



Monster Hunter Alpha

Larry Correia

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#3 in the break-out, best-selling Monster Hunter series. Earl Harbinger, head of Monster Hunter International, faces down an old nemesis -- a very nasty former KGB werewolf who is working to create a new, unstoppable breed. *Dirty Harry* meets *Twilight*. #3 in the break-out series and a follow-up to *Monster Hunter International* and *Monster Hunter Vendetta*.

Earl Harbinger may be the leader of Monster Hunter International, but he's also got a secret. Nearly a century ago, Earl was cursed to be werewolf. When Earl receives word that one of his oldest foes, a legendarily vicious werewolf that worked for the KGB, has mysteriously appeared in the remote woods of Michigan, he decides to take care of some unfinished business. But another force is working to bring about the creation of a whole new species of werewolf. When darkness falls, the final hunt begins, and the only thing standing in their way is a handful of locals, a lot of firepower, and Earl Harbinger's stubborn refusal to roll over and play dead.

Here's a sample of Larry Correia's prose punch from series opener, *Monster Hunter International* "I didn't wake up that morning and decide that I was going to kill my boss with my bare hands. It was much more complicated than that."

Monster Hunter Alpha Details

Date : Published July 26th 2011 by Baen

ISBN : 9781439134580

Author : Larry Correia

Format : Mass Market Paperback 552 pages

Genre : Fantasy, Urban Fantasy, Horror, Paranormal, Fiction

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From Reader Review Monster Hunter Alpha for online ebook

UniquelyMoi ~ BlithelyBookish says

Oh, my gosh! This installment of the series is amazing! Honestly, this is a MUST read series if you love fantasy and paranormal together. There's romance, but it's light. The MHI's ongoing battle against evil monsters is the meat and bones of these books and, even though I'm a hardcore romance fan, I wouldn't want it any other way! We get up close and personal with many of the characters who don't 'feel' like characters in a book at all. They are so real, so human (even the ones that aren't), so you-and-me... I adore them and am invested in the lives of each and every one.

I'm thrilled to have the next book loaded on my kindle and ready to read - THANK YOU BEAN!!!!

Maybe that amulet granted immortality, and then again, maybe nobody had ever bothered to shoot the son of bitch wearing it with an 84mm high-explosive round from a recoilless rifle before. Immortality was a relative term in this business.

[Name Redacted] says

This was definitely the most brutal entry in the series, with some of the most visceral and vicious content. I suppose that's to be expected, given that it's primarily about werewolves and werewolves, unlike Lovecraftian extra-dimensional god-crustaceans or shadow-controlling dark priests, are savage, visceral beings. I appreciated that change; it somehow increased the intimacy of the narrative, which is good because it also had the most confusing format in the series. The first two novels were personal accounts of the live of Owen Pitt and were told in first-person from his perspective, with occasional departures into the first-person lives of others which Owen was experiencing; this one however was primarily third-person, shifting among at least a half-dozen protagonists, with occasional first-person excerpts from the diary of Earl Harbinger.

It picks up where the previous novel left off (which explains, in part, why Earl is keeping a diary), but Earl is the only character from the previous two to feature here. Everything and everyone else is new (with two "cameo" exceptions), and we learn slowly how the events of this novel fit into the continuing adventures of M.H.I.

I don't have a lot to say about this book. I liked it once I got used to the abrupt change of format, but it seems almost... inconsequential ...next to the other two volumes. It feels like what's known as a "breather" episode in the parlance of tv critics -- an episode that doesn't advance the plot but allows for character development and hi-jinks.

Now, given the way it ends, it's entirely possible that somehow the events of this novel will lead into the next and there'll be a return to the usual format of the series. But there's no real indication of that. I'm conflicted! Guess we'll have to see how I like the next entry.

Evgeny says

Review rewritten on September 8, 2018.

I never rewrite reviews; this would be the first time I have ever done this. My first draft did not include rating, so I decided for this case I can break my rule.

Earl Harbinger learned that his old nemesis a Russian werewolf who used to do the dirty work for KGB came to US.

Instead of doing the logical thing and taking his whole team he decided to turn this into a dick-measuring contest and go after the Big Bad Russian by his lonely self. As a result the book was about three times as big as if his team were present and more people died.

