

YES, YOU
ARE
A
MONSTER

by

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and

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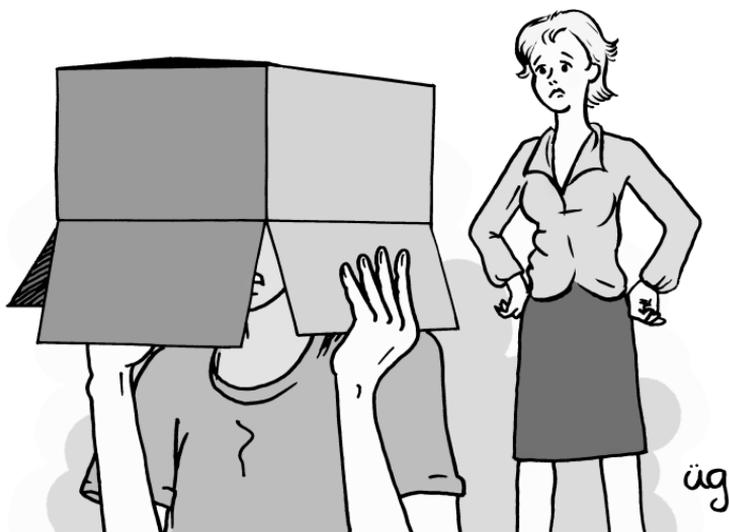
YES, YOU ARE A MONSTER



BOOKSHIP

INTRODUCTION

“Even a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. But if you’re a giant, fire-breathing, radioactive lizard-monster, one step might actually be a thousand miles...”



“I can’t talk now! Can’t you see I’m in my secret lair?”

WELCOME...

Welcome to the first day of the rest of your life.

No, scratch that. Too clichéd. Try again.

Welcome to the beginning of a brief, glorious burst of riotous self-indulgence followed by years of lonely incarceration—

No, scratch that. Too honest. I'm trying to *sell* this baby, aren't I?

Okay...

Welcome to the Introduction.

That's better.

This book will change your life.

A bullet in the head will change your life, too.

This book will change your life in a slightly better way than a bullet in the head.

But only slightly...

It certainly won't change your life as *much* as a bullet in the head. I mean, that's a pretty life-changing event. A bullet in the head can — in fact, most likely *will* — be a *life-ending* event. That's where this book is so much better than a bullet in the head. Reading it won't actually *end* your life.

Or probably won't.

Not immediately, anyway.

Look, I'm not making any guarantees, okay?

What, then, *can* we say about this book?

This book is about you and your inner monster.

You don't have an inner monster?

Yeah, right.

This book is a guidebook to *finding* your inner monster.

You know those old Medieval maps that had "Here Be Monsters" in the blank spaces, where people hadn't explored yet?

This book's like that. Only, the map is of you, and the "Here Be Monsters" covers the whole of it.

Because, let's face it, you're pretty monstrous, aren't you?

Oh, you're not?

Yeah, *right*.

This book is about bringing out your inner monster.

Now, you're probably thinking, "Bringing *out* my *inner* monster?" and how that conjures up an icky image of something wild and alien-looking bursting out of your insides in a splatter of blood and yucky, not-easily-identified red bits, leaving you a twitching mess, a discarded and broken eggshell, while this wild and alien-looking *thing* runs amok in your gloopy remains.

Yeah...

That's *exactly* what I mean.

Now, you're probably wondering, "Why would I want my inner monster to come out?"

But here's the great thing: there isn't a *why*.

There's no reason to it at all.

That thing's going to come out anyway.

You didn't even have to buy this book in the first place!

Ha!

I got you there, didn't I?

Ha!

Oh, you're just reading the free preview chapters?

Damn...

Okay, let's go back to:

This book is going to change your life.

And I'd better not say anything more specific than that.

A word about me

Five years ago, I was a head-case. I don't mean I was a glass jar in which a pickled, severed human head could be kept — though, at the time, it sort of felt like that. No, what I mean is, I was a mess. A mess in all sorts of ways. My wife had divorced me, and I'd been fired from my job. The fact that it felt like my wife had fired me and I'd been divorced from my job probably shows how much of a mess things were. My boss was filing for alimony, my wife was after me for all the paper clips I'd been stealing from her...

I really *was* a mess.

I mean, what was I going to do with all those paper clips?

That's when a friend of mine told me about the miracle of Self Help books. This friend — let's call him Scumsucking Bastard Sam, because Sam was his name, and he was, I later decided, a Scumsucking Bastard — was very fond of Self Help books. He had hundreds of them. He'd read them all. He'd done what each and every one told him to do and it had, he said, turned his life around. When he'd started reading Self Help books, *his* life had been a mess, too. He'd also lost his wife, and his job. Now he still had no wife, and still had no job, but he had a little cart he pushed around the streets selling secondhand Self Help books. I mean, it was something, yeah?

