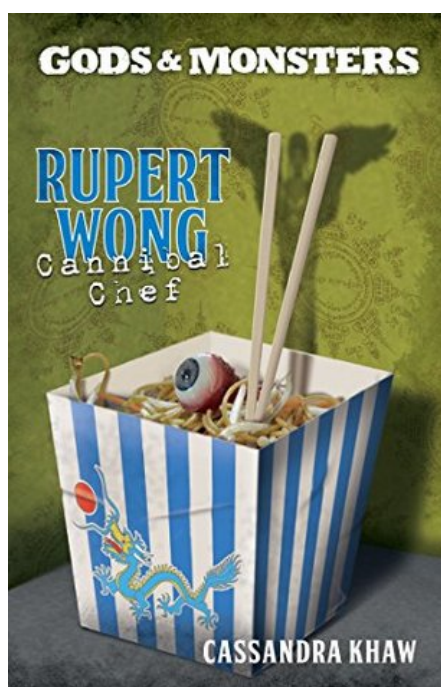




Rupert Wong, Cannibal Chef

Cassandra Khaw

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It's not unusual to work two jobs in this day and age, but sorcerer and former triad soldier Rupert Wong's life is more complicated than most. By day, he makes human hors d'oeuvres for a dynasty of ghouls; by night, he pushes pencils for the Ten Chinese Hells. Of course, it never seems to be enough to buy him a new car—or his restless, flesh-eating-ghost girlfriend passage from the reincarnation cycle—until opportunity comes smashing through his window.

In Kuala Lumpur, where deities from a handful of major faiths tip-toe around each other and damned souls number in the millions, it's important to tread carefully. Now the Dragon King of the South wants to throw Rupert right in it. The ocean god's daughter and her once-mortal husband have been murdered, leaving a single clue: bloodied feathers from the Greek furies. It's a clue that could start a war between pantheons, and Rupert's stuck in the middle. Success promises wealth, power and freedom, and failure... doesn't.

Rupert Wong, Cannibal Chef Details

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From Reader Review Rupert Wong, Cannibal Chef for online ebook

Stephanie Embry says

Unpopular opinion time:

I think CK is a fantastic writer of one liners and descriptions. She weaves details that keep me glued to the page.

Buuut i have the same problem here I had with her Lovecraft PI story - there's just something off about the pace. The characters all accept their fates too easily, everything cruises along with very little consideration. I get that it's a novella, and there is a lot packed into the story. I feel like it should have been a book, and in trying to make it shorter, CK took out a lot of necessary transitions.

I know I'm in the minority here, CK is riding a rising star right now. I'm hoping to see something full length from her soon.

Colin Sinclair says

This is glorious. For something so short it certainly crams in a lot of ingredients: gods, monsters, down-at-heel ex-mob chefs, gluttons, gourmands, angry ghosts, colonialism, assimilation, ancient vs modern, a bustling cityscape both bright & wild and grimy-drab...

It's got everything and all of it is mixed to perfection to produce a noirish yet numinous tale of one strangely compelling not-exactly-hero caught in the midst of a grand parade of terrifying grotesques.

Cassandra Khaw brings incredible depth to her world; a turn of phrase or well crafted image hinting at onion skin layers of history and politics and meaning and mystery, all waiting to be revealed beneath every place and every action. Despite the supernatural subject matter, this reads always as a story of real place, and real (strange) people.

Rupert Wong, Cannibal Chef rattles along in fast and thrilling style and manages to skip from visceral horror to easy violence to genuine heart-breaker pathos whilst never missing a step or leaving you behind. Highly recommended.

Beth Cato says

This novella is a fast read due to word length and its frenetic pace. From the first page, you know it's dark, too--cannibalism jokes are aplenty, and Khaw introduces many disturbing/fascinating creatures not usually depicted in English-language fantasy. That, along with the setting of Kuala Lumpur, add to the fresh and unique feel, though at time I felt a little lost because things did push along so quickly.

I love Rupert Wong and his little asides to the reader. He's a fantastic urban fantasy protagonist, abounding with snark, in love with a living-yet-dead lady, and in way over his head with petty gods and meddlesome ghosts and beasts. I was amused from the first page (and a little grossed out, too, I admit) as he described his

dinner menu plans and dealt with some nasty critters that he had accidentally inspired to unionize. That had me laughing out loud.

I have read a novel set in this same Gods & Monsters universe; Mythbreaker by Stephen Blackmoore has common elements like the intense darkness, fast pace, and heavy snark, but they both use very different settings and mythologies; both works stand on their own completely, and it's my understanding that all of the books in the series are set up that way.