It turns out a crazy Russian monster was Harbinger's least important problem as some of his native Americans presented much bigger threat and challenge. Killing everything that moves wholesale has begun.

In my opinion this book was much weaker than the first two. While the usual main character of the series, Owen Pitt does not always strike me as a perfect fleshed out masterpiece of literature I love his sense of humor and some observations. The guy was only mentioned here. Agent Franks outshines Owen Pitt and is always fun to follow, but he was only mentioned here.

The result was quite gloomy book with living beings being massacred left and right. On the positive side we learn a lot about Earl Harbinger (and yes, for those interested in the results of contest I mentioned above: his dick turned out to be bigger).

3 stars is the final rating. I do not endorse some of the author's views.

Beanbag Love says

Just finished it and I'm still hyped. As with the other Monster Hunter International series installments, this story is action packed with lots of humor and well-drawn characters.

I don't like to read anything about these books before I read them so I went in not knowing about the POV switch. I got used to it quickly and, while I did miss the old gang, the new characters were engaging enough to keep the story alive and flowing. I do hope we see more of MHI in the next book, though -- along with some of the folks we met this time. I do, however, think it's a smart move for Correia to change POVs so early in the series, opening up infinite possibilities for further stories.

This installment is dark and suspenseful. I always get stressed out when I read these books, but it's only because Correia makes me care so much about the characters. He creates situations that seem insurmountable, but he always manages to solve problems organically and in a way that's always true to the characters and the world building.

Major gore in this one. At one point even Earl Harbinger says a recent battle contained one of the grossest things he's ever seen. Now that's bad. Still, even though I'm not the biggest fan of gross-out battles, it fits with the whole premise of the series and anything less graphic would feel whitewashed and false.

Correia's writing has improved from book to book. Not that it was bad to begin with, it's just that the first book of the series -- Monster Hunter International -- had a "new writer" feel to it that the following books have shed. Of course, that could just be due to the world being introduced and now its flowing smoothly for the reader.

When I read these books I become fully immersed. It's surround-sound VR in book form for me so I waited for a long weekend to crack it. Can't have real life duties intrude on one of my favorite UF action fixes.

The only problem is that it's the last one available so far in the series so now I have to wait.

Published by Baen so it's not agency priced. The e-books are not sold through Amazon, but can be purchased from the Baen website very reasonably.

Tim The Enchanter says

A Howling Good Adventure - 5 Stars

Random Ramblings

When reading a series of novels, I believe the third novel is the most important in the series. A pattern is often recognizable after the third repetition. Often times, the second novel repeats the plot elements that made the first one successful. If the third novel repeats those elements, a pattern has been created and I begin to lose interest. If the author creates new storylines, characters and plot elements in the third novel, my interest is all the more piqued.

Monster Hunter Alpha is a shining example of how to write a novel that is batting clean-up. This is of course a personal opinion as some readers may find this to be the least interesting of the books to date. Decide for yourself by reading this series. Seriously. What the heck are you waiting for?

Plot summary

Monster Hunter Alpha takes us off the reservation so to speak. Unlike the first two in the series, this installment tells the story from the perspective of Earl Harbinger, MHI's own "king of the werewolves". The story is told as two different storyline. The first being the present time while the second is from the journal of Earl Harbinger. The present time plotline brings us to the frozen netherland that is Northern Michigan. After the events of the second novel, Earl is approached by his former CO while serving on "Project Unicorn". There is information that an old nemesis will be there seeking some power artifact. Chaos and mayhem ensues and ancient magic and a fight for power brings forth "werepocalypse" and the ultimate showdown to prove who really is the king of the werewolves.

The second plotline explores Earl's background and history. We are provided with an in-depth portrait of this character as we learn about the events that shaped him and helped him become the man and hunter that he is.

The Good

The decision to focus on Earl was an excellent decision by the author. It provide an interlude in the series wherein the reader can learn the background of one the series most fascinating characters. The interweaving

of the journal entries and the present storyline was seamless and provided for an enjoyable reading experience.

