



The Monstrumologist

Rick Yancey

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These are the secrets I have kept. This is the trust I never betrayed. But he is dead now and has been for more than forty years, the one who gave me his trust, the one for whom I kept these secrets. The one who saved me . . . and the one who cursed me.

So starts the diary of Will Henry, orphaned assistant to Dr. Pellinore Warthrop, a man with a most unusual specialty: monstrumology, the study of monsters. In his time with the doctor, Will has met many a mysterious late-night visitor, and seen things he never imagined were real. But when a grave robber comes calling in the middle of the night with a gruesome find, he brings with him their most deadly case yet.

A gothic tour de force that explores the darkest heart of man and monster and asks the question: When does man become the very thing he hunts?

The Monstrumologist Details

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From Reader Review The Monstrumologist for online ebook

Evelyn (devours and digests words) says

'Yes, my dear child, monsters are real. I happen to have one hanging in my basement.'

This should have come with a warning that says **READER DISCRETION IS ADVISED** printed in **bold** and stamped on the very first page.

Because man, this was hella bloody. I kid you not.

See, I have a not-so-secret part of me that digs violence and gore in books and movies, so I was practically foaming in the mouth when I learned (through Vane's kick-ass lengthy review) that the story is about chomping, man-eating monsters.

So obviously I expect a lot of bloody entrails flying everywhere.

Splatter! Splatter!

The entire storyline is uniquely presented in the form of a diary entry - split in 3 volumes that had once belonged to an old man called Will Henry who claimed to be born in the late 19th century. When the diaries are uncovered it is learned that over more than a hundred years ago, a 12-year-old Will Henry used to serve as an apprentice for Doctor Pellinore Warthrop who practiced Monstrumology - the study of monsters. *The Anthropophagi* were terrorising New Jerusalem. Through Warthrop's research, they found out that these monsters hid out in graveyards tearing apart fresh corpses while planting their seed in dead female wombs. When they took out a whole family. Serious actions were taken. *The Anthropophagi* must be wiped out for good before every single souls in town end up in their bellies.

The Monstrumologist may be all about defeating the man-eating beasts but it also delve deeper into something else other than that. Philosophy. **Not only is the story laced with gore, it's also layered with cynicism that makes you stare into space and ponder over the meaning of it all.**

*'There are monsters like the *Anthropophagi*, and then there are the monsters of a more banal bent.'*

This books made me question human nature and urged me to compare man from beast.

'We are very much like them: indiscriminate killers, ruled by drives little acknowledged and less understood, mindlessly territorial and murderously jealous.'

Who are the real monsters here especially when we are not so different from them?

* * *

Not only did Rick Yancey not shy away from going overboard with his blood splattered descriptions, both his writing style and proses are absolutely beautiful. Flowery proses usually make my eyes droop but in this case, I soaked in every single words, and I never even feel the impulse to skim! The tone is strangely soothing and it just really calms me down when I read which is saying something because I shouldn't even be calm when crazy stuffs keep happening left and right!

I perked up every time Warthrop explains about the anatomy of the *Anthropophagi* to Will Henry. I love the gross details and the complication that comes with the observations. Reading through all that was like being seated in a lecture hall. I love Biology and even though the whole Science stuffs in the book is made up, it's still attention-grabbing and its what made the book most interesting to read. I'd say that The Monstrumologist has taught me a lot ~~about monsters~~ but that would be crazy. I can't exactly use the stuffs in here for educational purposes, can I? And it's not as if the *Anthropophagi* exists.

Now if we put aside the yummy gore, the intricate writing, the deep philosophy and the non-mind-exploding scientific stuffs. We'd still have the memorable characterization.

The stand out characters are most definitely Dr. Pellinore Warthrop himself (You will best remember him with his constant commands of snap to's and his grumpy-frumpy nature) **and Cory Kearns** (who can't seem to decide what he want for his own name.)

"What do you mean, Cory or Kearns or whatever your blasted name is?"

"It's Cory; I thought I made it quite clear."

"I don't care if its John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt!"

Do not think this is a grim book. Yes, it can be cynical and dark at times and there are the occasional bloodshed and death. But it really isn't all that depressing. **There was humour in it.** Thanks to Kearns and his flamboyant nature which then lead me to finding it hard to decide whether I like Warthrop or Kearns more.

I admire Warthrop for his complexity, honesty, and discipline manner. He can be stone cold to everyone even to Will Henry who he 'adopted' after the boy's parents died but as the story progress so does Warthrop's characterization. Despite his cold demeanour, he has a caring, soft side. When he admitted his mistake and showed a shred of compassion I nearly fainted from swooning.

"I may be a fool and a terrible scientist, blinded by ambition and pride to the most obvious truths, but one thing I am *not* is a liar."

Meanwhile Kearns is a special case. He's the kind of person I'd mistaken for funny and charming with the devil's sense of humour. When the situations turn grim, he was the one who adds laughter and ease the tension. However underneath it all, he is truly despicable and has a cynical point of view toward mankind. He'd never hesitate to use a live victim as the *Anthropophagi's* bait! He comes so close to psychotic that I can't help but be in extreme awe. The dude is crazy but you can't help but admire him at the same time.

I cannot say much for Will Henry except that he's innocent, loyal and humble. He's too thick for me to be able to connect properly though. But since this is only the first book in a series, I can be able to pardon that and hope his characterization will be more solid in the following books to come.

To be frank, the main plot wasn't all that mind-blowing as I'd expected it would be. But despite the overused storyline, I still liked this. **A book about anything that goes bump in the night is my favoured kind** and there were more positive points than negative ones. So I decided to turn off the mean, petty reviewer in me and give this a solid 4 stars.

I would also love to thank my friend and fellow co-blogger Vane for introducing me to this world of monsters and other freakies to come.

Simona Bartolotta says

"Do you know why our race is doomed, Pellinore? Because it has fallen in love with the pleasant fiction that we are somehow above the very rules that we have determined govern everything else."

•First thing you need to know, plain and simple: rarely have I read such a **skillfully** and **elegantly written** book. And it takes a not insignificant amount of **versatility** to write a novel in 2009 and make it sound exactly **as if it were written in the 19th century** (and since I've read my fair share of 19th-century classics, I believe I know what I am talking about). Yancey's ability left me utterly speechless, and more than once I found myself re-reading some passages, so beautiful and melodious they were. So if the author did one thing absolutely, utterly, marvelously right, it is how he set the **tone** for his story.

•**The characters** are beyond doubt another big **selling point**. Even the little, meek Will Henry wormed his way into my heart *-Snap to, Will Henry!* Dr. Pellinor Warthrope is your classic **aloof, icy scientist** with a genius as big as his ego and not a friend in the whole world, and yet, in spite of the predictability of his figure, it's not difficult to grow to like him too, mostly because with characters like him you learn to cherish every bit of vulnerability and humanity they show, treasuring them more than you'd normally do. A special mention is due to **Dr. John Kearns** -or whatever his real name is- who managed to make me both drool and gag over a span of ten lines. Characters like him are the very reason why I will never get tired of books.

•**The horror stuff:** I don't know if I've ever shared this secret of mine with you, but I belong to that category of people who are afraid even of the air they breathe. I can't watch a horror movie without having to give up on sleep for a week (also, I can't watch them because I find the 90% of them rather stupid. But that's another story). I can't even have a look at the *trailers*. I stop breathing when at night the wind makes the door of my room move and its hinges creak. It's not that these things *scare* me, they just give me the creeps and I can't understand why I should make myself uncomfortable without any reason. This is, basically, why I don't read horror books either. **I am extremely impressionable** and when I finish a book, I can keep thinking about it for weeks.

So what did *The Monstrumologist* do to my psyche?

Since I never felt the urge to hide somewhere, I guess the answer is nothing. I mean it positively, because it gave me **goosebumps**, yes, **it made my skin crawl**, yes, it is **very, very gruesome**, absolutely yes, but I never felt actually scared. This was totally fine for me, but some of you may expect from the book something

more properly horror-ish, and either I became more tolerant after years and years of abstinence or *The Monstrumologist* doesn't aim to scare you out of your wits in the first place.

•**Sometimes, I felt like my interest in the story was walking on thin ice.** I could not for the life of me wrap my mind around the reason why it happened, but out of five times that I re-read a passage, four were because I had adored it, and one because my attention had dwindled so much that I hadn't registered a single word.

