



# Animal Kingdom

*Iain Rob Wright*

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**Animal Kingdom** Iain Rob Wright

WELCOME TO THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD CHAIN!

Aside from being freakishly tall, Joe is just an ordinary divorcee taking his son, Danny, to the zoo for his weekend of custody. Everything is going great until a bizarre snake attack sends everybody in the zoo running for cover. It isn't long before Joe realizes that there is a lot more going on than a simple snake attack. And if the hungry lions, roaring gorillas and charging elephants now free from their cages have anything to say about it, there is more bloodshed to come. All of the world's animals are attacking, and no one knows why. What they do know is that man is now on the bottom of the food chain.

FEATURES BONUS MATERIAL THAT TAKES PLACE IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM UNIVERSE:

7 Short stories by Iain Rob Wright and Eric S. Brown

## Animal Kingdom Details

Date : Published November 30th 2011 by Grand Mal Press

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Author : Iain Rob Wright

Format : Kindle Edition 302 pages

Genre : Horror, Apocalyptic, Post Apocalyptic, Thriller, Fiction, Animals, Zombies, Science Fiction

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# From Reader Review Animal Kingdom for online ebook

## thebonebreaker says

When you subscribe to this author's website, ([iainrobwright.com](http://iainrobwright.com)) he, in turn, gives you 5! (I repeat, five!) Free books!

After I downloaded my free books, and perused the summaries of each, I decided on this one. So, on with the review. . .

Iain Rob Wright has a tagline - "Fear on Every Page" - now, I am not sure if that is on all of his books or not, but it fits well with this book!

Wright wastes absolutely no time , jumping right into the meat of the story, and continues the thrills with rapid-fire precision!

In this book, Wright has created a rag-tag group of both likeable and unlikeable characters who are trapped within the zoo during an animal uprising. (After reading this book, I am beginning to think twice about renewing my local zoo's yearly membership, next month)

The characters in this book have to deal with lions, monkeys, elephants, reptiles, spiders, scorpions, rhinoceroses, hippopotamuses, etc. (all except for birds) Now, think about All of the animals in the world, (even just our own pets - dogs, cats, rats, etc.) and imagine if they all turned against humanity. . .!

By the end of this book you are questioning why is this happening?!? And then, brilliantly, After the epilogue, like an "after-credits-scene" in a movie, Wright ties it all together with "mini-stories" that have little tidbits that link directly into the main story. As if this book wasn't already awesome enough - the way Wright pulled off the end solidified me as a true fan!

I will definitely be reading his other books, and I will be hoping for a future sequel to this one!

If you are burned out on zombie novels, this is a fresh take on what could possibly be part of the apocalypse, definitely check this one out!?

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## Sylv.net Sylvia Kerslake PA says

Just when I thought Iain Rob Wright's books couldn't get any better.

I settled down to read Animal Kingdom 3 days ago and finished it last night. I couldn't put it down, every turn something happened. Animal Kingdom: An Apocalyptic Novel had everything, a hero, a damsel in distress and a really horrible guy you just love to hate.

Animals taking over the world? Never, it couldn't happen! Well it did and the animals in the Zoo ruled it.

Thoroughly enjoyed it except for just one thing.....

When I read The End.

Looking forward to reading another of Iain's book and will be pretty soon

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### **Su Ann says**

I just finished reading Animal Kingdom by Iain Rob Wright. I am such a huge animal lover! It is frightening to imagine this ever happening. Especially the spiders! Animals fighting back. Bent on rearranging the natural order of things and sending mankind into extinction. Animal Kingdom is George Orwell's Animal Farm on steroids. I find Mr. Wright's writing to be on par right alongside the early Stephen King. Mr. King's writing has changed a lot since his accident. In my opinion, it's just not as good. This author knows exactly how to scare people. He scares the bejeezus out of me! His writing is good. Some parts really pissed me off. There are two characters I, myself, wanted to kill. Forget about the animals doing it. I felt as if I was right there beside these people, but being invisible, there was nothing I could do to help.