Megan says

Incredibly fun, breakneck-paced adventure through Malaysian and Chinese (and, why the heck not, Greek) mythology, with a hapless mortal protagonist who's just trying to cook up a few tourists for his boss and keep his ghoulish girlfriend happy. I'm absolutely going to read more from this series and author!

Rene Sears says

I really enjoyed this book, but it took me a little while to read it, because I do a lot of my pleasure reading over lunch, and I had to stop a few times! Khaw writes really effective horror, and I guess I'm squeamish. :)

Rupert is not a good guy. It's right there in the title. He cooks people. Various gods and ghouls have a claim on him, and generally he appeases them by cooking for them, with all that entails. But every once in a while, he does try to do the right thing, or at least look out for those he loves. Eventually this gets him into trouble as those with different claims on him come into conflict. Horrifying, bloody, disgusting conflict. Recommended if you like horror. It is exactly what it says on the tin.

I really enjoyed this. But only on an empty stomach.

Terry O'Carroll says

Fascinating urban-fantasy-slash-horror-slash-mystery novel set in Malaysia where native Malay and the introduced Islamic and Chinese cultures meet and mix. All of the gods and monsters of each of these pantheons are real. Rupert Wong is stuck in the middle of the whole supernatural cultural collision, trying to keep the peace as part of his penance for his past sins. He wants to stay out of Diyu, the Chinese Hell. He also wants to keep his undead vengeful-spirit girlfriend happy, feed her blood-drinking never-born baby, and keep his boss (a ghoul) fed AND happy. Yeah, your life is not as complicated as Rupert's. Still, he has things mostly under control, until Ao Qin, King of the Dragons, drags him in to solve the murder of Ao Qin's daughter. Things get even more complicated for Rupert after that...

I found the window into an unfamiliar (to me) culture and mythology/ies to be really fascinating. There is a lot of grue and gore, because this is a HORROR urban fantasy, so be warned. Overall, I would recommend this one to people who enjoy horror, urban fantasy, and mystery stories.

caleb. says

Damn. I did not expect that.

I read the sample and knew immediately that this was something that I had to read. Not only because the first scene is Rupert arguing with undead dead babies about unionizing themselves but because of the *writing*>. *It's thick and visceral and gross. I just ... needed to read it.*

And I mean that in the best way. I absolutely loved how disgusting this book was. If reading about decomposition, bones, slurping, organs and egg yolks being compared to pustules then you might have a difficult time getting through it but that's absolutely up my alley. I found them ... delicious. (Ha.)

Set in Kuala Lumpur and navigating the gritty magical parts of it, Rupert gets wrapped up in what could be the start a war between pantheons. The daughter of the Dragon King of the South's daughter is dead and he wants Rupert to go after who he believes is responsible and giving him one clue: feathers from the Greek Furies. I went in thinking I was going to be reading about Rupert's (mis)adventures of butchering and serving up human flesh for inhuman ghouls but it was more of a crime, whodunit kind of story. Not exactly what I was expecting but Khaw's writing rolled on in a hot daze and promised me more rotten words. She did not disappoint.

The Malay-Chinese mythology aspect of this novella comes on pretty fast and, if it's something you're not familiar with, confusing. There were a few things I had to stop and look up because I just didn't know what they were. It disrupted the pacing but I do that on my own time anyway so it didn't particularly bother me. And while there were plenty of (fantastic, ugh I'm just not ever going to get over how much I enjoyed this gross writing) gory details, the mythology was kinda just mentioned and then moving forward.

Overall, just an incredibly fun, totally gross but delicious read.

Nenad Vukusic says

Cassandra Khaw has a way with words. She strings them up like beads of pearl, creating tactile, olfactory, all kinds of delicious situations, spiced with the magic of the far east, most of which I only touched when watching "Big Trouble In Little China" - ah, now it dawned on me. Maybe the appeal of this book is a complete lack of knowledge about all of the Chinese hells, and names of demons that sound so strange, and magical to my (mostly eastern) European mind. Anyhow - Rupert made me chuckle a few times, the dialogues were a bit too cliché, but what do you expect, reading a supernatural detective story, but to have fun.

K.J. Charles says

Okay, so either you want to read a book called this or you don't.

A fabulous and entirely gross horror comedy set in Malaysia (and Hell). It's spectacularly icky and kind of oddly sweet and moving, and the use of Malaysian and Chinese mythology is glorious. A wonderfully different-from-the-old-routine fantasy read and yet one more reminder that we need diverse books because (among many other reasons) *it's more fun and you read better stuff that way.*

Thoroughly recommended unless you're easily grossed out in which case...mate, read the title.

K's Bognoter says

En malaysisk splatter/horror/fantasy/noir-krimi, som udspiller sig i en verden befolket af mennesker, guder, dæmoner, vampyrer og andre monstre ... med en hovedperson, der arbejder som gourmetkok og forbindelsesofficer for det kannibalistiske jet-set blandt dæmoner og monstre i Kuala Lumpurs parallelle undergrundsverden ... Ja, det er lige så fjollet, som det lyder, men alligevel ikke helt dårligt, faktisk ganske vittigt sine steder.

