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Stop Those Monsters

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Editor's Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

This high-powered quest story begins in Bob's bedroom. Bob adores monsters and his room is festooned with posters and DVDs of horror classics such as *Jaws* and *The Blob*. By a ludicrous twist of fate, this bedroom (along with the rest of Bob's house) is hurtling within a hurricane towards the alien (or, more specifically, monster) land of Terra Monstra.

As if being stranded many miles beneath the earth with no means of return were not worrisome enough, Bob quickly becomes the prey of a band of beastly brutes who are terror-struck by the presence of a human being whom, they believe, has the unnerving ability to shoot toxic waste of their noses!

This inversion of the 'monsters are scary to humans' cliché, is just one way that author, Steve Cole, plays constantly with horror conventions. Intertextual references are rife as bits and pieces of memorable monsters repeatedly leap into the narrative to bite at Bob! The gorgon, Zola and the dino-beast, Crudzilla, for example, must be within a whisker of contravening some sort of copyright!

Bob learns that his only hope of escape back to terra firma is to uncover the Star Jewel - and so a quest begins. Much like in retro computer games, as Bob descends through the levels of Terra Monstra in search of the jewel, his path is blocked by increasingly frightful freaks, such as Chopper the jollywobble lumberjack, who is 'something that your worst nightmare would have nightmares about?!'

From aggressive, axe-wielding lumberjacks, to sluggish swirls of gloop, Bob and his new friends (including a talking, and surprisingly violent, giant hamster) lurch from one terrible crisis to another. With their colourful arsenal of mythical weapons and powers, the menagerie of monsters that confront Bob on his quest are at any one moment frightening, funny or just plain bonkers!

The comedy is, at times, a little crass (not least the detailed illustration of Bob's friends emerging from a mammoth monster's colossal backside), and its relentless presence throughout means there is little room for any genuine tension or drama. However, the chaotic carnival of scrapes, escapes and close-shaves that Bob encounters arrive with such frequency that readers will gobble up the pages like hungry, book-eating monsters.

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