

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## Monsters

by Maureen Marsh

He awoke to the familiar sounds, sights and smells of the forest. Parrots shrieking, trees rustling, earthy and exotic fragrances permeating the air. Life doing what life does. He slowly opened his eyes and rubbed them with his small hands and gazed over at his beloved mama, still asleep. Her deep brown eyes closed tight. Her breathing steady. He climbed over to her and playfully tickled her ear, then gently nipped it. She awoke laughing and hugging him close to her. He had been named 'Little Laughter' because he was always laughing, always smiling. His Mama considered him to be her most precious jewel of joy.

At 5 years old, he was already taller than most of his friends and certainly more precocious. His ability to locate hidden berries and nuts was legendary. He was fearless, curious and everything in his world held deep and wondrous fascination for him.

His mama and he laughed together frequently over almost anything. His father would gaze over at them benignly, shrugging his shoulders as they giggled over some private joke. He was somewhat sterner and private but he loved them in his still way. Life was simple here and in its simplicity quite beautiful. The days consisted of collecting fruit, nuts and berries and then there was the making and remaking of beds and shelters from the materials on offer from the abundant forest.

There was always much time to simply be. To stare up at the canopy of trees above and feel the comfort and protection of their branches like enormous arms shading and protecting them from the sky and elements beyond. Little laughter liked to stare up at the night skies, clear and mysterious.

Each star bright in the inky darkness. Imbibing the earthy smells and listening to the rustling and movement of the nocturnal creatures, talking to each other in the alive darkness. Simple pleasures like this filled his soul with joy.....and then, one day that joy was shattered....

When did it start? Perhaps it was the day his fathers friend returned from an expedition with sombre tales of a a mysterious and deadly monster. His father shooed Little Laughter away, but he hid behind some branches and listened.

'Great danger, I saw it' said his fathers friend 'The monster was huge and tearing everything apart in its wake. It had enormous teeth that were sharp and brutal....and the sound....the roar so loud that the earth itself trembled....its coming I tell you....its coming our way'

The story spread throughout the tribe and panic began to erupt. It seemed like the trees themselves were in terror and panic. His father and the others began fashioning some weapons from branches and materials around.

Several days passed and no more was heard and no monster arrived and the tribe began to settle down, perhaps feeling that it was a hoax or had been exaggerated.

Then, however, one morning, it came. Little laughter heard it first in the distance, like an ominous rumble, a vibration on the ground. The trees began to rustle and the birds began to call. The tribe got busy and began to find their abandoned weapons. The noise got louder and louder and there was the sound of ripping and tearing and the terrified screams of the inhabitants became palpable. And then he saw it! Emerging from the forest like a giant apparition. A relentless, huge and mindless monster with hideous teeth and intent. He came not alone but with other monsters and the sound they made vibrated through the forest and they brought death and destruction with them. Killing everything they touched.

His mama stood tall, protective, covering little laughter in leaves to hide him and telling him to stay there. She climbed bravely down from their tree home with a branch in her hand and ran towards one of the Monsters. Standing tall in front of it she took the branch and began to hit the monster, screaming loudly, looking small and vulnerable in front of the hideous apparition. Suddenly the monster spotted her, bent down and ripped her from the ground and threw her over several feet Her body violently hit the ground. Little laughter could see her bleeding and dying in front of him. All laughter stopped then and forever.

3 weeks later in a coffee shop in Greenwich, Emma was sipping a latte and looking through her facebook feed and came upon a photograph that had become viral. It was the heartbreaking image of an Orang-utan staring tall and proud with a branch in its hands confronting a bulldozer. Like many others that had encountered that image she felt sad and guilty. She wished she could do something but feeling uncomfortable at the image, she quickly moved on. She Scrolled onto a more comforting facebook feed about applying lipstick. Dunking her biscuit with palm oil into her coffee, she took a bite.