Several new characters were introduced. Each of the characters is, in one way or another, tied to one of the recurring characters from the first book and at least 3 or 4 of the characters are dealt with in such a way that they can be integrated in future storyline. As the first two books dealt with "the old ones" in some manner, I was hoping the author would introduce some alternate antagonists to keep future plotlines fresh. At the end of the novel we are introduced to characters that Earl feels are the worst monsters of all. It could lead to some interesting future plotlines.

The Bad

In the eyes of some readers, this entry should be consider #2.5 in the Monster Hunter International Series. I would agree that it does feel like a side story within the overall series but I am not personally bothered by it. As it introduces characters that I have to assume will appear in later books, the reader cannot likely skip over this entry.

Overall, it was a very enjoyable story. Personally, I hope the author writes stories from the perspective of some of the other characters. It breaks up the series quite nicely and allows you to explore the MHI world from a different viewpoint. If you think that this is not a recipe for successful novels, I invite you to read books by my favorite author Tana French who writes each of the books in her series from the perspective of a different character.

Content Advisories

It is difficult to find commentary on the sex/violence/language content of book if you are interested. I make an effort to give you the information so you can make an informed decision before reading. *Disclaimer* I do not take note or count the occurrences of adult language as I read. I am simply giving approximations.

Scale 1 - Lowest 5 - Highest

Sex - 1.5

As in the other novels, there are no sex scenes. In this installment there are several instances where sex is discussed in a non graphic manner. There are also several instances where characters have found themselves naked after changing back from a werewolf. There are several instances where there are animalistic urges to mate and some rather chaste kissing.

Language - 3.5

The author has toned down the language after the first novel. While there are still multiple uses of the f-word, the use of adult language is less overall. This is probably in part due to the fact that Earl sees himself as an old southern gentleman. Regardless, it does keep him from occasionally calling an ancient evil being a damn mother f-er.

Violence - 4

As is usual in the MHI world. Violence plays a central role in the story. Don't let the 4 fool you. Earl and crew find many exciting and novel ways to kill monsters. Let's just say that a scene involving a snow cutter is rather bloody and memorable. I gave this a 4 for violence as there violence is not as pervasive as the previous novels and there are lengthy sections of introspection and remembrance. As the story deals almost exclusively with the werewolf and some variants of the werewolf, the descriptions are far more detailed and there are more horror elements than are present in the previous books.

Mr. Matt says

Hands down the best Monster Hunter International book. The best complement I can give the book is that it was one of those books that I just couldn't put down. I stayed up well past my bedtime to finish it. In terms of the other MHI titles, I liked the focus on Earl Harbinger rather than Owen. I thought he was a more interesting character. The story also felt more 'real' to me than the other MHI books. Really awesome book. Lots of fun. Highly recommend.

Downgraded to four stars after some reflection. Fun, but not five star-caliber.

Patrick says

This book was a bit of a departure for the series.

The first two books are written in first person, and they follow the same main character, Owen.

This book leaves that character behind and changes to third person perspective.

I can see why it had to be that way. This story didn't have anything to do with Owen. It was all about Earl.

That said, the shift was pretty jarring for me. Losing the main character I'd been following for two books was difficult. And the loss of the first-person perspective was odd too, given what I was used to.

That said, it's a good story. It works. So if you're really into this series because of the world and the action, that's still in this book. But if you're like me and one of the reasons you're following the series is because you've come to enjoy Owen's character and voice... it's going to be a bit of a bumpy ride.

J. D Wenzel says

I am ambivalent with this entry in the Monster Hunter Nation. I have grown to care for the main cast of characters and when I heard that Alpha would only follow Harbinger I was put off. But, as a big fan of Correia's action packed writing style I bit down that sour lump of dread and began reading. I almost instantly picked up on the subtle differences in the narratives; I don't mean that this is told in the third person. Alpha

has a much darker tone to it, which I suppose is only natural given that Harbinger is a much darker character than Owen. These differences turned that sour lump of dread into a savage grin as I continued to read, eating up the pages.