This book was my worst nightmare. What a horrible way to die. Brought down by supposedly beloved pets. I love the short, action packed chapters. Made reading fly by real fast. This book was full of characters you run into every day. Would you trust a total stranger to help save you from a horror straight out of hell? I took advantage of an offer from Mr. Wright to download 5 free books. Those won't last very long. I'm going to download every one of his books. I just won't read them in the dead of night. Way too scary!

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### **William Bitner Jr. says**

Just finished reading "Animal Kingdom" by Iain Rob Wright. Okay, so let me get this right..."Animal Kingdom" was written in 2011, James Patterson wrote "Zoo" in 2012, and who did it better and why didn't we get to see this series on CBS (just sayin') Iain did it so much better in my opinion. This book is nail biting, on the edge reading from the first sentence to the very last sentence. I will not look at the Zoo or my house full of animals with quite the same ever again..

Synopsis: WELCOME TO THE BOTTOM OF THE FOOD CHAIN!

For readers tired of zombies comes a new kind of apocalypse.

When recent divorcee Joe takes his wrestling-mad son Danny to the zoo for his weekend of custody everything goes just great. Then a bizarre snake attack sends everybody running for cover and chaos takes over. It's a horrific attack, one Joe's poor son is unlikely to ever forget.

But the terror has only just started and an ordinary day is about to go very bad.

There's a lot more going on than a simple snake attack. Something has made the animals attack without warning, and it's almost like they have a plan. Joe will have to overcome his fear and fight for his life if he has any chance of keeping his son alive and escaping the zoo. Even then, there's no guarantee that the horror will be over

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## **Dreadlocksmile says**

First published back in November of 2011, 'Animal Kingdom' formed British author Iain Rob Wright's second full length novel to see publication.

### **DLS Synopsis:**

It was a day-out that Joe had been looking forward to for quite a while. And it was all because he hadn't seen his son, Danny, for months. But that was just the way things were when you became divorced and were trying to piece your life back together. But today was going to be good. And their first stop that Saturday morning was to the local Zoo.

But that morning was to become the morning where the world would suddenly change dramatically. That was the morning when, for seemingly no reason whatsoever, the entire animal kingdom would suddenly turn on mankind. Every species and type, (thankfully other than the birds) would all of a sudden rise up against humanity, in a rage of savage hatred.

And so, together with a handful of fellow survivors, Joe and Danny attempt to barricade themselves inside the relative sanctuary of one of the zoo's many buildings; hoping that rescue will arrive soon. But outside the hordes of animals are becoming organised. Under the watchful guidance of their apparent leader – Nero, the silverback gorilla, the animals are beginning their siege on the zoo's enclosure.

Inside the building, the few survivors quickly find that they have their own problems. Key-investor to the zoo, Christopher Randall, is throwing his weight around on a power-trip. Whilst the heavily tattooed Scot named Victor is already showing how intimidating he can be. Meanwhile a bible-bashing religious nut named Shirley is preaching her apocalyptical beliefs upon the other seven survivors – whether they want to hear it or not.

The added pressure of their immediate confinement together is already taking its toll. Their clashing personalities and individual ideas for survival are becoming a real problem. And outside the animals are starting to wage the war that could potentially end it all. The group's time, and potentially that of the whole of humanity, is quickly drawing to a close...

### **DLS Review:**

Following on from 'The Final Winter' (2011) Iain Rob Wright has once again embarked on another apocalyptic-style end-of-the-world scenario, shown purely from a small and localised environment. Here, instead of a typical British pub (ala Wright's previous novel), our handful of survivors are this time situated in a zoo. And here the threat is not such a pseudo-religious-doomed-mankind affair. Instead, although it's never properly divulged as to why it is happening (although hinted at in the later shorts), the potential end of humanity is ultimately brought about by a sudden uprising of the animal kingdom.

Like an apocalyptical cross between George Romero's 'Night Of The Living Dead' (1968) and William Kotzwinkle's 'Doctor Rat' (1976), Wright's 'Animal Kingdom' was apparently spawned from the initial desire to write a zombie-apocalypse novel. The end result is certainly far better than simply tagging on another post-apocalyptic zombie story to an already well and truly over-saturated subgenre.

Wright's writing ability has clearly come along leaps and bounds since 'The Final Winter' (2011). The dog-eat-dog atmosphere and desperate intensity of the survivors' predicament is much more immediate. The snappy rhythm and general flow of the events that unfold are more in tune with the plot – unravelling at an

increasing rate until it's finally time to play that final card.