•Is it a mere coincidence that Will Henry and the doctor go looking for Varner (view spoiler), or does the book give an explanation and I totally missed it? Because in a 23-year period, that *does* seem a coincidence.

"For if life is a question, then I have my answer: There is no escaping it. There is no cheating fate."

► In brief: would I recommend it? **Yes.** Will I go on with the series? **Yes.** Do I want to hug and hold tight the fabulous readers who recommended it to me (please don't kick me out of the cool nerd club)? **You bet I do.** You don't find little pearls like this every day.

Raeleen Lemay says

This book wasn't great for me. Going into it, I was expecting lots of different monsters creeping and crawling everywhere and tearing people apart, but that didn't happen so much. The monstrumologist and his assistant, Will Henry (our narrator) focus on one type of monster and are basically trying to deal with a massive population of them and figure out where they came from.

And that's pretty much it.

The plot lacked pizzazz, and I didn't feel like I was reading anything of importance at any given time. I skimmed through most of the last half, so I technically didn't really finish it either. I READ MOST OF IT THOUGH.

Jo says

A note: I promise the follow is actually a review and not my application for the position of President of the Rick Yancey fan club.

"There are times when fear is not our enemy. There are times when fear is our truest, sometimes only, friend."

"...for only a mad man believes what every child knows to be true: There are monsters that lie in wait under our beds."

When I was younger I never believed in monsters.

I like to think it was because even then I was a little clever clogs who knew that monsters didn't exist and believing in them was for babies.

But...um... it wasn't.

Because while most children were checking in their wardrobes and under their beds for monsters, I was convinced my house was haunted and that a ghost was going to eat me and/or possess me.

I was a strange child.

My house, for the record, was only built about thirty years ago and stands at the foot of the Pennines, not on an evil cemetery. Although there *have* been rumours that, like at Hadrian's Wall, you can hear the sounds of marching Romans on cold, quiet nights....

Um... what was I on about?

Oh yes.

The truth: I always thought that monsters were stupid. They were stupid because they could never exist.

Huge creatures who lived under my bed with slobbering, gnashing teeth?

Please.

The only things under my bed were books in boxes from Ikea and an alarming amount of odd socks and Crayola pencil crayons.

And the Bogey man lurking in my wardrobe, ready to creep out when I was tucked up in bed?

Whatever.

The only monster in my wardrobe is the Furby I given when I was seven and when the novelty wore off and it wouldn't shut up, I shoved it, swaddled in an old t-shirt, into a shoe box and flung it in.

But The Monstrumologist was not the book that I was expecting.

Don't get me wrong, I was dying to read it because in my head it was a story about a cute boy running around with a cantankerous old man fighting monsters. Sounds dead lovely, yeah?

I thought it would be sweet and funny and I'd enjoy it but then I'd put it back on my shelf and forget about it and calmly move on to the next book.

Pfft.

Nice try, Jo.

Try forgetting *this* book in a hurry.

A mixture of fantastic setting, brilliantly thought-out characters and relationships and genuinely horrifying action scenes; this book really has it all.

This book was vile, it truly was, and I'm not squeamish at all. I love horror films, I love gory films and I'm the sick sicko who watches the needle when the nurse takes my blood.

But there were quite a few bits where I almost gagged. Not just pulled a face or though "Ew, that's a bit gross." Actually gagged. There was one in particular bit at the end and, yeeerugh, so so grim.

So if you're a bit of a *wimp* on the more *delicate* end of the spectrum... there'll probably be a few parts you'll skip.

Funny I should use the phrase "a few parts".

Quite apt.

Heh heh heh.

But don't let that put you off.

I can't help but think if this book was ever adapted into a film (pleasepleasepleaseplease Adaption Fairy!) that, if it was *faithful* to the book, it would probably be rated as at least a 15. It is gruesome and it is macabre and it is relentless with its horror but never once does it turn gratuitous and I really loved that.

It's clear that Mr Yancey knows how to tell a horror story without resorting to cheap shocks.

But what is even clearer is that Mr Yancey can delve deep into human emotion, even the nasty bits, and

portray it with startling accuracy and brutal honesty.

The relationships and feelings explored in this book, particularly between Will (oh Will, I think we're going to best of friends. You're such a badass and I will *always* pick you for my monster-fighting team) and the doctor, were so beautifully written that I made a note of almost every paragraph in this book.

I love the way that Yancey dealt with certain characters and situations but I can't talk about them because of secret secrets.

But I'll just say this: There are lots of monsters in this book but not all of them have fangs dripping in blood.

I adored the prologue and the epilogue, too.

Don't worry, you're still reading one of my reviews.

And yep, I still hate epilogues and will continue to hate them until my dying day.

Except this one.

Usually the idea of an author adding himself as a character in his own story makes me feel a little queasy; but not this time. It added a sense of, and yes I'm aware at how stupid this will sound, realism to the whole story. I could absolutely picture Mr Yancey sat in his house, pouring over Will Henry's diaries, scribbling notes in a notepad and researching places like Deadham and Whitechapel (!!!).

There is a part at the end where the character Yancey describes Will Henry's stories as "fiction" and I got angry.

Yes.

That's right. I got *angry* at a fictionalised version of the author denouncing a fictionalised character.

I wanted to scream at the book: "How do *you* know if it was real or not?! It's NOT fiction! I know it because I saw it! I was *there*."

Read this book with all the lights turned on.

Read this book about an hour after you've eaten.

Read this book with a wooden stake next to you.

And....um, a few grenades.

Better safe than sorry!

cough

Just read this book.

You can find this review and lots of other exciting things on my blog [here](#).

Masooma says

4.5 stars

Like the lion, it uses its claws as its primary form of attack, but unlike the large mammalian predators, it does not attempt to kill its prey before it begins to feed. More like the shark or an insect, the *Anthropophagus* prefers living flesh.

The *Anthropophagus* are horrendous creatures who live and thrive on human meat. They are African natives but somehow, mysteriously, have reached New Jerusalem where our hero, Will Henry resides and serves in the Harrington Lane. In this house, also lives a monstrumologist, a monster hunter who is fascinated by these creatures and pursues learning more and more about them secretly although now he can't keep it buried any

more for the Anthropophagus have struck their first victim.

The Monstrumologist is strictly a book for the strong-hearted who are capable of digesting horrible monsters, disgusting diseases, gruesome details and high-level suspense. Rick Yancey has done a phenomenal job in making the book enticing from the first page itself and delivering a fully thrill-packed novel ahead.

The writing is mesmerizing. It suits the background of the late nineteenth century in which the story is set. Some expressions are so beautiful this I was left speechless such as;

My presence faded from his consciousness as light fades from the autumnal sky

The sound of their voices crashing against the plaster like storm surges smashing against a seawall

Unfortunately, such phrases abound in the beginning and gradually reduce as the book proceeds.

The details are horrific. Every scene is lucid. Even a single noise in the kitchen can raise the hair on the nape of the neck.

It feels like the author has mastered the art of scene and suspense development. He satiates all of one's senses.

I heard my mother cry out. A shadow appeared in my doorway, and the room was filled with a horrible stench that closed by throat I could not breathe. The shadow filled the doorway... huge and headless... huffing and sniffing like a hog. I was paralyzed.

He gives such details that you'd keep checking what's behind your back and at every turn of the events, your heart beat would flutter.

The character development is also exceptional. Will Henry, the narrator is the assistant of the monstrumologist- Dr.Pellinore. He is an observant assistant who keeps tucking away important information snippets in the back drawer of his mind and then bringing it the fore when the need arises. He's highly courageous and his bravery is superb considering Will is only TWELVE YEARS OLD. For a little child, he sees and bears way too much and has a personality which would strike a cord or two of each of his readers' heart.

The mad monstrumologist is consumed whole by his scientific ambition and passion as a soldier for science. He's like the typical, crazy scientist, unaware of his dwindling diet, messed-up hair and untidy clothing. Most of the times, he's flummoxed when it comes to normal conversations. But what is the best is the slow revelation of his character's emotions which come to the light only slightly but satisfactorily.

All characters including these two are fully realistic and flawed, submerged in questions of conscience and morals, confused, shocked and terrified like any other human in such circumstances.

I am all praise for this novel and I'd recommend it to anyone who loves this genre, there's a lot to talk about this one but at the moment I've to check if there is anything under my bed!