We are introduced to a handful of new characters, the real draw to all three books in the Monster Hunter Nation, each of these characters is well crafted and each of them has their own merits and flaws. Although you really have no choice but to dislike some characters, you'll find the others growing on you in their own ways and with that growth the pages can't seem to go by quick enough. But as some new development arises in a characters story line you're promptly taken away and shoved into another character's perspective. This is the crux of my ambivalence. In previous installments you didn't have to deal with the constant switching of perspectives, this switching of perspectives is a technique used a lot in other books to ratchet up the tension a couple more notches and while I know that that isn't the **ONLY** purpose of the switching it is a tad bit obnoxious when you're coming directly off of the previous books as you aren't really used to the switching and I only grew accustomed to the switching midway through when each of the characters had found their own places in my heart. At the beginning of each chapter you read a journal entry penned by Harbinger detailing his past and this sub-story is so great that it almost rivals the main tale. Most fascinating of all, however, is the slow revealing of the "society" of Werewolves as this world knows them and Correia's take on the beginning of the Werewolves is fresh and genuine. There is much to love here, but there is also much to get used to if you're coming directly from the MH:V.

Like all Monster Hunter Nation books this isn't going to be a highly intellectual read, but I don't like to make the all-too-common reference that this is like a B-Movie of the Urban Fantasy genre, because it just **ISN'T**. There is depth to these characters and their stories and the plot of this and the previous novels that really goes beyond most Urban Fantasy novels. But the growth doesn't lie within the characters, the story, and the world Correia's created alone. No, Correia's style and ability as a writer has grown as well, so much so that you can **FEEL** it. No, this book and this series is definitely grade A and I cannot wait for the next book.

Brent says

If you have ever read a MHI book and found yourself thinking, "Thanks for specifying the exact grain count of every type of ammunition used by every character in the entire book, but what I'd *really* more detail about is that Earl Harbinger guy." than this is the book for you.

Stephen says

Welcome to the **Werepocalypse...Lovecraftian-style.**

5 easy, **no-doubt-about-it** stars for this **smart**, well-crafted and **FUNbelievably** entertaining **popcorn-fest** of gun-metal, **monsters** and the baddest **minotaur coat-wearing**, creature-killing, **Alpha werewolf** to ever come down the pike. This is a high-quality, well-written page-turner that is a blast to read and yet will not leave you feeling the pangs of having indulged in too much brain candy.

This is a **guilt-free** pleasure.

I'm going to digress a bit before I continue because I want to put my history with Correia's work in some perspective as I have found his evolution as a writer to be pretty inspiring. At the same time, I'll also give a brief synopsis of the previous two MHI novels for anyone new to the series so hopefully my nostalgic ramblings won't be a total waste.

LARRY CORREIA & ME: A HISTORY:

Larry Correia started off as the guiltiest of pleasures for me with his highly entertaining, but definitely raw *Monster Hunter International*, which combined B-movie monsters, testosterone-soaked weapons porn and lots and lots of shit being blown up, killed or sent screaming back to the nethers from whence it came. The series is based on the premise that monsters exist and a secret government department known as the Monster Control Bureau pays big bounties to private hunters like MHI to exterminate everything from vamps, werewolves and gargoyles to more exotic fare like skunk apes, luskas and swamp sasquatches.

In the first installment, main character Owen Z. Pitt (aka Big Z) gets recruited from his accounting job into MHI after he single-handedly kills his boss- turned-werewolf, much to the amazement of everyone. *Monster Hunter International* was high octane, sugar-infused fun rush with enough excess testosterone to put hair on a woman's chest.

I loved it....a lot.

Then came *Monster Hunter Vendetta* and Larry started to really fill in the MHI world and we began to see a highly unique agglomeration of Cthulhu Mythos, ancient legends, secret histories and traditional theism. It's tough to pull this kind of stew together without making it taste rancid, but Correia showed himself to be no pulpy flash in the pan as he showed real growth in his craft. He took the series up to the level of quality that had me promising to buy his stuff on sight.

Again, I loved it...again, a lot.

From there, Correia didn't just sit on his awesome but decided, ala Monty Python, to try something completely different and produced a wonderful, hard-boiled magical alternate history called *Hard Magic* that became one of my goodest reads from 2011 *Hard Magic* review. Correia's improvement curve was suddenly so steep as to be almost vertical and he was becoming one of my tiny pantheon of can't miss authors. Adding to his natural skill at action and slick, addictive story-telling Correia had become adept at memorable character design, plot complexity and fresh, well layered world-building. All this without a single misstep in the pure-adrenaline fun of each page.