However, what really lets the novel down somewhat is the limited and somewhat blasé approach to characterisation. Wright has all the right elements, with individual character traits shoe-horned into the tale like there's no tomorrow (which indeed there might not be!). But the characters can't just stand on their own two feet with these singular traits alone. Joe is a giant of a man, along with being a divorcee – sadly end of story there. Danny is his 90's wrestling-mad son – age pretty much unknown and not much else to say there either. Grace suffers from a form of OCD that makes her want to hurt herself unless she's had her medication – and that's about all we're given on her. Bill is gay and black – end of. Mason is the zoo curator – so who needs any more than that, right? Shirley is an aged religious nut; once again, that's all we really see of her. And Victor is a homophobic racist Scot with a psychotic side to him and little else apparently. The character of Randall (a very Harry Cooper-esque character) is the only one who is given any further development or exploratory depth into his personality. Admittedly it's not much more, but Wright was at least on the right lines with making the character a little more human.

To be honest, the dialogue used by these cardboard cut-out characters isn't really up to much too. It's basic and hits all the right points, but doesn't come across as even remotely real or anything other than another method to deliver points for the storyline with. It's certainly a shame, but not too compromising of the overall enjoyment of the novel.

Characterisation and the dialogue aside, the tale does hurtle along with plenty of excitement and a snowballing pace. Yes there are shovel-loads of action and comic book style bloodshed. It's not shocking or gritty, but more playfully pulpish in its exaggerated frolicking with a condensed-Armageddon style of plot.

To be honest I enjoyed reading the novel from start to end, so I'm reluctant to say anything too scathing about it. It was a fun read, with plenty of action-packed scenes to keep you flying through the pages. Okay, so it did start to get a tad too ridiculous at times, but that's perhaps half the joy of the tale. And the ultimate finale was a little too abrupt and snappish in its delivery. But it was still a monstrously entertaining read ensuring a thick smirk was plastered across my face throughout.

The book also includes a collection of bonus short stories set in this new 'Animal Kingdom' universe – very much in the style of David Moody's 'Autumn: The Human Condition' (2005). These are as follows:

#### Clocking Off – 4 pages

Jeff, along with all his fellow colleges at the Stote Investments chemical plant, had been sent home from work after becoming exposed to a large dose of their SIRT1 compound following a large-scale spillage. Now at home, he was relaxing with a couple of days off, with just his wife and pets as company. But his cat, King, was beginning to get a little on the frisky side...

This swift little short plays along with the whole 'possible cause for the outbreak' scenario in a similar fashion to the meteor storm that was mentioned in Romero's 'Night Of The Living Dead' (1968). Refreshingly, the short doesn't even pretend to work up to anything other than a predictable ending of animal attacking fun. But it's quick and simple and gets the suggested 'possible cause' requirement down in almost record time. As a stand-alone short, it would be quite a poor read. However, alongside the main tale (as it was obviously always meant to be) it works well in thickening out the writer's whole 'Animal Kingdom' plot.

#### Howard's Wood – 4 pages

After Grace left Howard his life gradually become devoid of any form of companionship whatsoever. And

following his incredible good fortune in becoming a millionaire off his first published novel, Howard was feeling like he now had everything but the one thing he wanted. However, whilst walking around his private woodland that surrounded his impressive home, Howard found his luck was finally running out for good.

Here we have a small expansion on the secondary character of Grace from the main tale, offering up a brief insight into her previous love life with the introduction of the tragic fellow of Howard. The short doesn't have a whole lot in it, but lays down a quick backstory before diving into a last minute 'Night Of The Lepus' (1972) style ending. As a side note, Wright really missed a trick in not titling the short 'Howard's End' which would have been so much more apt and delightfully pun-tastic.

#### The Hunt – 6 pages

Clive Middlesex is a Master Huntsman and very proud of it. And that's why, on that fateful Saturday morning, he was to be out hunting on his trusty horse Petronella. Furthermore, for this particular hunt, he and his fellow huntsmen were being filmed by a television crew. And so it was important that the hunt was shown in all its spectacular glory. And not just revelling in the gore of the kill...

