



# Monster Nation

*David Wellington*

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## **Monster Nation** David Wellington

In the heart of America, in the world's most secure prison, something horrible is growing in the dark. A wave of cannibalism and fear is sweeping across the heartland, spreading carnage and infection in its wake. Captain Bannerman Clark of the National Guard has been tasked with an impossible mission: discover what is happening — and then stop it before it annihilates Los Angeles. In California, he discovers a woman trapped in a hospital overrun with violent madmen. She may hold the secret to the Epidemic but she has lost everything — even her name. David Wellington's first novel, *Monster Island*, explored a world overcome by horror and the few people strong enough to survive. Now he takes us back in time to where it all began — to the day the dead began to rise.

## **Monster Nation Details**

Date : Published September 28th 2006 by Running Press Adult (first published January 1st 2004)

ISBN : 9781560258667

Author : David Wellington

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## From Reader Review Monster Nation for online ebook

### Dale says

This was good enough - but for reasons I can't quite articulate I didn't like it as much as *Island*. I'll read *Planet* next and see how that goes.

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### The Crimson Fucker says

Kind of lame... the first one was good till this dude tried to put on all the "spiritual" crap... then this one did the same thing... it started so good! And then bang! The whole spiritual crap! I want my zombie books to be crazy zombie mayhem from beginning to end! This one only has it at the beginning! So a 3!

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### Ralph Pulner says

The weakest of the trilogy but essential to read the 3rd in the series. I give it a lot of levity, deserving or not.

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### Justin says

David Wellington's first zombie apocalypse novel, *Monster Island* was startling in its originality and quality of writing. Wellington has a creative writing MFA and all that cute stuff, and the dude can twirl a sentence. His taut, powerful prose and lucid pacing suggests he's probably capable of writing any kind of prize-winning literary fiction he wants, but is for whatever reason fixated on zombies, werewolves, and other monsters that populate his books.

*Monster Nation* is a prequel to *Island*. Where *Island* dropped us right in the middle of the apocalypse ("after the fall" if you will) and just took off running, *Nation* moves much more slowly, wading its way through the zombie uprising itself. In describing such events, and the slow decline of humanity in the face of a flesh-eating undead plague, Wellington falters a bit. Obviously, zombie uprisings and the subsequent apocalypses are no longer new literary territory, and the reason *Island* was so good was because Wellington pumped such an amazing amount of fresh life into the genre (zombie pigeons? oh yeah you better believe it.) But in *Nation*, he fails to achieve a similar feat. His blazing, adventurous creativity is gone, replaced by a careful attention to character, primarily in the forms of a military leader, Bannerman Clark (a stupid name), and a young woman who, through an odd series of events, kept her brain alive while succumbing to the zombie plague, thereby turning into the rare flesh-eating corpse capable of rational thought.

Wellington used this same rational zombie device in *Island*, and it was fascinating because the character, "Gary," intentionally did it to himself and proceeded to use his combination of undead invincibility and working human brain to wreak major havoc. But the thinking zombie in *Nation*, "Nilla" (again with the silly name) became who she is by accident, and the explanation of her transformation is pretty feeble (something about an oxygen bar... yeah.) Her character never really recovers from this plot twist, remaining similarly passive and poorly formed throughout the book. Wellington seems more interested in putting his energy towards his military leader, Clark, who struggles to fend off the growing zombie hordes while grappling with his own moral dilemma regarding the slaying of undead "civilians." It's a nice element, but isn't intriguing

enough to deserve the intense scrutiny Wellington devotes to it. I read this book aloud to my girlfriend each night, and both of us had trouble staying awake as page after page unfurled about Bannerman Clark and his soldiers shooting zombies and flying around the country feeling bad about shooting zombies. Wellington's focus on the military side feels informed and, as always, is well written, but the story itself doesn't add anything new to the problem: Ultimately it comes down to guys in uniform killin' zombies, and we've seen that before.

Wellington rallies in the final 50 pages or so, culminating this second book in what is apparently a zombie trilogy with a truly unexpected plot twist that handily tied up a lot of loose ends and reminded me why I like the guy and why I will definitely read the final book in this series, *Zombie Planet*. Even when Wellington is slightly off his game, he's weirder, darker, and slightly better than most other horror writers I can think of.

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### **Kalyn says**

This is the sequel to *Monster Island* but is set in the time frame before that book. This book sets up how the "virus" was first found in a prison and its spread throughout the West. We see the infection through the eyes of a normal person - Bannerman Clark - and through the eyes of a thinking zombie (who has no name until the end).