Anyway, he started lending me Self Help books. I read the books. I did what they told me to do. I started each day

with my Affirmations. Pretty soon I had a list of Affirmations so long it took me most of the day to say them. They left me exhausted. All those “I *am* this” and “I *am* that”, those “I *will* do this” and “I *will* do that”. “I *am* in control of my life, I *am*,” I’d chant in front of the bathroom mirror, then turn the page to see what to do next.

Some of the books told me therapy might help. I started seeing therapists. I saw strict Freudians and lax Jungians; I saw people who practised CBT, NLP and DIY. And yes, I came away with answers. I came away with so many answers I didn’t know what to do.

Finally, one day, I found myself wandering the streets of my home town, utterly broken. My life was in ruins, and no amount of positive thinking, or confessing my innermost feelings to a man with a notepad, a diploma and a Serious Beard, could put it back together. Bereft, destroyed, I wandered till the streets got dark.

And then I thought: I *like* the dark.

No — I *love* it.

In the dark, no one can see you for the shameful noper you are. No one can see your irredeemable, DNA-deep ugliness. No one can see the patches on your elbows or the wax in your ears. Even better, no one can see you as you creep up on them, bare your fangs, and take a bite out of their shoulder.

YES! I shouted. I LOVE THE NIGHT!

“Keep it down, some of us have to work in the morning,” said a voice from a nearby house.

“Sorry,” I said.

But I *didn’t* feel sorry. Not sorry at all. And I *liked* not being sorry. I *loved* it. Because I was—

I was—

Yes—

I was...

A MONSTER!

As soon as I admitted it to myself, everything made sense. All those years wasted on Self Help books, which were written for normal human beings. Of course they couldn't help me. I *wasn't* a normal human being. I was — I am — say it again! — A MONSTER!

Immediately I called my therapist and told him.

Immediately, he called the police.

But that's beside the point. Because now, from my lair in the comfortably padded recesses of the County's deepest, darkest hole, I pen this, my manifesto (I say "pen this", but "crayon this" would be more appropriate, considering the implement I wield between the toes of my right foot, my hands being, alas, strapped to my sides in overlong, hole-less sleeves), in the hope that it will help you, too, discover your inner monstrosity — will help you run free, howling and growling, beating your chest and breathing fire, tearing down power lines and snapping up beautiful young things in your massive, hairy claws.

You, too, can be a monster.

I can show you how.

And if, in any way, this book at all earns your gratitude for freeing you from the chains of social restraint, the thumbscrews of peer pressure and the manacles of normality, all I ask in return (aside from the cover price — I have to be kept in crayons!) is you do one thing for me:

Find that Scumsucking Bastard Sam and rip him to pieces, the lowdown — dratted — manipulative — grrr! rrr! — GIVE ME BACK MY CRAYONS!!!

How to use this book

Well, first of all, I'd not recommend eating it.

(But if you're going to eat it, why not try it with some fava beans and a nice chianti?)

((I have no idea what a fava bean is.))

The common practice with books like this is to *read* them.

You should know about this, because you're doing it now.

Other than that, you're really on your own.

This particular book is divided into useful sections, and not-so-useful chapters. You can read it from start to finish, or from finish to start, I don't really care. I mean, if you want to read it so it comes out as nonsense, who am I to stop you?

The generally recommended approach, though, is reading it from start to finish. Usually with little pauses between the sentences. If you read it this way, you'll find that the whole thing makes a kind of warped sense. It starts off with a couple of chapters designed to persuade you that Yes, You ARE A Monster (as it says in the book's title). One of these chapters is my very own Monstrousness Test, a test designed to eke out just how much of a monster you really are. Or it may be nonsense. (Most probably, it's nonsense.)

Following that, there's a section on Finding Your Monstrous Self. In it, you will learn to identify the two major types of monster (Rampaging Monsters and Lurking Monsters), and to work with such essential aspects of being a monster as having (i.e., inventing) an Origin Story, forming an Evil Plan, practising a little trick I call The Reveal, and understanding Your Fatal Weakness. Finishing that section, there's another chapter which I can't remember anything about. Let's leave that as a surprise till we get to it.

Then, there's the section on Your Monstrous Life. This is my favourite section of the book, because it's near the end. It covers such aspects of normal life as Relationships (ick!) and Work (yuck!), and how to deal with these now you are no longer a Normal Human Being, but a Monster. (You'll notice I use a lot of capitals in this book. That's because they're easier to write in crayon.) Then there's another

chapter, and... I can't remember much about that one either.

Finally, the book comes to an end. All good things must end. But bad things end too, so the fact that it ends is no guarantee this book is a good thing. In fact, this book — and I cannot emphasise this enough — comes with no guarantees. *Life* comes with no guarantees. Oh, apart from death.