You've gotta love a good short that's drenched in irony. Oh yes, we all know where this one's going. We had the delightful end guessed from just reading the title. But it works and it's delivered incredibly well, with plenty of meaty backstory and supporting layers. This is perhaps Wright's best example of his writing potential in the book (even though it's so short). The characterisation of Middlesex is far further developed than any other character we have been introduced to. And it just flows well, with enough padding to make it a good solid piece of engaging fiction.

#### Home – 4 pages

Jane was at home alone when the proverbial shit hit the fan. And as the unbelievable stories of animals turning on mankind started being broadcast across every channel, Jane's thoughts went out to her son Danny and where he was with her ex-husband. A zoo of all places. And now, she couldn't get hold of Joe. And the animals outside were getting closer...

An altogether depressing short, with barely a glimmer of hope to be pulled out of it. The short does little other than to serve as a slight expansion on the main tale's principal protagonist via a deeper divulgence of his backstory. The short is grim and emotive and ends perfectly in-tone with the rest of the quick story.

#### Behold, The Beasts Of War – 4 pages

Corporal Nick Robson had already seen more than his fair share of the war against the animals. Wave after wave of the beasts had surged over their military ranks. And the animals were undoubtedly becoming wiser to mankind's defences. Their attacks more organised. And now, as he surveyed the land before him from behind their hastily erected barricade, he knew that much, much more was to come...

'World War Z' (2006) meets 'Animal Kingdom'. Here, Wright throws down a brief glimpse of the war to come. A depressingly bleak vision of a military response to the attacking hordes of the animals. Admittedly, the short doesn't really hold up that well to its epic-sounding title, but nonetheless, delivers a firm kick to the guts for the continued development of Wright's animal-attacking premise.

#### Sanctuary – 4 pages

Caroline was alone now; wandering the deserted and ravaged streets of Leicester in the hope of rescue or some form of sanctuary. She hadn't seen a living soul since she was with her small group of wandering survivors. But they were all gone now. Dead. But up ahead she could just make out the outline of a hastily erected barricade. An outpost for soldiers to defend against the hordes of animals. But sanctuary in this new

ravaged world is a very fickle thing...

For Wright's last short in his 'Animal Kingdom' premise Wright keeps with the downbeat bleakness, this time taking the story on to the possible end days of mankind, where the beasts that have risen up against humanity have swept over everything, killing and destroying as they go. Slight attentions to emotive details make this a much stronger addition than the sum of its parts; and certainly a grand one to finish Wright's overriding input with.

The Night Of The Squirrels – by Eric S Brown – 10 pages

Scott found himself alone and running through the dark woods in the desperate hope of finding safety somewhere. After the squirrels had stormed their house, and his mother and father had succumbed to their overwhelming numbers, he had managed to escape. And now he was on the way to old man Worley's farm. After all, he was an ex-military man with plenty of strength behind him. Scott was sure that he'd take him in... Meanwhile, Lieutenant William Gunter and two escorting soldiers were on their way flying over the woods in a helicopter on a rescue mission for the very same Colonel Worley. But the woods are far from empty. In their depths lurk swarms of squirrels as well as a much, much larger and fiercer threat...

Penned by prolific short story writer, Eric S Brown, this final addition to the 'Animal Kingdom' premise is certainly a strange one. At first it feels like it fits in nicely – the Leicester setting, the small nods towards details that Wright had already set down, and the overall 'apocalyptic' backdrop. Indeed, all the correct ingredients appeared to be there. And the short is well-written to boot. But for some reason, possibly known only to Brown himself, he has included some strange sasquatch type of beasts roaming around the woods! Not only does mankind have the animals rising up against them, but now they've got mythical beasts to cope with too. Okay, so 'Animal Kingdom' was never meant to be an altogether realistic tale, but to throw in a whole new form of beastie right at the very end is just plain stupid. Personally, I would have preferred to have kept Brown's 'Squirrel and Sasquatch' based addition out of the book. It's well written and exciting, but veers off the overall storyline just too much to justify its inclusion.

The book as a whole runs for a total of 292 pages with 'Animal Kingdom' itself running for 253 pages.