It was interesting to see the spread of the infection (and pretty accurate as far as I know) but I liked *Monster Island* better. That could be because I knew the setting of NYC much better than the Western US or it could be because there was more conflict in the first book.

I didn't like the idea of sending the zombie woman to go shut down the source and the explanation of why it happened just pushed my suspension of disbelief too far. What I had the most trouble with was the timeline. The zombie woman meets Mael Mag Och (the evil peat mummy from *Monster Island*) as a spiritual manifestation. He is guiding her east and trying to get her to help him spread the infection. At the end, he tells her that there are only a few thinking zombies and he names the doctor in Manhattan (the major zombie character from *Monster Island*) as one of them. But in *Monster Island*, we are told that he didn't become a zombie until well into the infection after NYC was overrun and that character didn't meet Mael Mag Och until after he was separated from the African girl paramilitary group. So it would seem that the two timelines don't quite match up enough for Mael to know of the existence of both these thinking zombies.

I'll be reading the third book - *Monster Planet* - to see if the author can create a fun zombie story like the first one. I think this novel is useful to have a better understanding of the zombies of this series but it left me a little cold.

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### **Joe Robles says**

Had to give the first in the series 4 stars because this one was so much better. This is a prequel to *Monster Island* and we find out how it all started. The story is also a nice commentary on the strengths and weaknesses of our modern military. Sometimes America will face problems that don't have military solutions, and using the military to try to solve those problems can sometimes make the problem worse. Suffice to say, David Wellington is a person I'll be reading for a long while.

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## Clark Hallman says

Monster Nation: A Zombie Novel (2014) by David Wellington: Monster Nation is the second volume in Wellington's three-volume Zombie apocalypse series. Although it is a sequel to Monster Island, it is written as a prequel to Zombie Island. It leads the reader from the beginning of the Zombie infection to a complete Zombie contagion in the United States. I expected to experience plenty of Zombie gore and I was not totally disappointed by the invasion. Unfortunately, I found these flesh-rotten Zombies to be somewhat blasé, tedious and repetitive. In addition, I did not appreciate the lengthy Zombie-Nilla storyline. I don't mean to be discriminatory toward Zombies, but Monster Nation just did not significantly satisfy my need for gruesome bodily deterioration.

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## Edward A. Taylor says

Whereas a great stand alone story, to tie it in with the zeitgeist that surrounded Monster Island was a poor idea. Here we have an established universe and mythos that feels forced (as much as you can do to make an author write more successful stories) into a sequel. Gone are the feelings of horror and despair as a father fights to not only save his daughter but ensures the survival of the girls that became his surrogate children. Replacing this is a mishmash of different points of interest from the first novel that are tied together with threads that should never be put together.

3/5 skulls

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## Imogen says

Yeah, zombies are the new pirates, as in they were a hip/boring/cutting-edge hipster allusion a few years ago, and now they are over and kind of annoying. But they are also the best monster! Except for the Cloverfield monster. They are scary and they just keep coming and they symbolize modern american stupid culture AS WELL AS face-eating awesome gore.

And this one is full of missteps, oh boy. Like the ancient deity from the beginning of civilization is from... Ireland? And the zombie who feels remorse, which I guess is what the story is about, but still. And the non-explanation for why the zombie who feels remorse strapped an air thing to her face before she died, although that might be answered in the third one.

THE ZOMBIE WHO FEELS REMORSE is the name of my new album.

Still, the ending worked, zombies tended to be characters with interior monologues, sort of, and a zombie fought a bear! A zombie fought a fuckin bear. That's why we read zombie books, not for Kafkaesque commentaries on society or, like, even Dean Koontz levels of suspense. Pssh. It is an instance of somebody getting an MFA, liking zombies, and then aiming for the lowest possible common denominator, e.g. ME. Four stars!

When we found out about Monster Island, Hannah and I stomped around going MONSTAR ISLAND in growly voices for about a year, until eventually we read it. While I was reading this one I said MONSTAR

NATION the same way a lot of times. Now I am saying MONSTER PLANET!! until I read that one.

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### **Thomas McBryde says**

Not great, not bad either...just expected more. Part of me feels like the novel tried too hard to differentiate itself from other zombie novels, when there's really no need. Everyone knows about zombies and what to expect, that is not the fun in reading about them. The thrill of zombie literature is the post-apocalyptic backdrop the reader finds themselves in. Part of me feels like he went a little Twilight here (a la sparkling vampire) and tried to put that onto the zombies.

