



## The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove (Pine Cove Series)

*By Christopher Moore*

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The town psychiatrist has decided to switch everybody in Pine Cove, California, from their normal antidepressants to placebos, so naturally—well, to be accurate, artificially—business is booming at the local blues bar. Trouble is, those lonely slide-guitar notes have also attracted a colossal sea beast named Steve with, shall we say, a thing for explosive oil tanker trucks. Suddenly, morose Pine Cove turns libidinous and is hit by a mysterious crime wave, and a beleaguered constable has to fight off his own gonzo appetites to find out what's wrong and what, if anything, to do about it.

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## The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove (Pine Cove Series) By Christopher Moore Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Amazon.com Review

Reading a Christopher Moore novel is a little like eating a potato chip--it's hard to stop at just one. And you don't have to look beyond the titles to understand the allure; who could pass up a book called *Practical Demonkeeping* or *Island of the Sequined Love Nun*? Each of Moore's tales skewers a particular literary genre. In *Coyote Blue* he nailed New Age fascination with Native American religion; in *Blood-Sucking Fiends: A Love Story* he put a new twist on the classic vampire tale. *The Lust Lizard of Melancholy Cove* is a companion piece to his first novel, the hilariously twisted horror story *Practical Demonkeeping*, and readers of that book will recognize the setting, Pine Cove, California. In addition, Moore includes plenty of his patented weird sex, occasional gross-out death, several off-kilter but nonetheless affecting love stories, and some fabulous secondary characters such as Mavis Sand:

Mavis first began augmenting her parts in the fifties, first out of vanity: breasts, eyelashes, hair. Later, as she aged and the concept of maintenance eluded her, she began having parts replaced as they failed, until almost half of her body weight was composed of stainless steel (hips, elbows, shoulders, finger joints, rods fused to vertebrae five through twelve), silicon wafers (hearing aids, pacemaker, insulin pump), advanced polymer resins (cataract replacement lenses, dentures), Kevlar fabric (abdominal wall reinforcement), titanium (knees, ankles), and pork (ventricular heart valve).

In a nutshell, the plot revolves around a gigantic prehistoric lizard whose slumber deep beneath the ocean surface is interrupted by a radioactive leak from a nearby power plant. At the same time, a woman in Pine Cove hangs herself; the local psychiatrist (who has been prescribing antidepressants to everyone in town with gay abandon) decides the suicide was her fault and yanks everyone's medication; and an elderly black blues singer named Catfish Jefferson arrives to perform at the Head of the Slug saloon. Into this already strange brew mix one schizoid former B-movie starlet, a pot-head town constable, a bereaved local artist, a biologist tracking anomalous behavior in rats, a crooked sheriff, and a pharmacist with a bizarre sexual fixation on sea mammals, and you have a recipe for the kind of madness Moore does so well. --*Alix Wilber*

#### From Publishers Weekly

With in-your-face, South Park-worthy humor that only once slips into the truly offensive, Moore (*Island of the Sequined Love Nun*) has written the definitive Prozac allegory. Like its Puff-the-Libidinous-Dragon protagonist Steve, this novel delightfully runs roughshod over trailer parks, scrip-happy psychiatrists, right-wing moralists and "nuked-out future movie" stars with laugh-aloud wit and gentle affection. Pine Cove is a Pacific coast town of 5000Aa third of whom Dr. Valerie Riordan has rendered dependent on antidepressants. When obsessive-compulsive Bess Leander is found hanged from a calico cloth rope, a possible suicide, Val fears she has been overmedicating, and she blackmails fish-fetishist pharmacist Winston Krauss into giving all antidepressant users placebos instead. As the antidepressants wear off, a hilariously uncontrollable erotic revolution takes place in the formerly groggy and dispirited population. A simultaneous nuclear plant leak into the ocean awakens serotonin-deficit sea beast Steve, who descends on the town, disguised occasionally as a double-wide mobile home. When the dooper constable and the methamphetamine-peddling sheriff duke it out, creating chaos instead of restoring order, we learn our lesson about better living through pharmaceuticals. Moore is Daniel Pinkwater for grownups, but a lot funnier; and his irreverent antics reveal a buoyant wit and surreal authority even while rendering the emotional range, sex life, and murderous tendencies of a sea monster. Agent: Nick Ellison. Author tour.

#### From Kirkus Reviews

Godzilla comes to Pine Cove, nestled somewhere between Los Angeles and San Francisco, in Moore's latest foray into the zany and the zonked. If Steve Martin ever wrote a novel, it might be something like Moore's farcical labors in the field of psychotropic fiction. Here, one knows from the start that not only is nothing sacred to the author but also that nothing is important, and by mid-novel you're doubtful that anything life-changing will come of this bemused cartooning. Even so, Moore's latest is marginally less sick and more serious than 1997's *Island of the Sequined Love Nun*. It's September in Pine Cove. Cleaning freak Bess Leander has just hung herself. Investigating is stoned constable Theophilus Crowe. Meanwhile, Bess's therapist, Valerie Riordan, who counsels a large number of the town's population and keeps them tranquilized on a variety of psychotropics, gets scared by the statistic that 15 percent of all depressed people commit suicide. This means that perhaps more than 200 of her patients are slated for self-exit, despite her widely dispensed pills for which she gets a kickback from the local druggist, a dolphin fetishist. When her qualms overcome her, Val instructs the druggist to replace the pills with placebos. As autumn leaves fall, her patients go into withdrawal and self-medicate, en masse, with alcohol. What's more, elderly Delta guitarist Catfish Jefferson has just been hired to play at the Head of the Slug Saloon, where his marvelously sad blues add to the local scene's seductive narcosis. Fifty years ago down on the Delta, Catfish first met the Sea Beast, a hundred-foot creature that loved his steel guitar and that has now risen from the depths, awakened by a sexy nuclear radiation leak, to blister the countryside with radiant energies of lust . . . . Patches of good writing break through the looniness and give hope for better things from Moore when his hare-brained imagination settles down. (Author tour) -- *Copyright ©1999, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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