Jeg var glimrende underholdt i et par timer i selskab med kannibalkokken Rupert Wong. Som et forfriskende pust af noget andet end det sædvanlige på min læsehylde, fungerede bogen fint. Men det var trods alt også betinget af, at bogen er på under 100 sider. Jeg havde næppe udstået 300 sider i samme stil ...

Læs hele anmeldelsen på K's bognoter: <http://bognoter.dk/2018/08/01/cassand...>

Michael Hicks says

Cassandra Khaw takes us into the magical underbelly of Kuala Lumpur in *Rupert Wong, Cannibal Chef* as part of Abaddon Books Gods and Monsters series. Picture Jet Tila (a Thai chef Food Network fans should recognize) with magical know-how, acting as ambassador for the Ten Chinese Hells in between his culinary duties for a family of mobster ghouls.

Our introduction to Wong finds him tasked with locating the murderer of the Dragon King's daughter. Heady stuff, to be sure, and one that finds Wong calling upon various Chinese deities as he unravels the mystery. As is tradition with the noir tropes that have inspired, and been somewhat upended by Khaw, it doesn't take long for Wong to find himself in way over his head and under assault by various forces, living, dead, and otherwise. And holy crap, does Wong ever get assaulted... [insert maniacal laugh]

Wong is a fun character to spend a few hours with, and this novella is the perfect bite-sized serving of urban fantasy horror mayhem. Khaw does a terrific job creating some uncomfortable scenes, but is even better at bringing to life the mythological denizens inhabiting Kuala Lumpur (the God of Missing People in particular is very neatly crafted). It's this mythology that makes *Rupert Wong, Cannibal Chef* completely aces in my eyes. The cultural and religious practices in which the Chinese honor their dead are vividly realized here, and lay a solid foundation on which to build a superb urban fantasy. I also felt that I got to know a little bit about Kuala Lumpur as a setting, and I could easily picture myself wandering the alleys and Chinatown alongside Wong and some unwelcome companions. All in all, this was a terrifically immersive read!

My only complaint is a slight one, involving my own misreading of the title. I had thought going in that Wong was a cannibal *and* chef, rather than a chef *for* cannibals. That said, I still got to read a little bit about the preparation of fat, white tourists for some ghoulish company, even if I had expected way more dishes with long pig as the central ingredient.

... It's also entirely possible I'm just a weird-o.

Robbie says

This is a tad over 3.5 stars for me in my late 30's but probably would have been 5 when I was in high school. That's not to say that it's a YA novel, but that my tastes have changed a lot since then. I think the problem with it for me was that I just didn't like the titular character that much. The world he moved in was fascinating and I loved the richness of his interactions with the various gods and monsters and whatnot. The humor just wasn't what I'm into these days and there was a lot more silly grossness than I like. I'd probably read something else by Khaw and may even read one of the sequel novellas later, but we'll see.

James says

Khaw is a genius!!! everything about this tale is exquisite... Rupert is supremely developed in every aspect of what a character should be... the story is epically funny and menacing (great internal dialogues and bloody acts of whatever abound)... much to love about the twists and turns of The Old Ones... plenty of detailed references, cultural and mythological and mythical and social and criminal... hard to describe Khaw's use of words and phrases in general since it seems so effortless, and her icky-lethal-awful terminology for the creatures is crazytown beauteous... loved it and am heading right into the follow-up book...

Will Caskey says

A fun, lurid dive into supernatural horror

If a hard boiled style tale about a guy who literally cooks people for his demon employers is your jam, this book will delight you. There are ghouls! Dragons! Gods of every sort! And beneath it all a mash smoky ethnic religious conflicts that flash in and out of focus.

A few of the secondary characters are surprising to the point of confusing, presumably in the service of setting up a serial. All told a fun ride through SFF horror.

Bkwyrn says

Either this seems like a good premise for a book to you, or it doesn't. If it doesn't, out the book down, you're not going to enjoy it.

I LOVED IT. I read a lot. Especially a lot of fantasy and I'm tired of formulas. No formula here. Rupert isn't a good guy. He's just.....maybe less bad. The lesser of a whole lot of evils. The setting is, to me (white American woman), totally alien. The manners are different, the rules are different, it's just about as far from boring supernatural formulaic hero dreck as you can get. This is original and while not perfect, it's a fantastic antidote to "oh my god another book about a Chosen One." I immediately bought all Khaw's other books after reading this one.

There's an "ick" factor. But if you're easily squicked out, don't read a book about a cannibal chef.