Vanessa J. says

Original review posted on Books With Chemistry on February 2015, even though I read this for the first time on July 2014.

“These are the secrets I have kept. This is the trust I never betrayed.

But he is dead now and has been for more than forty years, the one who gave me his trust, the one for whom I kept these secrets.

The one who saved me ... and the one who cursed me.”

When I first found about this book, I didn't quite want to read it. I was really hesitant to pick it up. I already had not-so-high expectations for it. I mean, monsters? I'm not usually attracted by that kind of things. They don't scare me, and I think they're for children. It didn't sound like the kind of book I might enjoy, but I'm glad I finally made up my mind and gave it a try.

I don't regret at all my decision. I love this book, and have loved it since... What is it? July 2014? See? A short time. This is the kind of thing this series provoke. It's perfect in its own way. In fact, it is *perfect* for me. **I don't have a single complaint for it.** The plot, character development, writing... *everything* is done incredibly well.

So now I'm going to introduce you to the world of *The Monstrumologist...*

Monstrumology is “the study of life forms generally malevolent to humans and not recognized by science as actual organisms, specifically those considered products of myth and folklore.” The book starts with Mr. Yancey talking to someone who has some papers for him. They belonged to a now dead man who called himself by the name William James Henry. So, the book is supposed to be the diary of this Will Henry, and Rick Yancey's role was as the editor of the book.

The book's setting is in late 19th century New Jerusalem (New England, Massachusetts), and we have Will Henry (at the moment a 12-year-old boy), the orphaned assistant to Dr. Pellinore Warthrop, the monstrumologist, as the narrator of the story. In this case, they are brought a nightmarish creature that feeds himself on humans –the *Anthropophagi*– and they have to get rid of his pod before it is too late and something really bad happens.

The plot sounds too simple for what the book really is. I mean, intertwined with the hunt for the *Anthropophagi*, there is some philosophizing about human nature (my Philosophy teacher would kill me for putting the words "human" and "nature" together) in the way, but it does not bore you; or at least, it does not bore *me*. And also, there is a constant (yet not explicit in this first installment) **struggle between good/evil, man/monster, science/superstition**, and that makes me love the book even more.

“We are very much like them: indiscriminate killers, ruled by drives little acknowledged and less understood, mindlessly territorial and murderously jealous - the only significant difference being that they have yet to master our expertise in hypocrisy, the gift of our superior intellect that enables us to slaughter one another in droves, more often than not under the auspices of an approving god!”

There is a question that is constantly analyzed throughout the book, and that one is: **When does man become the very thing he hunts?** I know that at some time, you have to become what you do. For example, if you're a hunter, you have to know how the prey thinks so as to get hold of it...and in this case, if you're a monstrumologist, then I suppose you must be one of the monstrosities you claim to hunt in order to do a good job.

The character development in the book is done in such a good way that you could *almost* feel them as real people. In fact, you *could* feel them as real people, since Mr. Yancey, being he the “editor” of Will Henry's diary, said he wanted to know who this Will Henry was, and also, because at the beginning of the book, it is stated that Will Henry had just died –at the age of one-hundred and thirty-one years.

Will Henry, as I said before, is the 12-year-old narrator of the story. He's too young to be doing the kind of job he does with the doctor, yet he does it. He's brave, innocent and loyal. His bravery, also, is realistic, for me. I know no 12-year-old kid would be able to bear the things Will Henry bears, and *that* makes him even braver. Besides, he's no fearless hero. He sometimes felt weakness inside him and sometimes fear got better of him, but that made him more realistic. He's now an old man writing down his memories, and we know his past was horrible and that he is doomed.

The doctor I mentioned before, Dr. Warthrop, is the other major character of the book. He's clever, serious, ice-cold, terribly egotistical, cruel, proud, easily exasperated, determined and cares for nothing but his work. He can spend many days and nights in his basement (laboratory) working in a case that has been brought to him, and he will not leave it unless his body cannot endure it anymore. **He's my favourite character in the book and the entire series.** I even admire him and wanna be like him some day--err, I mean, I want to be in love with and determined to my job, just like him. Oh! And I almost forgot: He loves scones.

Jack Kearns (or whatever his name is) would be the perfect definition to what a dangerous man means. If I ever thought Warthrop was inhuman, then wait to know how this man is.

“There is no morality save the morality of the moment.”

Remember the question I said was analyzed throughout the series? Well, **this man is a perfect example of a man who is what he hunts.** Within his charming smile and his silky blond curls, there is madness. He can throw a convincing lie without flinching, he can use a person as bait for the *Anthropophagi* without remorse, he can humiliate and frighten the great Pellinore Warthrop, he delights in suffer, he doesn't fear death, etc. **It's implied that this man is the famous Jack the Ripper.** If that doesn't prove he's mad, then I don't know what does.

One of the things I really liked throughout the series was the Will/Warthrop relationship. As stated before, Will was an orphan. His parents died in a fire, and therefore he had no one else in life, and so, Warthrop

"adopts" him as his new assistant. Warthrop is also alone in life: He's not married, has no children and all his family is already dead. Will and Warthrop have just each other. Their relationship is like that of a father and a son, and I loved it. At some point in the novel, Will says he doesn't love the doctor, nonetheless, it's really obvious he does care for him. He's loyal to him and he's always trying to impress him.

As for Warthrop, he also loved Will... in his own way. He's uncappable of showing any emotion besides anger or hatred, but he cares anyway, because he's always trying to protect Will from the dangers they get into, and if something happens to him, he feels guilty and worried.

And the writing is simply mesmerizing. It is filled with many action-packed, fully-detailed scenes... but it is also similar to Mary Shelley's writing. This is perhaps what I admire the most in Rick Yancey's books. I've read two series by him until now, and they both have a marvelous writing. In this case, it's very dark, gothic and also poetical. His descriptions are pretty vivid and horrifying. It has a *big amount* of blood and gore, which made the book ~~more enjoyable~~ scarier. To add another praise for it, it fitted the time in which it was set.

"Our enemy is fear. Blinding, reason-killing fear. Fear consumes the truth and poisons all the evidence, leading us to false assumptions and irrational conclusions."

Speaking about scary things... **Holy. Mother. Of. God.** This book was completely *creepy*. There were parts that made me feel uncomfortable while reading, and I was *never* alone at the house. There were some parts that made me look around me just to make sure there was anything wrong in the house, and there were others that made me stand open-mouthed and blank-faced. It was so disturbingly horrifying. I wanted to hug myself tightly most of the time.

This brings me to my next point, that is, **why this book is tagged as YA**. I don't say it is meant for adults because the hero is far too young and the theme might not call adult readers' attention, but the book is so **exceedingly violent and gory** that I often wondered if it was really aimed for YA readers. It is obviously not for MG readers, for the previously stated fact that it is far too violent for them, yet the protagonist is the age of most MG's fiction protagonists.

However, it's not only the violence that makes me question this. This book is filled with vocabulary that not everyone is going to understand, for example, names of chemical compounds, parts of the body that you don't hear about in everyday life, words in latin or greek, references to classic figures, etc. Also, **it has no romance**, which we know is ever-present in YA fiction. Well, I guess this question will remain unanswered and I will bring it to my grave still unanswered.

But the sad part about this series is that almost no one knows it. *The 5th Wave* has been read by almost every person on Earth, but strangely enough, this book is, in the majority of the cases, not even known to Rick Yancey's readers. I guess my greatest hope is that this book gets some popularity one day.

Anyway, I'll stop here. I feel I've written a Bible, so I'll finish by saying that after this reread, *The Monstrumologist* is still my favourite series of all time. In my opinion, **it is where Rick Yancey shows us his best**. If you're a fan of gothic horror, then this book might be just for you, but don't wait the entire series to be just blood, blood, blood, because it is more than that. This series starts as one thing and ends up being completely another.

So now, what are you waiting for? Go read it! And snap to!

“Yes, my dear child, monsters are real.”

Aj the Ravenous Reader says

People who know me are very well aware that I wouldn't in a million years pick up a horror-monster book of my own accord. But I have this personal reading challenge in which I am aiming to read at least one book recommended by each of my GR friends and I thought reading this would be like hitting four birds in one stone. But instead of birds, I would be hitting four intelligent, opinionated and not to mention, gorgeous young women's recommendation, for these four lovely ladies-Vane, Tash, Paige and Evelyn are head over heels for this novel (especially the first three^^). (Click their names for their review.^^)Plus, I am a huge fan of Uncle Rick's Fifth Wave series, so this is practically a win-win.