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## **Myra Gabor says**

Another in the long line of apocalypse novels, but this one has many good points (at least it's not about zombies). The basic plot is simple. The animals have achieved awareness. They now work together to kill off all the people in the world. While the liberals in the audience might cheer and think "about time", Mr Wright also mentions that those countries without an adequate military were the first ones to fall.

The book opens in a zoo. Without warning, a snake crushes its handler. Then the lions attack. We meet the people who happened to be at the zoo that day. The author has given us a microcosm of society within the confines of that zoo. As the people join forces to combat this threat, the only thing that unites them is their determination to survive. Yet they are divided in how they feel they can do this, while the animals, all different species, are united in their determination to eradicate the human species.

Everyone has his quirks (read personality disorders), but each fights on in his own way.

I gave it 4 stars because it went from determination to succeed to nihilistic. I would have preferred a more positive outcome.

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## Grampy says

Awesome! You have GOT to read this book! For some unknown reason, apparently all the animals in the world suddenly began attacking humans with a clear intent to kill and consume them. A handful of "lucky"... or maybe NOT so lucky... survivors who happened to be at the zoo, of all places, when chaos broke out, found themselves presumably safe in the visitor's center. Or, at least safe for the few minutes it took the lions to figure out how to break glass. Scrambling for safety higher in the facility, a few folks managed to get into a corridor before the last couple in decided they'd better close the door, because the lions were getting close. They ignored the cries for help from the screaming people locked out with the lions, and ignored the wet, slurping sound of meat being torn from still-living bodies being eaten by the lions. Are you hooked yet? Well as the saying goes, you ain't heard nothing yet! As if four-legged murderous beasts weren't bad enough, the handful of survivors soon found themselves split into two opposing factions, and things go seriously downhill from there. YOU HAVE TO READ THIS BOOK! And, as good as the book was, the author also included several short-short stories after the conclusion, to provide some background on a few of the people and/or their kin. I can't say enough about this. You've GOT to read it!

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## Jennifer says

Wow!!!! This book is a not stop adrenalin pumping thrill ride of horror and suspense. Imagine if you will every animal in the entire world turning on humans, not just the big bad animals but the cute and fluffy ones as well. Then to make matters worse what if you are stuck with a group of people in a zoo!!!! All Joe wants to do is protect his son and his new found friends from danger but there is not only madness all around him from the animals but some of the people he is hold up with are borderline insane. This is an outstanding book with such addictive writing that you will not be able to put it down, and to add to the awesomeness of the book the bonus content is just as good as the book it's self. This is a must read for any horror lover.

I want to give a special thanks to the author Iain Rob Wright. I am so happy to have read your wonderful work and I want to say thank you very much for writing such a wonderful horror that kept my imagination on edge from beginning to end.

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## Terri says

Joe takes his son Danny to the zoo, never expecting that today is they day all the animals in the world revolt and attack the humans. A story of trying to survive the inexplicable. It kept me turning pages and highly engaged

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## Kaisersoze says

As much as I respect anyone who has managed to make a living out of self-publishing - and Iain Rob Wright is one example - there are times I become frustrated with that produced by these authors. **Animal Kingdom** falls into this category.

This should have been the proverbial slam dunk. The concept is so simple, it's brilliant, and I cannot believe it hasn't been done to death at least a thousand times over. *Animals suddenly start killing humans*. That's it. End of premise.

Think about it. Imagine the world-wide carnage if everything from your four legged, supposedly domesticated best friend to all the animals in the wild suddenly decided humans shouldn't be in charge and, in most cases, would make a very tasty meal.

Mayhem would ensue. Chaos would reign. And yes, the animals might just win. How cool would it be to read about *that*?

Well, you won't find out in **Animal Kingdom**. Instead, you'll be treated to the POV of one tiny group of characters trapped, inconveniently enough, within a zoo. And therein lies my frustration. This could have been *epic*. Instead, it's just all right as we follow seven cliched characters holed up and bickering amongst themselves. Loony old religious nut? Check. Cartoonishly evil selfish guy? Check. Pretty love interest? Check. And the main character who has an in-built sympathetic trigger - in this case a son also trapped with him? Check. Most of the book's bulk is spent on the interactions between these characters, while the animals bide their time or try to find entry to where the humans are. After an initial frenzy, there's really not much animal action (get your mind out of the gutter) until the last quarter of the book. There will also be no surprises for calling who survives and who doesn't within the book's first 50 pages.

