

A Misfortune of Lake Monsters

Nicole M. Wolverton

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In Nicole M. Wolverton's hair-raising thriller *A Misfortune of Lake Monsters*, a teenager who fakes cryptid sightings confronts a monster from her nightmares.

Lemon knows that Old Lucy isn't real. Her family has been responsible for impersonating the cryptid that lives in Devil's Elbow Lake for decades in secret to draw in tourist money. When she witnesses a toothy monster erupt from the lake and eat her dog, she is shocked. Though her friends Troy and Darrin are loyal, no one in her family believes that she saw a real monster—until people start dying, earthquakes shake the town, and the federal forces roll in. Lemon, Troy, and Darrin endeavor to prevent the monster from killing more people, placing Lemon's family's legacy at risk in the process.

Devil's Elbow's inhabitants speak with rustic accents and have a propensity for gossip, fleshing out the intimate, rural atmosphere of Lemon's youth. The trio's pulse-pounding ventures onto the lake in kayaks to place cameras to catch the monster are suspenseful. But the tension is balanced by earnest conversations between Lemon and her grandmother, while Lemon and Troy's alternating narrations fill in gaps of the monster mystery. There's romantic tension between Lemon and Troy, too, that sustains interest. Meanwhile, cocky Darrin is a source of comedic relief, delivering clever one-liners with regularity. The three form a magnetic trio: in addition to the monster, they're on the verge of adulthood and have to reckon with decisions about their future.

High stakes and an endearing romance rocket the thriller *A Misfortune of Lake Monsters* to mythical heights.

AIMÉE JODIN (July / August 2024)

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