



Ascendance: Dave vs. the Monsters

John Birmingham

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For fans of Jim Butcher and Kevin Hearne comes an exhilarating new urban fantasy series featuring monster-slayer ""Dave Hooper and his magical splitting maul.

"Kids, there are no monsters under the bed. They're in the front yard."

As a hardworking monster-slayer, Dave Hooper tries not to bring his work home with him. But nowadays it's hard to keep them separate. Email, cellphones, empath daemons, they never let a guy rest.

The Horde has been raising hell and leveling cities from New York to Los Angeles, keeping Dave and his fellow monster-killer, Russian spy Karin Varatschevsky, very busy. But when the legions of hell invade the small seaside town his boys call home, Dave has to make a call. Save the world? Or save his family?

Not as easy a choice as you'd think, since Dave's ex-wife expects to be saved too. And there's no convincing her that the supersexy Russian spy isn't his girlfriend. She's just his sidekick--and an assassin.

Ascendance: Dave vs. the Monsters Details

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Author : John Birmingham

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From Reader Review Ascendance: Dave vs. the Monsters for online ebook

Craig says

Much better than Book #2.

Breane Ross says

LOVE this book in the Dave VS The Monsters trilogy. Sure wish there were more of these!!! Come on John Birmingham, PLEASE write more!!!

kate mcgrail says

Good fun

Enjoyable romp with blood, death and monsters. Dave is still a toddler but is developing well as a character and a human. The idea are good and I'm waiting for the next one.

Ken Richards says

2.5 stars. John Birmingham returns to the world of Dave Hooper, exploring what would happen if a working class Trump voter got superpowers, and a invasion of demons from the underworld with apon which to expend them.

The tale picks up right after the conclusion of volume #2, with Dave and Russian spy Karin Varatchevsky calling a truce on account of the problem that what with their super strength and all, they cannot kill or subdue each other, so they might as well join forces against the monsters. And in any case, they both think that Trinder, the MIB who is out to capture Karin is an arsehole.

Birmingham has introduced some necessary tweaks to the powers of both the monsters and the superheroes. First, the introduction of 'Threshrendum' a species of empath demons which can interdict Dave's enhanced speed (which tended to make him invincible, and the demon fights a dull turkeyshoot), making for a more even contest. And secondly, the ability of some of these empath demons to dine on the brains of captured humans, thereby gaining their knowledge and strategy. in a stroke of luck, one such demon chowed down on strategist Compton's grey matter (in addition to that of random other morons and military personnel, making for conflict in the resultant hybrid demon Compt'n ur Threshrend's addled brainpan), with the effect that the demon hordes can use modern military planning and learn from their mistakes, rather than repeat them, like dumb nazis from any number of WW2 movies.

The story moves along mostly with verve and humourous snark, despite getting bogged down in some overlong gory monstrosity battles. Through the agency of the very kick-ass karin, glimmers of civilization

gradually penetrate Dave's thick scull (making him a most atypical Trump voter, it must be acknowledged), and it is these conversations and interactions that are the most enjoyable passages of the book, together with our plucky little demon empath's fevered internal monologues. Will Threshy find true love, will he even survive?

The book ends on another cliffhanger, so there is some chance of Dave reappearing in future if the fancy takes. Not sure I'd bother, unless the library happens on a copy.

Simon Robinson says

The rollicking conclusion to a great aussie piss-take of the whole superhero genre. a seering commentary on the average american, and indeed our western civilisation. yet thoroughly entertaining with an endless stream of laugh-out-loud moments laced with action, sci-fi and fantasy.

Andrew Wasson says

Great series, this book definitely leaves you hanging, wanting more.

Jennifer (JC-S) says

‘The monsters are back. They’re here. In the city.’

Don’t make the same mistake as I did. Start with ‘Emergence’ and then read ‘Resistance’ before tackling ‘Ascendance’. Dave Hooper’s world may not necessarily make more sense, but it will be a lot more fun to be part of. And it’s important to know just how Dave Hooper, an American oil rig worker, became a hero.