After reading the book, I perfectly understand why any reader who is fan of horror, mystery, pure gore, dry humor, mystery, perfectly embodied characters of the Victorian era, pure literary creativity and imagination and exemplary intelligent writing would fall crazily in love with this book. I did fall in love with the latter half of these attributes I mentioned, the first three though...

I have to admit that the thing that blew me away in this novel is not so much the content. The story is mainly about the 12 year old Will Jenry James' account of his out of the ordinary experience as the loyal assistant of Dr. Pellinore Warthrop, a mad scientist, a "monstrumologist" obsessed with his craft that he had become ***"flummoxed by the precepts of normal conversations"*** (this is the writing language throughout the novel^^) and their encounter with these human eating preys called, Anthropophagi which perfectly shaped children's imagination of a monster. Come to think of it, stories like this have been already told by hundreds of dads to their children as a simple bedtime story. Okay, maybe not as a bedtime story but you get what I mean.

But like in any piece of art, the meaning is essentially of no value if not for the form it is conveyed through. That is what gave this book the huge difference. It is perfectly executed with a strong narrative voice, true to life characters, powerful general message and thought provoking philosophical truths about humanity, intensely engaging plot and precise descriptive imagery. Uncle Rick Yancey has superhuman writing abilities.

At times though, the gory descriptions were too vivid, specific and overly gut-wrenching. There were scenes that made me really nauseous. I was literally sick to my stomach especially that part with Capt. Varner.

Friendly advice: Do not read this right after eating, before sleeping, when you are at a hospital, when you are not feeling well.

This is a certified literary masterpiece although not in this lifetime or another will I ever reread this.

If you are a fan of this genre, then this is written specifically for you.

karen says

okay, so monsters.

this reads like victorian teen fiction, only with more arterial spray. it's got all the trappings: it is long, and there are orphans and mad scientists, an evil madhouse director, and then there are monsters that eat people.

there is absolutely no crossover audience between this and *twilight*. the girls who swoon over edward's restrained bloodlust are going to be horrified by the multiple beheadings and the scene where a child is reduced to a fine mist of blood splatter-painting a living room.

so why isn't this book awesome?

years ago, before i was captured and dragged kicking and screaming into the Land of Teen Fiction, i had a certain conception of what teen fiction was "like", and i thought "this is not for me, it is for teens and unbright adults". and then i read some really great teen fiction, and felt ashamed for being so dismissive without having done any actual legwork.

but this book is pretty much the way i thought teen fiction was before my conversion. it's fine...for kids. it's got a fast pace; even though it is long, you just burn right through it, there are a lot of action sequences, the characters aren't terribly original or developed, but it's all about the monsters, right? and the gore.

it's not awful, it's just not terribly sophisticated, despite its references to jonathan swift and shakespeare (william) and herotodus and other classical mythologies.... oh, and the kid's name is william henry james. so, there's that..you know, for the kids.

but, it is probably a fine, quick halloween read. i shrugz.

Neil (or bleed) says

3.5

adult image

I agree with Frosch. This book is yucky. By yucky, I mean totally gross and stomach-churning. With the book's graphic and vivid descriptions of the gory and bloody scenes, I can always hear my stomach complaining and twisting not of hunger but of disgust. If it can speak I know my stomach will beg me to stop reading this book.

The Monstrumologist is a great book. I know I got bored with the first half of this book because the writing

and I didn't get so well but I thought it was good all the same. When a book made me think and feel things and imparted knowledge and stirred something in me (e.g. textbooks), I labeled it good even I had difficult times reading it.

Besides, the second half redeemed itself and rectified my boredom to anticipation and excitement. And I thanked Dr. Kearns and his odd personality for that. I enjoyed his humor, oddity and being honest and brutal.(if that's the right term for it). I really can't describe his character but I can say that I love and hate him at the same time.

I also love the major characters Pellinore Warthrop and Will Henry, especially, when the two are talking to each other. I found their conversations funny and it lessen my boredom away after a long narrative of nosebleed English words and phrases.

At first, I can't connect with Warthrop but in the end, I realized how he truly cares with Will Henry. I felt happy about it, I swear. The story of his past and the longing for his father revealed his true self that he won me over.

Nonetheless, I admired Will James Henry for he is a brave, well-mannered kid on his time. I admired his perception, patience and thoughts. He looked like a monotonous, boring kid but he saw things and thought about them and it made the difference. Though, sometimes, I got bored with his narrative.

Finally, I love love the last chapter and the epilogue. I can feel that it is hinting something interesting, mysterious. I just hope I won't be disappointed.

Mia (Parentheses Enthusiast) says

*"I had a thought, dear, however scary
About that night, the bugs and the dirt
Why were you digging?
What did you bury
Before those hands pulled me from the earth?*

*I will not ask you where you came from,
I will not ask and neither should you."*
-Hozier, 'Like Real People Do'

The doctor is *in!*

What to say about this book? I have a lot to say, actually, but right now I have that wonderful feeling of total satisfaction that you get from finishing a book that had all the right stuff in it- plot, writing, characters, structure- the whole bloody, shocking, fantastic, gory enchilada. Because there's so much to talk about, I'll separate this review into sections to spare you the horror of reading through an enormous wicket of blocks of text.

Synopsis

The book opens in June of 2007, when Yancey, the author, is commissioned by the director of a retirement

home to leaf through the journals of a resident by the name of William James Henry. Will, who claimed to have been born in 1876, died a few days before, and these were the last of his possessions, so the director asks Mr Yancey to read through them and search for any identifying details as to Will's identity, or specifications to whom the journals should be passed on, as nobody has claimed Will as their kin. Like any self-respecting author confronted with several folios of mysterious, worn notebooks, Yancey accepts the offer. What follows are the first three folios of Will's journals.

The rest of the book is set in 1888, New England, with a twelve-year-old Will Henry as the protagonist and narrator, whose parents died a year ago in a fire and who, ever since, has lived with Pellinore Warthrop, a cold and mysterious doctor of even an more mysterious profession- monstrumology. What happens in Will's second year under Warthrop's care is an exceedingly strange and gruesome affair concerning bloodthirsty monsters and more than a few morally bankrupt supporting characters. We'll travel with Will to horrifying sanatoriums, into misty graveyards and through dank, pitch-dark tunnels where it becomes ever more difficult to believe Dr Warthrop's saying that fear is the ultimate enemy. The claustrophobia and insanity, the smell of smoke and decay, monsters in forms both familiar and foreign, blood and sinew and bones- these are the things that distinguish *The Monstrumologist*. And I loved every damn second of it.

William James Henry

After Will's parents died when his house burned down- the grisly details of which are revealed later on- his father's employer, one Doctor Pellinore Warthrop, takes him in. It's immensely lonely for Will living at the Warthrop residence on 425 Harrington Lane- it would be for anyone, even more so a twelve-year-old boy thrown into new and terrifying circumstances. His parents' deaths were so sudden that he's now thrust into the demanding job of being Warthrop's assistant, and all that it entails: being woken up late at night for whatever Warthrop needs, assisting with necropsies, cooking, cleaning, and generally helping with the doctor's obscure calling.

Not to fear, though- Will is a tough little orphan. He sees things that would send grown adults cowering into corners, monsters that everyone has always assumed only live in our darkest nightmares. It's a solitary way to live, and despite Warthrop's presence, Will is usually on his own.

I was not unused to this odd isolation in his company, but had yet to become accustomed to the effect it had upon me: There is no loneliness more profound, in my experience, than being ignored by one's sole companion in life. Whole days would pass with nary a word from him, even as we supped together or worked side by side in the laboratory or took our evening constitutional along Harrington Lane. When he did speak to me, it was rarely to engage me in conversation; rather, our roles were rigidly defined. His was to speak; mine was to pay attention. He held forth; I listened. He: the orator; I: the audience. I had learned quickly not to speak unless spoken to; to obey any command instantly and without question, no matter how mystifying or seemingly absurd; to stand ready, as it were, as a good soldier dedicating his sacred honor to a worthy cause, though it was the rare instance when I understood precisely what that cause might be.

