



# Pet

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Editorial Choice:

New Talent

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5

There are no monsters in Lucille; at least not any more after the revolution. Now the angels keep order ? angels drawn from the community. But what does a monster look like? And why do the angels found on the pages of old books look so monstrous? What happens when you forget the monsters? These are questions that trouble fifteen-year old Jam. Then Pet arrives, drawn from a painting by Jam's mother. Is Pet an angel ? or a monster?

This is a powerful and disturbing narrative told in a voice that is both immediate and reflective as all the best allegories are. Lucille is a community that is inspirational; here a young person can find an identity that is their own ? as Jam has. Here there are loving families with a strong sense of wellbeing and togetherness. Lucille is a happy, safe place. Or is it? There is a history, one in which the adults had a part, but which, in a belief that its horrors should not be remembered, is being quietly buried in favour of a golden present. The result is that Jam, alive, intelligent, independent is also naive. What is a monster? And suppose it wears an angel's face? The greatest danger in any community is complacency. Young people reading this will be drawn in by the characters, by the situation, by the emotions. But they will not be presented with a resolution that is black and white; it will be satisfying but uncomfortable. Angels, like Justice, are not there to deal in ?fairness?, they are as Pet says ?hunters? and as all mystics have known are truly frightening. Humans are not angels ? there is an emotional response but even compromise can be uncomfortable. Emezi has shaped a story to encourage thought and reflection ? even discussion among young readers. This is a novel that presents powerful messages which are conveyed through lively language and dialogue, through imaginative images and strong characterisation of both the young protagonists and the adults. The result is an absorbing, powerful, multi-layered read that is not just a lesson but an experience.

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