‘Is this daemon bothering you, ma’am?’

Now that you’ve read the first two books, you’ll be happy to know that Dave continues to battle the monsters who’ve been unleashed on the world. With his trusty enchanted splitting maul (her name is Lucille), his ability to stop time and his superspeed, Dave should be almost invincible. Especially now that Karen Warat (or is it Varatchevsky?) and her magic sword have joined him. She’s ultra competent and sexy, and a Russian deep cover agent, and she knows just how to keep Dave going.

‘I might indeed be cool, had I any idea of what you speak.’

And the monsters? Well, they haven’t been marking time. And they are not all as nice as Threshy. There are a lot of cunning monsters out there, and they appear to be getting assistance from some traitorous humans. Whatever is the world coming to? Dave and Karen are almost overwhelmed in New York. The monsters are learning about human technology and how to adapt, and some of the demons can use empathy. Dave is not finding this battle easy. So how will it end? Read on, and find out.

Just don’t take it all too seriously, there’s plenty of humour in there as well.

‘It was almost like a date, except he was a razor-toothed Hell daemon intent on enslaving all mankind, and she was his captive.’

Note: My thanks to Momentum Books and NetGalley for an opportunity to read an advance copy of this novel.

Jennifer Cameron-Smith

Dawn Folley says

Grim stuff there at the end

Frank Errington says

Review copy

Sometimes it's OK to jump into a series without reading the books from the beginning, other times it's not such a good idea. If you decide to check out *Dave vs. the Monsters: Ascendance* I strongly recommend starting at the beginning with *Emergence* and then reading *Resistance*. There were times, particularly at the beginning, where I had no idea what was happening. That I blame on myself for jumping in mid-steam.

Combine a Lovecraftian horror novel with an acid trip from the seventies and you might have some idea of the world created by novelist John Birmingham in his *Dave vs. the Monsters* series. The book certainly gets to the action quickly and barely lifts its foot from the accelerator until the very end.

Early on, I wanted to put this one down and move on to another book, but I really hate to do that. When I pick a new read it's always with a reason, a favorite author, interesting subject matter, a recommendation. In this case the following description for the book sold me...

"For fans of Jim Butcher and Kevin Hearne comes an exhilarating new urban fantasy series featuring monster-slayer Dave Hooper and his magical splitting maul.

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Hell, I'm in. I'm not sure why I didn't like this as much as I wanted to. At times I found Dave vs. the Monsters: Ascendance very entertaining, laced with pop-culture and literary references, and ultra-violent. All things I like in my urban fantasy.

Dave vs. the Monsters: Ascendance will be available in paperback and e-book formats beginning June 30, 2015. Published by Del Rey Books, the Science Fiction & Fantasy imprint from Random House.

Recommended, but not for everyone.

Jim Lass Sr. says

I liked the first book but beginning with the second book Dave Hooper became less and less...i don't know...likeable... I understand he's a huge douchebag but u was waiting and kinda hoping he'd be redeemed by the "end" but alas not so much. if there and up being more books to this series which seems as though there will be then I'll most likely read the cribnotes version.

Alan says

Monster slayer, "The" Dave, was so obnoxious in book #2, I was not expecting to enjoy book #3, but I felt like I should finish the series. The book is saved by another monster slayer, Karen, a Russian mole in the US. Karen is everything Dave isn't: intelligent, a grown up, tactical, proactive instead of reactive. She makes Dave and the book bearable. Although this is the final book in the series, it ends very abruptly without resolution - why???

Bryan457 says

The Dave, Superjerk, worst superhero ever.

Shelleyrae at Book'd Out says

The final novel to feature rig engineer turned superhero monster slayer Dave Cooper, Ascendance picks up right where Resistance left off.