Pellinore Warthrop

As much as I loved little Will Henry, Warthrop was, without a doubt, my favourite character. He is the eponymous monstrumologist- he studies, and, if necessary, hunts "life forms generally malevolent to humans

and not recognized by science as actual organisms, specifically those considered products of myth and folklore." He takes this profession seriously- his work is his life, and he often spends days at a time without eating or sleeping, sustained only on black tea, if he has a lead on one of these malevolent organisms.

I was expecting a pretty cut-and-dried mad scientist- obsessed with science, has some sort of sinister master plan or agenda for his research (taking over the world maybe?), ruthless, willing and able to lie and cheat and steal to achieve his ends.

What I got instead was Doctor Warthrop.

He's quite earnest- he is obsessed with monstrosity, but he also has a regard for human life, and he isn't quite as ruthless as he may seem at first. He's tough and wickedly smart, but he's as stubborn and uncooperative and egotistical as they come. I think Warthrop described himself best when he said:

"We are slaves, all of us, Will Henry. Some are slaves to fear. Others are slaves to reason- or base desire. It is our lot to be slaves, Will Henry, and the question must be to what shall we owe our indenture? Will it be to truth or to falsehood, hope or despair, light or darkness? I choose to serve the light, even though that bondage often lies in darkness."

WARTHROP is such a fascinating and complex character, and puzzling together his intentions and motivations is an equally fascinating exercise. Also, how awesome of a name is PELLINORE WARTHROP?!

The Monsters

These are monsters done *right!* They aren't the monsters we've become accustomed to seeing- they don't brood about their fate, they don't pretend to be human, they don't pine for humanity or love or release from their bestial confines.

They are *ferocious*.

They have *no heads*.

They eat humans *alive*.

They have a bite-force of *two thousand pounds*.

They are *Anthropophagi*.

They are monsters whose mouths are gaping pits of razor-sharp teeth set into the middle of their torso, who feast upon human flesh with the unbridled ferocity of a Tasmanian devil. Think this:

Combined with this:

To form something along the lines of this:

...And you've pretty much got an Anthropophagus. They're the villains of this story, the monsters to be exterminated, and they are really worthy monsters. Horrifying.

Plot

There are two main plotlines working in tandem in this book: 1) The mystery of how the Anthropophagi pod got to America in the first place, and 2) The dilemma of how to kill them all, when their strength is far superior to humans'. I'm purposely keeping it vague here because I don't want to give you any hints to either of the answers to these questions.

You've probably noticed that I gave this book four stars. Make no mistake, I loved it- but since lying is the worst kind of buffoonery I must confess that I did not find the plot five-star worthy. It's pretty linear, which is fine because it's executed well and there are a fair amount of twists, but I kind of wish there was more going on. I love a book that can juggle several plots and character arcs without making them too jumbled or confusing, books like *The Shadow of the Wind*. *The Monstrumologist* had five star potential, no doubt, but the plot was rather simple, and even though it was only .5 stars away from being a five, I round my reviews down because I am a cold-hearted harpy.

Writing

Apart from the extremely well fleshed-out characters, Rick Yancey's writing is really what makes this book shine. He masters the gothic Victorian tone and aces the setting, and he was able pull off the feeling of a 100+ year-old man looking back on experiences he had when he was 12. The sentences are gorgeous, the metaphors complex and beautiful, and somehow it never feels purple or overwrought. It would be so easy to venture into cheesy or cliché territory here, but Yancey deftly avoids the line separating high-quality from trying-too-hard. He also seems to be very fond of alliteration- there's a lot of it in the book- which I actually quite liked.

Beware, my more sensitive friends- there is a sizable amount of gore and nastiness within these pages, so read at your own risk. Some scenes even feature pus, that most repulsive of bodily fluids. But, to me, it was never gratuitous, and in places it really helped me to step into the book, to feel the revulsion and shock and horror that Will felt, the horror of realising that all the nightmares of things waiting in the dark were not fabrications at all. Take, for instance, the sanatorium scene with Hezekiah Varner- for the last three pages I didn't even realise I was holding my breath until my vision started to swim.

*"Fresh from the fields, all fetor and fertile,
It's bloody and raw, but I swear it is sweet."* -Hozier, 'Angel of Small Death & the Codeine Scene'

Closing Thoughts

While the marketing for *The Monstrumologist* really sells it short, in my opinion- this is most definitely NOT Young Adult Fiction!- the book remains a remarkably well-written and thoroughly entertaining story. The characters are not only relatable and interesting, but they ask important questions, something I wish more books would do. Questions like, when do the ends justify the means? Is one life taken worth one life saved? What happens when a scientist get to close to the subject? Finally, how are humans really different from all other animals, and will the belief that we have conquered nature's viciousness be our downfall?

Will Henry and Warthrop's relationship was wonderful, their seemingly one-sided conversations were hilarious, and the way their roles grew and changed and became less defined felt natural and was really quite touching.

Sorry if this review is long and dry and doesn't do the book justice, I am very tired but I felt the need to review this because it is such an incredibly absorbing book. I'm looking forward to tearing through The Curse of the Wendigo next!

Also: I must send out my heartfelt thanks to the lovely Vane. Without her prodding me to finally pick this book up, I've no doubt it would have just sat on my TBR shelf for months, perhaps years. I blame her for my budding addiction to this series. Also, check out Tash's and Evelyn's great reviews of this book, two other friends who assisted in the creation of my obsession.

?Tash says

5 morally ambiguous stars and a fangirly, gify and, possibly, incoherent review.

Buddy read with my precious BookDragon.

Q: What do you get when you cross Supernatural and Sherlock?

A: Me

Yes, I am a shameless fan girl for both shows. Not even sorry, but it gets awkward for onlookers when I fangirl in public. I've been asked more than I care to count what are in these shows for me to completely lose my shit over them?

What indeed? I love both shows because they deal with mysteries and the macabre, they're infused with equal parts humor and tragedy, and lastly, they both have charming main and supporting characters. Not that I care, the main characters are,eh, somewhat pleasing to the eyes too.

And what the heck does it have to do with The Monstrumologist? I loved this book to gory bits for the same reasons as I love Superlock and let me breakdown the ways:

***Characters** – typical to Victorian gothic, we have the mad scientist, the orphan, the seemingly incompetent constable and, uh, a Van Helsing-y monster hunter. Our narrator is 12 year old orphan straight from a Dickens book named Will Henry. He tells us of his adventures as an assistant to New England's premiere Monstrumologist (doctor of the study of monsters) , Pellinore Warthrop, who is...

Then we have our extremely charming and pragmatic gun for hire/monster hunter, John Kearns, who has zero delusions of morality.

All the main characters in this book are morally ambiguous. Their actions invoke that age old conundrum of the double-effect reasoning. Needless to say, I loved the characters exactly for this complexity.

P.S. The main characters are all male. I guess it's understandable given that science and law-keeping were exclusive for males in the Victorian era, but there better be ladies in the next few books.

***Setting** – set in a fictional NE town called New Jerusalem, we have all the landscapes typical of Victorian gothic. We have the misty graveyard complete with intricate mausoleums, townhouses with underground laboratories and tiny lofts for servants or orphaned assistants, and decrepit insane asylums. Admittedly, the setting isn't that distinctive for this book, but it was done well enough for the story.

***Plot and pacing** – the best features of the book, imo. Despite the hefty 454 pages, this was a fast paced read. We get action from the start to the end. I've read The Fifth Wave books so I know that Rick Yancey doesn't shy away from blood and gore, but he overdid himself here.

He does *ew* to full on *hoark*. I am not squeamish at all, but damn you Rick Yancey for that pus in the mouth scene.

And the monsters, y'all, stuff of nightmares! Not even romanticized a bit, there are no vampires suffering from ennui or tortured geniuses in love with naïve ingénue here. We get monsters of the primeval sort, I'd like to say that they're dumb but they're not, they are intelligent in a way predators are, unhampered by conscience. We also have monsters of the human variety in this book.

To end my ramblings, here is a quote from this novel, which I think perfectly captures the essence of the book: *"We are slaves, all of us...Some are slaves to fear. Others are slaves to reason—or base desire. It is our lot to be slaves...and the question must be to what shall we owe our indenture? Will it be to truth or to falsehood, hope or despair, light or darkness? I choose to serve the light, even though that bondage often lies in darkness."* “

Paige Bookdragon says

EDIT: 1/20/2016:

I'm so sorry for this recurring review. I did a reread with this one and I didn't even put my updated review. I was furious with the momentary disappearance of my old review and at the same time, I was hooked with Twitter.. (follow us btw, <https://twitter.com/TheWildReaders?l...>)

My review was gone and if not for Tash who gave me a link to my original review, I wouldn't have any review to this wonderful book all.

