

Review 676 - 16 June, 2013 A+ - The Love Monster by Missy Marston

I have not read a funny book in a long time since I have been distracted by my literary love, historical fiction. Historical fiction tends to be quite serious with Lords of the Manor oppressing tenants or trying to touch the maid's goodies or beating a limbless orphan and such not, so there is not much opportunity for laughter.

Love is a crazy, messy, complicated monster. Missy Marston's unconventional take on modern love is a hilarious yarn with a list of flawed characters all trying to understand love.

The main character of this book is a woman named Margaret. Margaret H. Atwood was born just a few years before the *other* Margaret Atwood started to make a name for herself in Canadian lit, and must endure the endless questions about the origins of her name. This is a minor nuisance compared the other problems in Margaret's life. Her marriage to her sleazy, unfaithful husband is over, she hates her job, is in trouble at work for insensitivity and her pants are getting tight. What makes this story different from predictable stories about women in and out of love is that usually those characters are fairly likeable. Margaret is a sullen, cynical and at times, a very unlikable character. But you still root for her.

The story is written in very short 1-2 page chapters and each chapter is almost a short story or poem. These short chapters offer insight to the other characters lives and connects the bigger story together. As a character is introduced, the next chapter is usually about that character. In these short chapters the reader learns the back story of the characters and how their lives are equally messy as Margaret's. Characters like Larry and Marie could be flat, one-dimensional distractions, the dull boss or devout Christian, but Missy Marston excels at making their stories poignant but not predictable.

And then there are the aliens.

I find it highly amusing that Helen recommended a book that has an alien as a character yet she is so resistant to the notion that Jane Austen and Zombies can co-exist in literature. I

found the parts about the aliens gossiping about the Leader and other alien related office gossip hilarious. I will admit that subplot is solely missing in historical fiction.

Yes there is a lovesick alien who is besotted with Margaret and rather than try and understand the logistics of an alien being in love with Margaret, it's best to just go along with the story. All you really have to get from this book (besides a lot of laughs) is that love is the main theme, and falling in, out and in love is a giant monster that has to be wrestled to the ground, not unlike a brain hungry Zombie.