Super Dave, newly teamed with the katana wielding Russian spy Karen Warat (aka Colonel Ekatarina Varatchevsky), is in New York. Dismissing Trinder, they race to defend areas of the city under siege but are nearly overwhelmed as the Hunn continue boiling up from the underworld realm. The powers that be soon realise that the Horde is using Professor Compton's theoretical model for collapsing western civilisation, and the world is in real peril. However Dave's primary concern becomes his sons when he learns New Harbour is under attack and if he can't save the world, he is determined to at least save his children.

Dave suffers badly in comparison to Karen whose training and discipline allows her to exploit her gifts,

which includes an empathic ability. Not only does she wield her deadly katana like a master, she thinks strategically and seems to have her powers sussed out. Dave is pretty much left trailing in her wake like a meat-head while the choices he made in Resistance come back to haunt him.

The action in Ascendance is non-stop, violent and bloody. This is not a story for the squeamish what with splattering ichor and demon flesh and babies being tossed from buildings like confetti. To be honest I got a little bored with all the fighting, though the final confrontation was tense and exciting.

There is plenty of the bold and crass humour I've come to expect in this series. Dave is still a dick, Threshy's thinkings are riotously confused and Karen adds her own brand of dry humour.

While this is supposed to be last book of a trilogy, the story definitely feels unfinished. It has been fun though.

A Reader's Heaven says

(I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.)

New York is on fire, the streets are overrun, and the Demon Horde is feasting. With the world's greatest city in chaos, all eyes are on Dave Hooper, the superhero destined to save mankind.

But hero or not, Dave is just one man and he's short of allies. He soon finds himself relying on Karen Warat: art dealer and Russian deep cover agent. Smart, dangerous and armed with a magic sword, Dave knows not to trust her. He also knows that without her, New York will fall.

While the United States military try desperately to hold off the Horde, Dave and Karen realise that the monsters have a powerful new weapon - one of their best warfare strategists is working for them. With the enemy using the military's own tactics against them, defeat seems imminent.

To have any chance of survival, mankind needs its Champion more than ever. The world needs Dave to become the hero he is meant to be.

This is the third book in the David Hooper series. I strongly recommend starting at the beginning with Emergence and then reading Resistance before tackling this one. It can be confusing to follow at the start if you don't know the backstory.

It is very hard to describe this book (and series) - maybe urban fantasy meets action hero. Or maybe Bruce Willis channels Harry Dresden. I don't know...

What I do know is that this is a great 3rd book...following the first two great books. Hooper is still fighting off the daemons and is now ably assisted by Karen Warat and her magical sword. As for the monsters themselves? Still scaring the bejesus out of anyone who gets in their way - but they are also pretty damn smart as well, learning how to break through the human defenses.

Is there character development? Deep psychological studies of humanity? Sure....but for me, who cares? This book is fun and should be treated as such. I love the humor, the monsters, Dave and Karen's dialogue and, most of all, I can "hear" Birmingham's Australian "voice" throughout.

Give this series a go...I can't recommend it highly enough!

Steve Caldwell says

I am a huge fan of this series. It is a completely different direction of urban fantasy than some of my other favorites, like Dresden and The Nightside books, but that's what I like so much. The main character, Dave Hooper, has more in common with Sandman Slim than Harry Dresden, while not quite crossing the line to anti-hero. In this book, the third in the series, the monsters/demons, are finally using the knowledge stolen from the scientist they captured earlier, who know how to strategically and tactically cripple the human defense. Lots of twist and turns, lots of reversals for the humans, although we are introduced to several more human champions, and find out how they are created. Well plotted, the story never seemed to drag, and I never felt any lulls. There is a lot of good character exploration, deepening the feeling you know the characters and their motivations. The story leaves you fulfilled, but wanting to read the next installment. I'd recommend this to any fan of The Dresden Files, The Nightside books, or Richard Kadrey's Sandman Slim books.