Yeah, I think he's pretty darned good.

...okay back to the present.

PLOT SUMMARY:

So does the trend continue in *Monster Hunter Alpha*...a big fat slobbering YES. ****WARNING**** No spoilers for this book will be released but events and revelations from the first two installments will necessarily be discussed. Nothing that should hamper enjoyment of the first two, but still...fair warning has been issued.

Fresh from the events of *Monster Hunter Vendetta*, Alpha switches focus to finally tell the story of MHI's

chief, Earl Harbinger. As was previously divulged, Harbinger is a werewolf and one of the few “monsters” granted immunity from the government because of his singular service in dispatching other bump in the night baddies. As a result of the memory-drain Earl received at the hands of the Lovecraftian elder god underling in the previous book, he decides to journalize his life history for posterity. Thus, one thread of the plot is a series of flashbacks in which we are schooled on Harbinger’s fascinating history, from his turning in 1900, through his experiences in WWI, WWII and Vietnam up to the present day. For fans of Big Z who might be disappointed that he is not a part of this story, I think you will find Earl just as intriguing (maybe even more so).

The other half of the plot involves a good old fashion werewolf apocalypse as a mysterious entity is threatening to unleash furry fanged FUBAR all over the world with the help of a powerful amulet and a secret dating back to the origin of the lycanthrope. These present events also tie in nicely to events from Harbinger’s past and it all comes together in a massive explosion of YUM. I don’t want to say more about the plot because it is really fun to watch the pieces fall into place and come together into a coherent whole.

Just read it and you'll see.

THOUGHTS:

I loved it..a lot. I think this is the best installment of the first 3 MHI tales. While I was itching to learn more about Agent Franks (my personal favorite) and I missed Big Z, Correia’s already impressive talents have evolved to the point where his name on the cover is pretty close to a satisfaction guaranteed stamp. I like that Correia doesn't laurel rest either. This book is a considerable departure from the first two MHI novels. In addition to the main character switcheroo, Correia noticeably eases up on the gun oil drenched weapon-a-llooza of the previous books in favor of more focus on personality profiles and character growth. Don't mistake that for suggesting a lack of excitement. There's still plenty of action and body parts a-flying, just not quite the detailed drooling over who has the biggest calibers present in the previous novels.

I think this is a positive and that Correia's stories are becoming more balanced without losing any of his trademark thrills.

For me, the real magic of Correia's stories starts and ends with the characters for which he has a real knack. As good as his world-building and action scenes are, and as expansive and his list of monsters (which I love) it's the characters that endear the stories to you.

With that in mind, Earl Harbinger wearing a Minotaur-skin trench coat (the history of this item is one of my favorite parts of the novel) and sporting double .45 caliber hand guns and/or .45 caliber were-claws is the quintessence of cool and his battitude would make Clint Eastwood a proud papa indeed. However, Earl is so much more than a card-board asskicker. That would be boring. Harbinger is loyal, fierce, intelligent, scarred, lonely, determined and a consummate leader or men.

So, what's the bottom-line.

This isn't Cormac McCarthy or Dostoevsky and you aren't going to have much to contemplate when you close the book. That's why we have those books to read when we are feeling cerebral. However, in the realm of popcorn, mood-enhancing entertainment, this is as good as it gets and I will take Earl, Big Z and the gang at MHI over all of the likes of Harry Dresden and his ilk any day.

5.0 stars. HIGHEST POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION.

Lo9man88 says

My first reaction was RAGE : Where the fuck is Z at ? You think being in the same predicament again and again "when your favorite character is absent" would lessen the blow but no: you'll almost end up throwing your e-reader,, mistaking it for a good old fashioned enduring book... but no matter after seriously considering "DNFing" it , i powered through and surprise of surprises the book was actually cool and fun , the bloodiest so far, but ultimately very satisfying : and we also find ourselves with one bad-ass character: **“Who do I think I am?” the Hunter snapped as he yanked the Glock away. He held two hundred and fifty pounds of Stark several inches off the ground without so much as a muscle tremor. “I’ve been kicking monster ass longer than you’ve been alive. I’ve eaten men that would make you look like a pussy on your best day. I’m Earl Harbinger, motherfucker.”**

We learn "via flashback" of Earl's bloody history: how and when he got turned and how he dominated his beast , the incidents take place in an isolated town , where Harbinger with the help of the inhabitants "whats left of them" try to prevent a werewolf apocalypse, cut off from the rest of the world by magic "hood's daughter" ,Earl finds himself without the support of MHI so improvisation is the name of the game....

