written but kind of a bummer.

Marco says

People on goodreads seems to like this story quite a lot... but it really did not work for me. I am not a big fan of oneiric stories with a very thin and hard to follow plot, where things happen almost at random. I had a similar reaction when I read Lovecraft's dreamland stories, where at least the plot is a little bit easier to see and follow. Some other readers saw deep allegories and hidden meaning in what was happening, but I failed to do so, and I had an hard time to get to the end of it.

Igrowastreesgrow says

Beyond boring.

Hayley says

Wonderfully strange

Such a bizarre, wonderful story than requires more than one reading to fully appreciate the created worlds, beautiful language, and characters.

Terri says

A writer finds a letter on his doorstep which is the beginning of an invasion by otherwordly creatures starting with a story-creature. Filled with evocative images and a very strong sense of surrealism and wonder. It is life and death and transformation and becoming and growing and all sorts of wonderful and terrifying things.

Alex Sarll says

Vandermeer's best work since *Ambergris*, or possibly ever; a fevered fugue of parasitism, transfiguration, memory, loss and solace. At times I understood it as a metaphor for the writer's life, or else for the slow corruption of our noosphere by processes we use without understanding, or maybe for heaven. More than any of them, I think it may be about that old standby, the cycle of life. But most of all, it's simply itself. If *A Voyage to Arcturus* gave less impression of being written in green biro, it would be this haunting and

compelling. And on top of all that, it's free on Tor.com.

Rick says

The poetic, somewhat flowery, way in which this SciFi short-story is written may find better use should the author change gears and actually become a poet. As it stands the dream-like, poet-like narration is just an empty device that hovers in and around a not-even-mediocre story of alien/intelligent plant possession and cloning. Even though I was aware that this was a short story I couldn't help but to want it to be even shorter - such was the nature of my agony as I read it.

Jen says

Just a short story, but couldn't finish it. I just didn't appreciate the style of writing. Too odd for me. No star rating.

Lukasz says

This short story is available for free on Tor.com website.

The story is written in poetic and a bit flowery way. VanderMeer imagination is awe-inspiring. On the other hand, there's not much plot here and it's a problem I had with *Borne* as well. While it was pleasant to read the story and try to imagine all the weird stuff, I can't help but notice it feels a bit empty inside.

Sure, deep allegories and hidden meaning can be found here if you try hard enough and want to find them. The same is truth for almost everything, though.

I like reading VanderMeer but after finishing his texts I feel somewhat ambiguous about them. This one is short and free. Go, give it a try and see if it speaks to you.

Claudia says

The story that meant the end arrived late one night. A tiny story, covered in green fur or lichen, shaky on its legs. It fit in the palm of my hand. I stared at the story for a long time, trying to understand. The story had large eyes that could see in the dark, and sharp teeth. It purred, and the purr grew louder and louder: a beautiful flower bud opening and opening until I was filled up. I heard the thrush and pull of the darkness, grown so mighty inside my head.

I grew weary.

The story of a story's creation in the unmistakable weird style of Vandermeer: beautiful, mesmerizing, lyrical and nightmarish at the same time. Simply brilliant!

Same for the artwork.
One the best on Tor.com.

Here's the link for it: <https://www.tor.com/2017/11/08/this-w...>

Brandon Petry says

Damn

I loved this. So much going on that I felt I understood on a deep and strange level that's hard to articulate. Certainly open to interpretation and probably not gonna be for everyone. Still, wow. Trying to makes sense of a world as it changes in grotesque and incomprehensible ways right under your feet. I know that feeling.

Tim Pendry says

Jeff Vandermeer is quite definitely a writer of the weird. This is one of those cases where I admire the writer greatly while not being 'simpatico' with the underlying thought processes for Vandermeer is very much a child of his time, worrying about the anthropocene and the natural.

This work (which I experienced alongside the equally remarkable 'Secret Life') positions, like 'Secret Life', the human in the context of the alien where the alien is the more natural force. Indeed, his alien worlds are really expositions of the power of the natural to overcome the human.

From this perspective, Vandermeer is not a trans-humanist writer (at least in these two stories) but rather a writer of the post-human where the displacement of humanity into the alien-natural is a consummation devoutly to be wished for - not at all my view since I don't like human self-hatred.

One might compare this implicit negativity towards his own species - the despair perhaps of the intellectual in a world he no longer controls - with the very different and more overt conservative pessimism of Ligotti. One is a green, the other a nihilist. Sometimes I don't see the difference.

These are two sides of the same despairing class - one sinking into the despond of the occult and meaningless and the other sidling into a green preference for anything living that is not human. Both seem to prefer the company of the alien.

Having said that and prejudices aside, both stories are very finely written, taking enormous risks with narrative and the suspension of disbelief and managing to get away with it because the worlds being drawn have a coherence that pulls you in as the narrative unfolds.

'Secret Life' does not follow a simple narrative trajectory. The setting is an office block whose initial caricatured corporatism is brother to Ballard's High Rise and sister to Ligotti's corporate tales of sinister meaningless doings behind the doors of the offices of 'managers'.

But it rapidly moves on from there into high weird fantasy as individuals come to terms with the appropriation of the human by the alien-natural, becoming integrated with nature in some cases as the corporate structure becomes the jungle. The influence of Ballard is clear enough.

'This World is Full of Monsters' takes another approach. Here the alien-natural is truly alien but is an alien invading the world of man through bending time and space in monstrous evolutionary adaptations of familiar biological forms. It is the unnatural natural.

This novella has more in common with Lovecraft than with Ballard (though the influence is there) but the tone is still very different. There is none of Lovecraft's cold detachment. Vandermeer is engaged with his alien worlds and sympathetic to them. He wants to make them real for us.

The narrator goes through terrors and horrors that are presented ultimately as a rebirth into something new and post-human, in tune with 'creation' (in pre-scientific parlance) or with 'nature' (if nature is taken to be all possible evolved forms).

The writing in 'Secret Life' is simple and readable. In 'The World is Full of Monsters', it is more lush and allusive although the tale hooks you despite the jump starts from one state of being to another. And yet it is not over-literary though some will find it 'difficult'.

The narrator is not the detached observer of H G Wells' 'War of the Worlds' (ironically doing precisely what he says the Martians have dispassionately done to us before the invasion) but an emotional being trying to cope with radical horrible changes that could be mistaken for madness.

Jeff Vandermeer is a fine writer and I was happy to ignore what I consider to be the negativity of wanting 'nature', perhaps existence itself, to conquer and transform humanity. I prefer things to be the other way around but I know that is now unfashionable amongst depressed liberal intellectuals.