So here's some cookies and hot fafa for Tash:

Now that I'm done with my shameless self promotion, here's what I think of The Monstrumologist.

Of course it's still as awesome as ever and rereading it for the 2nd time around, I was able to savor each gross and bloody moment as much as I can. But I want to stress Jack Kearns character with this one:

Make no mistake, Kearns is really a villain in this book. Try pushing the main character in the cliff and feed a young lady to the monster and your status will be villain. Yes yes, the Anthropophagi are the monsters, but they were the fairy tale type of monsters. They can be defeated by a fairy tale type of hero and means.

But Kearns is different. He's the type of villain that we should really fear. He's cold, heartless, cunning and he can be found in the heart of any man. I have to admit that while I was reading the part where Kearns used the lady as a bait because that's one of the easiest way to let the monsters out, I was rooting for him.

I was ashamed because my morals were screaming at me. But deep down, I admire him. He will do any means to finish the job, morals and society be damned. When he pushed Will Henry, I hated him, but I ~~respected~~ understand why he have to do it.

So one of the reasons why The Monstrumologist is a great book is that it shows us that yes.. *we are all monster.*

Review

Tash's review convinced me to make my own fangirl review for Warthrop-baby.

The Monstrumologist is definitely one of the best books that I've ever read. If you're a fan of **monsters**:

I mean, **scary, human-eating monsters,**

a sexy, mad genius scientist,

and blood and gore,

then this book/series is definitely for you.

The Monstrumologist was told by Will Henry. He was Warthrop's indispensable assistant. He was only around 12 or 13 when he lived with Warthrop and all the things that he "witnessed", he wrote it in his journal which will eventually be this book.

The things that you'll read in this book is definitely guaranteed to make you vomit. Rick Yancy didn't hold back when it comes to the bloody part, so if you're a little squeamish, just make sure you have a bucket or bowl you can puke into.

CHARACTERS::

Pellinore Warthrop:

I love this crazy, selfish, son of a bitch. He is not the usual swoon worthy hero I usually go with, but Pellinore is one of a kind. He is very paradoxical. His ego is so big it should have its own zip code, he is cold, ruthless, kinda obtuse when it comes to feelings and he's moody.

(This is my Pellinore Warthrop, Tash and Vane. Isn't he so fucking sexy? All the broody stare and madness is his face is visible. I want to lick him up and down.

William James Henry :

Jesus wept.

Will is the kind of character that you just want to pick up and hug till his heart and soul glowed with happiness. Will's voice is fascinating and heart wrenching. He just wants to be a child but knows he has to 'man up' because if you're living with a certain Pellinore Warthrop, you really have to toughen up.

(Note: Saw this photo and I can't help casting them as Warthrop and Will Henry)

John Kearns

What to say about this character? He's charismatic and he's ruthless. He does have a shady moral and he's loves upsetting Warthrop. He's the kind of person who makes other people want to punch him.

The The Monstrumologist is the type of book that I wouldn't hesitate to recommend.

Here are the reason why you should buy a copy of this book and read it:

The suspense is top-notch.

The book has this thing called "character development".

Pellinore Warthrop. ('Nuff said.)

No bullshits in this book.

Scary monsters.

Monster hunting.

And this book shows us that humans are sometimes more terrifying than the things that we hunt.

Brigid ☆ Cool Ninja Sharpshooter ☆ says

This book was quite the pleasant surprise.

I didn't really know what to expect when I first picked it up. I had heard of it a couple of times before—and maybe I'd seen it at the library and previously thought about reading it. I just recalled being told that this book was really graphic and frightening. So I was just like, "Well, here goes nothing!"

Within about twenty or thirty pages, I was already feeling a bit sick to my stomach. Let's just say, this book just got right into the gory stuff. And since I'm kind of a squeamish person, at first I really didn't think I was going to enjoy this. But as I got further into the story, I found myself more and more wrapped up in it. And ultimately, I actually loved it. (Hence, the five stars.)

But let's go a little more into detail ...

The setting of the story is a bit ambiguous—but we know it takes place in the late 1800's in New England (possibly in or somewhere around Massachusetts—my home state, woohoo!). Our protagonist is 12-year-old Will Henry, who is an assistant/apprentice to Pellinore Warthrop—aka the doctor, or the monstrumologist. Will is an orphan, taken in by the doctor after the gruesome death of Will's parents. (Will's father also worked for the doctor.)

Monstrumology is the scientific study and the hunting of monsters. In this particular case, Will and Dr. Warthrop are studying the sudden outbreak of a monster called the *Anthropophagi*—which is a somewhat humanlike creature, except it has no head, and it has eyes in its shoulders and a mouth for a stomach. Oh, and it eats people of course.

Bahaha, okay. No more "Troll 2" jokes, I promise.

Anyway, I was kind of surprised to see that this book has kind of a low rating on Goodreads (I mean, considering a lot of really awful books have averages of like 4.5 and this book has a 3.9). But, I also realize that this book might not appeal to the majority of the YA audience, for several reasons:

1. There is no romance.
2. In fact, there are no major female characters in this book at all. Probably only three or four women show up in the entire story, and they're very, very minor characters.
3. There's a lot of extreme and graphic violence. (I mean, if you think The Hunger Games is violent for a YA book, just ... HAHAHAHAHAHAHA. You have no idea.)

4. The main character is quite young. He's not even a teenager himself. If it weren't for all the gore and whatnot, the book would probably be middle grade solely based on the protagonist's age.

5. The writing is kind of in a Gothic/Romantic style—think along the lines of Mary Shelley or Edgar Allan Poe. So, probably not something that a lot of younger readers are used to, or can easily understand. I see a lot of negative reviews complaining that the writing is too old-fashioned and whatnot. Although, since it's set more than a hundred years ago, I think the style makes sense ... but everyone's entitled to their opinion and all. And if you don't like that type of classic style, this book is probably not going to be your thing.

So anyway, I see how this book is difficult to put into a genre. I guess it's the type of book that's just categorized as YA because it's too mature to be for children, but the protagonist is also very young so you can't really aim it at adults. But, I think there are a lot of things about this book that a lot of younger teenage readers might not enjoy. I mean, if I read this book when I was 13 or so, I probably would have hated it. If I had read it back then, I don't think I would have understood the influences behind it and it just wouldn't have been as interesting to me. Now, being almost an adult, I can see what might have inspired Rick Yancey.

As I've already mentioned, the style seemed to have a lot of Gothic and Romantic influence. The story is full of gloom and horror and mystery, and of course is full of supernatural elements. Yancey also writes in great detail, creating a lot of horrific and unforgettable images.

And that brings me to the writing. Oh, how I love the writing in this book. I mean ... WOW. Mr. Yancey is just terrific at detailed imagery. I could see everything so clearly. And yes, most of it was really frightening and disgusting, and caused me to make faces like this:

But it takes a lot of skill to create such memorable images!

The whole thing sort of reminded me of reading something Shelley/Poe-esque, crossed with Sherlock Holmes or something. Although, I think that might just be because Dr. Warthrop reminded me a lot of Sherlock—in love with his work but usually unfeeling towards other people, brilliant but also kind of insane, etc. Ahhh. I was kind of in love with him. But maybe that's just because I kept picturing him looking like Benedict Cumberbatch ...

MMMM.

Uh, where was I? Oh yeah.

So, I guess that brings me to the characterization. If you haven't gathered it already, Warthrop was my favorite character. I liked his Sherlock vibe. He could be intense, yet he could also be hilarious. He could act completely unfeeling, yet there were a lot of subtle moments when the reader could glimpse how much he cared about Will.

As for Will, I wouldn't say he was the best protagonist in the world, although he was likable enough. I think what I especially appreciated about him was that he acted his age—that despite all the horrible things he had gone through, he would still feel horrified or sickened at the appropriate moments. He still cried or threw up or something, if things got really bad ... which I thought was realistic. And his attitude toward the doctor is

quite interesting. Obviously, he has mixed feelings. Warthrop is kind of insane and can be very insensitive—not to mention, he might have caused the death of Will's parents—yet he is the only thing Will has left. So, the whole relationship is very complex and intriguing.