The action was touch and go and the book seemed to drag on some parts...too much explanation. Their zombies, they don't need to be explained, they just are. The moment you try to explain them rationally you lose a little the moment you put a sci-fi twist you lose a lot! There are two other books to this series (Monster Island and Monster Planet) I am willing to give them a try, if nothing else then to complete what I've started. Perhaps reading the whole trilogy will help me come to a better conclusion on the novel.

I didn't really care about any of the characters and they seemed to serve as nothing more than ways to fill in story holes or just to take up pace. The one thing I did find cool was the zombie like animals in the book, that was new and it worked (sort of). The main character who is zombie, but retains some human traits was too flat and just meandered around from one location to the next yet somehow she held the key to the whole thing. The sci-fi stuff was just thrown in to be different therefore held no bearing for me.

Again, not bad just not great. I would rather read World War Z again or a zombie anthology. Just my opinion...maybe you would like it or maybe you will see something I missed in my reading of this novel.

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### **Stacie says**

This is the second book in Wellington's trilogy, but functions more as a prequel to Monster Island. This is about the origin of the zombies - sounds good, huh? And Wellington really pulls through with the amounts of gore and violence you would expect from an initial infection.

The problem comes in with the super-powers he starts giving some of the zombies. Invisibility, mind reading, healing, etc. Also, the mystical 'Source' of the infection - just give me a good old-fashioned government developed virus, or even a mysterious plague.

Plus, I expect that the reader is supposed to empathize with the main character Nilla - who happens to be a zombie. I'll pity zombies, but I draw the line at getting to know them as separate 'special' individuals.

Overall, I think I am too much of a classicist when it comes to zombies to truly enjoy this installment in the trilogy. Wellington isn't a bad author. He's just not my type of author.

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### **Andrea says**

2.5 stars.

## Loschuler says

Don't love this series, but like it enough to keep reading the trilogy.

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## William M. says

### 2 AND 1/2 STARS

I decided to read this series in chronological order after buying both the first two books. The writing is not bad, in fact, it's quite good. However, once the story got going, I quickly began to hate the Nilla storyline and her ridiculous invisibility gimmick. I couldn't believe what I was reading. Yes, even in a zombie novel, suspension of disbelief can only take you so far. There were a few other problems I had with the book. In one scene, a zombie (with human teeth, remember, this isn't a vampire) bites the neck of a 7 foot black bear and kills it. Please. A zombie would be hard pressed to pull out a clump of the bear's fur much less rip open its skin. In addition, every once in a while I would find some spelling errors which shouldn't happen in a professional novel costing \$13.95.

Other small details that took me out of the story was when a zombie threw a bone up at a flying helicopter and actually hit it. Wouldn't it be more poetic to have the bone be thrown at it and miss? The intention would still remain, but the reality wouldn't be flushed down the toilet. But okay, maybe that's being too picky.

Anyway, I did enjoy Clark and Vikram's storyline and that was probably what kept me reading. Unfortunately, the ending wasn't satisfying, feeling rushed and thrown together without too much thought. I hear better things from critics about Monster Island, and being from New York City, I'm a little more excited now to read it.

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## Danielle says

Didn't love it. Didn't hate it. Still an interesting read. And shorter than what I'm used to. Part of me wishes that I read this one first, just because it really is the beginning even though it was the second book in the series. If you read them back to back anyway you'll probably be fine. I read the first one closing in on a year ago now and spent some time wondering if I had also seen some of the characters in the other book. On a funny side note did any one else notice tha the two guys we get a viewpoint from are named Dick and Clark? Dick Clark? Lol. Anyway, there were some wording issues that his spellcheck missed because they were still words and there was a time he said something about why there was a pile of zombies and there must have been food underneath and the character was wondering if the person WAS or HAD been alive and all I could think was that they are both past tense words. But overall these are minor issues and don't really affect the flow of the book. I did question the bear senario in the story. Did it escape from a near by zoo? We will never know. Wellington briefly brought in an annoying character called Agent Dunnstreet. She called her self an imaginer. Really. That's what she does. Apparently she's the only one who has ever thought about a war on the US soil and even though her plan has nothing to do with zombies, it's the only idea. Obvioulsy they would have been better off buying some fantasy/horror books like this one to at least give them a starting point. When done right, authors are the imaginers. In any case it was neat to see a version of how the government would handle such an event and how people react. The characters are well thought out. There

was even a guy with an obsession with yellow peeps. Random!

"We can do good in this world or we can be miserable over the bad that is already done. What would you have me do?" - Vikram pg. 112

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