Once the main story has ended, Wright includes several satellite short tales that add some depth to his world. I tended to enjoy these more than the main narrative as a picture bigger in scope was hinted at.

All in all, **Animal Kingdom** was a disappointment to me, if only because the central premise was so fantastic, I was expecting a great deal. Read it for yourself if you're a fan of said premise to see if you agree.

## 2.5 Silver Backed Generals for **Animal Kingdom**.

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### **Ami says**

Disclaimer: I received this book as a gift from Mr Wright but this in no way affects my following review. If you would like the same gift just go to his website, [www.iainrobwright.com](http://www.iainrobwright.com). He actually sent 4 books, a short story and the first three chapters of another book. All I had to do was give my email address. I definitely got the best deal in that transaction and it's yours for the asking.

This is the most unusual apocalyptic novel I have ever read and I pray that the world is over run with Zombies rather than this book becoming a fact. As in all cases involving humans, there are horrible, despicable and disgusting actions along with a few truly compassionate and kind actions but you won't read about them here. You will have to get the book for yourself, sorry.

There is one thing I want to say about the book though. I wanted more answers at the end so I will hope that means there will be another book written about those very things soon. Hint Hint Mr Wright (and keep writing other books as well, please).

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## **Pamellia says**

Pretty darn good for a first published novel. Full review to follow on [The Lazy Book Reviewer.com](http://The Lazy Book Reviewer.com)

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## **Andrew Lennon says**

Very, very good!

Really enjoyed this book. I listened to the audioversion of it. The narration was great.

The story itself was awesome, such a great concept. I love Iain's writing, it just seems to flow and makes for very enjoyable reading.

Can definitely recommend this to pretty much anyone. It draws you in pretty much straight away and the character development is done so well that you find yourself detesting some while rooting for others.

Check it out.

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## **Frank Errington says**

4 of 5 Stars

Iain Rob Wright is a young writer, from the UK, who's making a name for himself in the Horror and Thriller genres. And *Animal Kingdom*, from late 2011, is a fine example of taking an original idea and running with it.

For reasons unknown, a day at the zoo turns deadly when the animals unite to start killing humankind. There are plenty of encounters between the survivors, trapped in the zoo's administration building, and the creatures that once made up the zoos exhibits.

Given time, those trapped at the zoo learn that this is not an isolated incident, but is affecting all animals around the country, perhaps it's even a global catastrophe.

One of the things I really liked about Wright's story was the character study that developed from placing a number of people from diverse backgrounds in a closed environment. Granted it seems a bit contrived, but it really facilitates the conflicts essential to the work and makes it so much more than us against the animals.

You have a Father and Son, Joe and Danny, visiting the zoo as part of Danny's weekend of visitation with his Dad. There's also a zookeeper, a business man only interested in himself, a black gay man, a racist Scotsman, a religious nutcase and a romantic interest for Danny's Father, who is not without her own personal issues.

At times the situations seem a bit forced, construed to advance the story, but make little sense outside that context.

That aside, Wight did a good job of keeping the action moving and I found myself getting angry with and empathizing with his characters and the things that happened to them and the way they would deal with their situations. I think that's a true compliment to any writer.

Although we never learn what caused the animals to group together and set out to kill all the humans, Iain

has included several short stories after the main novel, all set in the same world as Animal Kingdom. Each short sheds light on some aspect of the main tale. Including one that offers a bit of an explanation of what happened that might have caused the animals to turn.

Currently available as a paperback and for the Kindle from Amazon.com. If you are an Amazon Prime member you can borrow the book for free from the Amazon Prime Kindle Lending Library.

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### **Bill says**

I listened to this one on audio a while back and evidently forgot to leave a review. I enjoyed this one from Iain Rob Wright. It was very quick, but a little predictable. There were some plot holes, although minor, and I thought the story could have jumped the walls of the zoo for a more dynamic story. The narration was good and the pacing of the audio fit the story well. 2.5+ Stars.

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