Kearns was also a fascinating character. Almost kind of a Moriarty in this situation—just as brilliant as Warthrop, but more ... evil. He was an interesting comparison to Warthrop, and provided the reader with a lot of questions. Such as ... if you spend so much time studying such horrible creatures, how long will it take before you start to think like the monster you're hunting? Hmm.

The plot itself was very exciting, and often I would find the book hard to put down.

I would be reading like:

And then things would be getting creepy and I'd be like:

And I would just know something horrible was going to happen and I'd be like:

And then MONSTERS WOULD COME OUT AND RIP PEOPLE TO SHREDS AND STUFF, AND I'D BE LIKE:

... And then it would be over and I'd just be left sitting there like:

So yeah, I think that about sums it up. It was quite the emotional roller coaster. But altogether, it was just awesome.

And now I'm reading the sequel with very high expectations. Woohoo!

Alienor ✕ French Frowner ✕ says

If this book was a landscape, it would be the Sahara desert : perhaps beautiful from a distance, but so fucking *dry* that I wouldn't want to stay there more than 1 hour. **I stopped at 67%, because there's just so much boredom I can take.**

? **Lack of ... interest.** What's the point of this? Oh, here's a monster. Look, his teeth are in his belly. This is a *insert Latin name to appear clever*. How wonderful. Now, you can eat your porridge, but just so you know, these creatures are invading New Jerusalem. What do you mean you don't care? SNAP TO, READER! SNAP TO!

I'm sorry but I can't.

Nothing fucking happens! I don't care if it's gross, I mean, I do have an history of disgust with maggots but in all honesty that's not at all what bothered me here. No. What annoyed the crap out of me is the fact that the plot felt way too simple to interest me, the whole thing punctuated with so many useless and sloooooow scenes that I struggled to keep my eyes open.

Not to mention that far from awakening my interest, the Latin names and other classics references felt somewhat pretentious to me, because they seemed completely out of phase with the simple plot.

? **Lack of ... depth in the characterization.** Look, I love darkness. I love morally ambiguous characters. You know I do. Yet if I do like wondering what characters really think and analyzing their actions, in my opinion I haven't near enough material here to work with : everyone keeps telling me that Warthrop is complex and multi-layered, but HUH? Really, HUH? To me he's one dimensional and pretty boring, and don't get me started about the stiff and repetitive dialogues which consistently failed to convince me.

Moreover, young Will Henry lacked a voice in my opinion. I know what you're thinking, "what's her problem? It's Will's POV!" except, yes it is but no it's not. The narrator isn't 12 years-old Will Henry, but the events are told years after they originally took place. As it is, I know how old Will Henry interprets them, and if his thoughts aren't (always) uninteresting, by no means do I have any insight about what he was thinking when he was younger. Come on. **No 12 years-old would express an opinion in such a way.** None.

To me, Warthrop is pretty dry in his selfish manners and Will Henry acts like a spineless puppy. Please don't hate me, but I really didn't see anything else so far.

? **Lack of ... emotions.** I don't mind the lack of romance, and several of my favorite books don't contain one bit of it. This being said, I need to feel at least ONE emotion - I know, I'm annoying.

What brings me to... **the absence of fear.** Scary, The Monstrumologist? Monsters don't scare me. *Humans* scare me on a daily basis - when I watch the news, when I read, when I talk to random people. *Stupidity* scares me to death. Clowns do scare me, but only because Stephen King screwed up my childhood. Monsters? Nope. Grossed-out? Maybe, but never scared. **This book should have made my heart pound - sadly, it never did.**

Anyway - *blablabla*, I didn't get it, *blablabla*, **I don't care is all.** So, okay, It's well-written. Okay. GOOD. Sadly I don't give a damn if I'm bored to death (it did escape the 1-star rating thanks to it, though).

shrug

I'm in the minority though, so don't let my review prevent you from reading it^^

For more of my reviews, please visit:

Maggie Stiefvater says

Soooo this one is about a rather particular Monstrumologist and his apprentice chasing headless man-eating monsters across Victorian New England.

Here are five reasons why you should read it:

1. These are proper monsters. They don't want to make out with you or play you songs on their guitar while you snuggle on the sofa. They just want to eat you, except for when they want to insert their babies in your corpse so they have something to snack on as they incubate. Okay, it's a little gross sometimes. I ought to say that up front.
2. The voice! The voice! Apart from the first and last chapters, which are introduced in modern times (and which I don't care for), the entire novel is told from the point of view of Will Henry, the Monstrumologist's pint sized apprentice. He is resolute but afraid, put upon but never whiny. I love the historical aspect. It's all very gaslight and cobblestones and black cloaks and gasping behind hands.
3. The Monstromologist! He is so high-maintenance and flawed and persnickety. Basically, he is Howl from Howl's Moving Castle, if Howl never met Sophie. Oh, my love is undying. "WILL HENRY, SNAP TO!"
4. I wish I could just make you read this book now.
5. The beginning. Also, the middle. Also, the end. There is a character twist two thirds of the way through the book that I just did not see and I literally gasped on a plane. Then I was so delighted that a book had made me gasp on a plane that I punched Lover in the shoulder and made wild hand gestures. This book is put together like a puzzle box, and I will be taking it apart again sometime soon.

Melissa ♥ Dog/Wolf Lover ♥ Martin says

Well that was, uh... a bit narly and different.

I felt sorry for Will Henry who was only 12 and had a lot to deal with living with this man and finding out some revelations. Curioser and Curiouser

I guess I will eventually finish the series just to see the end game!

Liz Janet says

This book is considered a young adult horror novel, and in 2010 it became an honor book of the Printz Award, so it is easy to say that it's literary excellence.

"He knew the truth. Yes, my dear child, he would undoubtedly tell a terrified toddler tremulously seeking

succor, monsters are real. I happen to have one hanging in my basement.”

It all begins when a grave robber discovers an Anthropophagi (monster) with an eaten girl, and Will Henry and the Doctor must begin to uncover what has happened and how to stop what is to come.

“Perhaps that is our doom, our human curse, to never really know one another. We erect edifices in our minds about the flimsy framework of word and deed, mere totems of the true person, who, like the gods to whom the temples were built, remains hidden. We understand our own construct; we know our own theory; we love our own fabrication. Still ... does the artifice of our affection make our love any less real?”

The main character is called Will Henry, and he is a child of around 12-14, he is orphaned as his father and mother died in a fire, and he was taken by his father's boss, Dr. Warthrop. Warthrop is a 'mad scientist,' however he has clarity, so he knows that what he is doing is not okay, but he does it anyways. We don't really get to know the doctor's true intentions with Will Henry until much later in the book, but it was intriguing to say the least. If you are thinking Will Henry is too young to be doing what he is doing as assistant to this sociopath/psychopath, the answer is yes, but what else can he do, when the man cannot even tolerate child-like behaviour. We must remember that no matter how brave Will Henry is in the presence of the horrors he endures, he is also a child, and albeit brave, he is not fearless, and unlike Warthrop, he has a conscience for now. The doctor is cold, and harsh, cruel and very proud, but he is nothing compared to another character named Jack Kearns, unlike the doctor who knows what he is doing is wrong, this guy has no sense of morality or an ethic code, I could even go as far as to say he is not human, but one of the monsters the monstrumologist should study. This "man" is not afraid of death, he has not qualms about using a person as bait, he has no problems with lying.

This is a novel about good and evil, how science and folklore come together, and the big one, when does a man become the monster he hunts. I have seen some people comparing it to Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, and although I don't necessarily agree, I can see the comparisons drawn between the novels. They are both Gothic horrors, with beautiful prose, and layered characters, while the book itself poses many questions about the human condition, who we are, and what makes us.

“There are times when fear is not our enemy. There are times when fear is our truest, sometimes only, friend.”

Guillermo Del Toro or Tim Burton could do an amazing film of this book, and I would watch the hell out of it.

Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

The Monstrumologist was an unforgettable read. I can't even imagine how Rick Yancey came up with this idea. I was completely horrified many times, as I read this book. This is a young adult book, but it's not one I'd recommend lightly to just any teen, or adult for that matter. Mr. Yancey doesn't hesitate to make this story gruesome and downright stomach-churning. Due to my biological/medical background, I have a strong stomach. It came in handy when I read this book. There were scenes that I would not want to watch in a movie. Sadly, I think this would be a fantastic movie, as it's very vivid and dynamic; but I would be afraid to watch it, and I think it would have to be R-rated for some of the scenes of extreme violence and gore, which is probably not ideal, since it's a young adult book.