“You know, I’ve been doing this kind of thing a long time....” Earl pulled out a cigarette and lit up. Thankfully, at least it wasn’t red. “I’ve got to say that this is the single nastiest thing I’ve ever seen. And trust me, brother, I’ve seen some crazy shit in my day. Smoke?”

but it all worked out in the end :

“So, this is what saving the day feels like, eh?” “Something like that. Welcome to the exciting world of professional monster hunting. Usually not quite so...messy. Well, it’s always messy, but we’ve reached a whole ‘nother level on this one.”

Mike (the Paladin) says

This is the third in the "Monster Hunter International series" and frankly...it's great.

Well, if you're a card carrying member of the high-brow, elite, avant-garde, literary snob society then maybe not. You my friends are far too good for this and all the other "stuff" read by all we action loving readers of brain candy.

You poor things, I feel for you.

That said, this book will appeal to so many people. Urban fantasy readers, action readers, horror readers...it's all here. The book is a thrill ride that doesn't slow down from start to finish. It has fun and pathos, there are laugh out loud moments and moments so melancholy as to bring tears.

I really liked the first in this series, I liked the second though not so much...this one is at least neck in neck with the first.

We got to know Earl (and his furry little problem) throughout the series, but here it's Earl in the spotlight. We get the tale of his background how he got where he is and the consequences of his actions (and the actions of others). We also get more of the background and history of the world we are functioning in.

(view spoiler)

You'll not only come away from this one knowing more about Earl, more about the world, and more about MHI...you'll also come away highly impatient for the next installment. Oh and possibly a big cleaning bill...the blood spatter is a ~~bite~~ mess, yeah that's it a mess.

Great read, highly recommended.

carol. says

I've procrastinated on this review because, frankly, I disliked the book. It alternatively bored and annoyed me, but at the time I read it, a number of my friends were Correia fans, and I didn't want to rain down on their parade. Boring, trite; lifted from any number of action movies, it was a snoozer.

Plus, Correia is kind of a hater. I hate to give his blog traffic, but the latest post was mocking both the efforts to raise awareness about the abducted Nigerian schoolgirls, and the men working on the anti-pedophile campaign. Plus there's the whole effort to destroy the Hugos by "getting underrepresented white minority conservative writers" 'represented.' monsterhunternation.com (link done through donotlink.com to avoid giving his blog upticks).

Eric says

4.5 Stars

Earl Harbinger, head of Monster Hunter International and werewolf, is headed north to a small town in Michigan after a tip that one of his old enemies from the KGB is there. It doesn't take long for Earl to realize there is more going on than a showdown with an old enemy.

Monster Hunter Alpha switches things up, changing both the tone and setting of the story from the first 2 books. Instead of following around Owen Pitt, we tag along with Earl as he heads north to fight an old enemy. Vendetta started to show some scenes from other POVs and Alpha continued that trend, hopping around multiple times in each chapter to tell the story from the perspective of different characters. We also get a number of "journal entries" showing events from Earl's past.

The tone of this one is very different as well. While Alpha retains the fast pacing and frequent bursts of action, this book has much stronger horror movie overtones.

I was initially a bit hesitant about the shift in formula. I loved the first two books, and horror isn't my favorite genre. My worry was unfounded though, as it all worked brilliantly. The setting was atmospheric, the action was great, and all the various POV threads wove together nicely. I enjoyed learning more about Earl's backstory as well. The only real downside for me is due to the setting and plot circumstances, most of the regular characters from the first two books are entirely absent. Still, Alpha was another great read and allowed the author to show off his skill in crafting a different type of story in the third entry in his awesome series.

XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says

- **Book 1:** Monster Hunter International ★★★★★
 - **Book 2:** Monster Hunter Vendetta ★★★★★
 - **Book 4:** Monster Hunter Legion - *to be read.*
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