Death...

Mmm, death...

Deathy-death-death...

Oh, sorry, was I writing that? I meant to just think it.

Let's move on swiftly to:

Real-life stories: A Teenage Werewolf

Throughout this book, we'll be looking at the real-life stories of monsters, using their hard-won battles and experiences as a way of understanding your own monstrosity.

Let's start with Joe. Joe is a werewolf. Joe has been a werewolf ever since he could remember. While he was a little boy, his being a werewolf was cute, or at most just a bit annoying. His mother could put up with the occasional ripped-up cushion or him leaving his mark on doorposts. It was (as so often in life) when Joe entered the difficult stage of adolescence that his being a werewolf started becoming a problem.

*Adolescence is difficult. Spots, tufts of hair growing in odd places, sudden mood swings, intense thoughts about *The Meaning of It All* balanced by even more intense feelings of *Lust*, and *Guilt*, and *Lustful Guilt*, and (my favourite) *Guiltful Lust*. And that's just for normal people. For monsters, it's even worse. You get all that, multiplied by monstrosity. So, even more hair, even larger spots, even wider mood swings, and much more monstrous lusts.*

And rages. Oh, the rages.

Joe had rages. He couldn't help having them. He was a werewolf. Every full moon, regular as clockwork, he'd hair up and bug out. He'd howl at the moon, he'd chase cars, he'd dig up bones (usually human ones), he'd make his mark on lampposts and he'd tear the odd family pet into small, bloody pieces.

The neighbours got fed up. Every morning after a full moon, they'd wake to find the tibia of a long-deceased family member badly buried in their otherwise perfectly manicured lawn; they'd find scratch marks on their new car's paintwork; they'd find little Tiddles spread in furry clumps over the driveway.

They got together and talked it over. They went round to Joe's house to have a word with his dad. (This is the mildest form of the torch-wielding mob — see the chapter on Relationships for more on torch-wielding mobs.)

Joe's dad decided to have a talk with Joe. He went up to his bedroom. It was mid-afternoon, but the curtains were closed and Joe was still in bed, having spent the previous night rampaging through the neighbourhood. Joe's dad sat on the edge of his boy's bed. "We have to have a talk," he said. "These wild rampages have to stop. The Wainwrights' little daughter is traumatised by finding nothing but a blood-soaked pair of rabbit ears in the hutch of her beloved Flopsy; the Joneses are fed up taking Great Uncle Samuel's bones back to be reburied at the Cemetery; and they're all beginning to talk about just what really happened to little Tommy Sanders last full moon. So I'm saying it now as your father. These wild rampages have to stop. What have you got to say for yourself, Joe?"

And Joe sat up in bed and looked his daddy straight in the eye. Then he bared his fangs and said, "Grrrrrrrrrrrr."

And Daddy left Joe's bedroom pretty sharpish.

Your first growl

A growl is a monster's best friend. It's our calling card, an announcement of our intentions, and an expression of our innermost monstrosity. It says: "I am going to eat you and all your loved ones" — but so much more succinctly and with such *feeling*. Growl a good growl, and no one's going to doubt that you are a monster who means business.

So, a growl is pretty important, and worth practising.

Let's give it a go, then.

Grr.

Pretty simple, huh?

Grr.

If you want, you can make it longer. Just add r's at the end as required.

Grrrrrrr.

For added efficacy, gnash your fangs and grin on the G.

G-G-Grrrrrrr.

Now *that's* a growl.

Grr. Go on, give it a go. Grrrr.

But they're looking at you worriedly as you read this on the bus, eh?

Get used to it.

Exercise: Your daily growl

One growl is not enough. No, no, no. A growl should be part of your daily routine.

*Start the day with a growl and end it with
a howl, with nothing but monstrosity
in between!*

Stand yourself in front of a mirror. (If you're a vampire, forget about the mirror.) Now GROWL. Don't growl — GROWL. GRRRR! Go on. Let's see those fangs, werewolves! Let's see those stumpy broken teeth, zombies! GROWL!

If you're more the Godzilla type, you could try breathing fire at this point. If you're a Frankenstein's monster type of monster, you might prefer to moan piteously, gripping your head and threatening to destroy your reflection. (Go on, do it. You know you want to. Mirrors are cheap, and what's seven years bad luck? You're a monster, you're already in for a *lifetime* of bad luck.)

The point is, you need to FEEL monstrous. Really feel it. Hook your claws and make swipes at the air. Roll your head like you've just bitten into something and are tearing off a chunk of it. Froth a bit. It can be tremendously liberating. (If necessary, chomp on some toothpaste to get the froth going.) Growl like a lion growls, from deep down in the gut.

Are you frightened?

YOU SHOULD BE!

Your daily growl is an important part of your monstrousness routine. Start today!