Thankfully, there is a strong story with a compelling set of characters to balance out the unsettling, distasteful scenes. Our protagonist is young Will Henry, an orphan who works as the assistant to an eccentric scientist. His father worked for the doctor before him, and died with his mother in a horrible fire that Will survived. Will says to himself that he never loved the Monstrumologist, but he will never leave him. It's an interesting aspect to this story, Will's devotion to this man, who barely shows him kindness or regard. For the doctor is a cold man, completely devoted to his work as a scientist who studies monsters. His skills come in handy when a group of monsters from any person's worst nightmare begin to wreak havoc on the sleepy New England town of New Jerusalem (I wondered if there was a deliberate reference to Jerusalem's Lot when I read this book). The doctor and Will embark on a quest to seek and destroy these monsters that makes for harrowing reading.

I have to admit that this book had some moments that were hard to read. The anthropophagi are vicious predatory creatures, who view humans as a food source, and they are not sentimental in any way. What they did to the minister's family was just awful. I wanted these monsters found and destroyed, all the while fearing for the lives of Will, the doctor, and his companions.

Gross, gory parts aside, I loved the writing in this story. Mr. Yancey establishes himself very credibly in the historical narrative of this novel. I was immersed in this world, a dark one, set in the late 19th century. In the background, one can see the significant events that would have shaped the characters, such as Darwin's work in evolution, scientific studies in eugenics, and the aftermath of the War Between the States. This is all seen through the eyes of the twelve-year-old narrator, who witnesses things that would cause a grown man to lose sleep. I could not admire Will more. He made my hero to die shelf, because this was one heck of a young man. He goes into the lion's den and into the pit of Hell numerous times to face these horrifying monsters. I could only cheer him along, my heart racing, when he comes face to face with the incredibly vicious matriarch of the group of monsters who have made New Jerusalem their preying grounds.

In reading this book, one has to fortify herself. There are views of human nature that are just as unsettling as the monsters themselves. In fact, the man that the doctor summons to help to hunt and to kill the anthropophagi might be considered a human version of a monster himself. I admit that I found Kearns to be an interesting character. He was very lively, making me laugh a few times. However, he had absolutely no moral center, which made him a very dicey ally. He even has a line where he states that "the only morality is the morality of this moment." Yeah, that makes him a very dangerous man. Good to have against the anthropophage, but not so good if you happen to be standing in the way of his objective. Doctor Warthrop (Will's boss) was a flawed, complicated character. He came off as arrogant and uncaring in many moments, but deeply principled at his core. In fact, Kearns turns out to be a good foil to reveal the positive aspects of his character. I think the doctor cared very much for Will, but was unable to show it in the ways that we would consider most demonstrative of affection. He had so many issues with his own father, that it warped him emotionally. However, it was apparent that Will was very important to him--his companion, and the only person who cared for and about the doctor. This made their relationship very complex, and in my opinion, the core of this story.

The Monstrumologist is a book that is quite hard to categorize and to explain in a few words. There is so much to this story. Yet, it's not one that the casual reader will enjoy. It's too dark and gruesome for that. But for an intrepid reader, there is much to admire and to appreciate in this book. After this book gets started, it doesn't wind down until it's over. It was a fascinating, powerful read, one I won't forget. Even now, it is lurking in the back of my mind like a shadow.

Wanda says

Actual rating: 3.5 stars.

A pseudo-Victorian novel set in 1888, *The Monstrumologist* has the same rather over-wrought style of that time period and is chock full of orphans, including our protagonist Will Henry. But this is very much a product of the twenty first century, being much more direct and much more graphic than the standard Victorian novel.

On full display is the mad scientist stereotype. The doctor whom Will Henry serves is depicted as amoral, pursuing scientific knowledge without much reference to morals or emotions. He attempts to be the ultimate unbiased observer. There is some exploration of the danger of obsession , with references to Nietzsche (referencing his statement: If you gaze long into an abyss, the abyss also gazes into you). Indeed, by book's end, the reader can certainly see where the doctor's childhood has shaped the nature of the conflict, which is interesting considering that Sigmund Freud's theories were developed during the Victorian period and are generally accepted into popular thinking today.

The mad scientist stereotype always frustrates me, appearing as it does from Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* right through to Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park*. It makes a good story, which is why it continues to be used, but it also feeds that strain of scientific ignorance and fear that seems to run just beneath the surface of so many issues of our times. Both industrialists and environmentalists who refuse to believe various scientific studies, for example, and have dug into their positions. Rather than actually think and truly negotiate, they merely refuse to believe each's other's positions and go nowhere and nothing changes. (Science is a method of investigation, not a religious belief.)

For those with delicate sensibilities, this may be a book to avoid as there is a lot of what I found to be gratuitous gore. But there are a few interesting ideas being bounced around and once again, I find myself impressed a work of YA fiction.

Read to fill the **YA Horror** square of my **2016 Halloween Bingo** card.

Sean Gibson says

Before getting into any substantive thoughts on this book, I'd like to take a moment to note that if I made the study of monsters my life's work, I'd come up with a much, much better name for my profession than "monstrumologist." I mean, do proctologists call themselves "ass pokers?" Of course not—just because they have their hands up there all day doesn't mean their heads are, too. See, cryptozoologists are smart—they figured out how to have a ridiculous field of study but make it sound fancy. Take a lesson, Pellinore.

Okay, now for the book itself—let's call it 3.5 stars.

There are numerous reasons why I should have loved this book:

-Creepy Victorian-era setting (albeit on the other side of the pond) and appropriately florid, descriptive writing style (you all know I'm a sucker for books that use 5 words in instances where 1 would do just fine)

-Strange things afoot, including the appearance of terrifying, murderous creatures

-Shadowy pasts and dark deeds to atone for

-Character named for King Pellinore (respect: dude broke the sword that Arthur drew from the stone)

-Scones. Because delicious

So, why is Vane going to kill me for only giving this 3.5 stars?

It came down to the characters. This is a solidly entertaining story when it comes to the particulars of the aforementioned murderous creatures, how they got to the U.S. of A., and how our merry band of heroes went about trying to put an end to their reign of horrifically graphic body desecrations (I'm not sure I've ever read anything more graphic than this book when it comes to descriptions of dismemberments, incidentally...how is this YA??). The characters, though...I just didn't get attached to anyone. Our narrator, Will Henry is...well, he's fine. Plucky young lad and all that. But, that's it. He's fine. He doesn't really inspire strong feelings one way or the other.

And then there's the ass poker, er, monstrumologist, Dr. Pellinore Warthrop. Aside from the awesome first name, he's basically an assholier version of Sherlock Holmes (and Holmes, though we love him, was, himself, a colossal, gaping asshole).

Look, characters don't need to be good and selfless and noble to elicit admiration or be interesting. Tyrion Lannister is the most compelling character in the Song of Ice and Fire, right? And he killed his father. With a crossbow. While he was defecating (his father, I mean...would have been quite a feat if Tyrion had offed Tywin with a crossbow while he himself was defecating). But, they DO need to be more than just a psychotically focused genius with zero people skills.

Consider, if I can reference an amazing character from another medium, Dr. Gregory House. Like Warthrop, House is a derivation on Holmes (an even more obvious one, of course, given his synonymous surname). House is just as misanthropic as Warthrop, just as singularly focused, just as abusive to the people who try to love and care for him. But, House is still a sympathetic character – we may not like what he does, but we like HIM. Why? Pick a reason—his pain humanizes him, his reasoning is sound even if his methods are madness, he shows flashes of tenderness toward marginalized members of society, he's freaking hilarious...all of these characteristics make House a compelling character (it doesn't hurt that his Watson, Dr. James Wilson, provides the idealistic moral counterbalance to his realist pragmatism, something that Will Henry has neither the gravitas nor the boyish good looks to do (okay, well, he probably has the latter)).

Warthrop, however, lacks those redeeming qualities. Sure, he seems to care for Will Henry...sort of. Otherwise, he's pretty much just a jerk, and for all of his purported intelligence, he's right about as often as a stopped clock. Or a monkey with a typewriter.

And that's what kept this from being a really great book. It's well written and has an interesting conceit. But, it's still a solid read. I'm just not sure if I'm going to continue with the series...

(Go ahead and proceed with slaying me anthropophagi-style, Vane.)
