

## **Chapter – IV**

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*'BEASTS'* is the second novel written by John Crowley. Even though, it is written soon after completion of *'The Deep'*, it is totally in different form. *Beasts* describe a world in which genetically engineered animals are given a variety of human characteristics. Painter is a Leo, a combination of man and lion. Reynard, a character derived from medieval European fable, is part fox. Political forces result in the Leos being deemed an experimental failure, first resigns to reservations, and later to be hunted down and eliminated. A central element of the story is the relationship between Painter and Reynard, who acts as a kingmaker behind the scenes.

As per the title, the novel is about the wild animals. It is about the Lion and fox that are genetically engineered human-animal hybrids. *'Beasts'* is divided into eight chapters but all these amount to a few story strands that eventually come together in the end. It takes place after a civil war has caused the United States to split up into several districts. The Federal still exists and is trying to reunite these districts together under its tyrannical rule through the operations and morals of USE (Union for Social Engineering). As the Federal attempts to coerce the largest of the districts to reunite under a Union, a mysterious Leo enters the scene as a sort of messiah, inspiring people to live in a more anarchistic lifestyle.

First chapter of the novel is about the Loren Casaubon and his experiments on four young Falcons. He is a Naturalist and is working with young Falcons on a huge tower in the forest where he wants to train them for hunting. He stays there for a month and then comes to the nearest city where he came to know that his project is cancelled. Then he is appointed as a teacher of Sten and Mika- children of Dr. Jarrell Gregorius.

In the second chapter, Leo-a lion headed man meets Caddie. He purchased Caddie from Hutt. Caddie is orphan. Leo and Caddie went in the search of Reynard in forest. One helicopter was trying to follow them. It was in search of Leo. Caddie was unknown about the follow of helicopter to them. They stay in the tent covered with trees near the lake. Nobody can search them easily. One day one helicopter came with one commander. He tries to kill Leo and Caddie, but Leo attacks and kills the commander. The commander was a government servant. Leo sees two labels in helicopter one for the Leo and the second for the thing which is 10 miles away from this place. Leo comes to know that the government's persons want to kill him. At the same place they meet Reynard. Caddie asks him about him and Leo.

Third chapter deals with the training of Sten and Mika. Loren Casaubon teaches and trains Sten and Mika about handling of Hawk at their father Dr. Jarrell Gregorius' farm house. Dr. Jarrell Gregorius is an officer of Northern autonomy who also lives in a huge farm house. He has a lady assistant namely Nashe. One day Reynard meets to Dr. Jarrell Gregorius and they discuss about Union for Social Engineering (USE). Reynard argues Dr. Jarrell Gregorius to put his conditions to USE about the reunion of various districts of U. S. A. which are divides about ten years back after a long war. One Day Dr. Jarrell Gregorius was murdered. Reynard, Leo and Caddie discuss about this murder. Reynard tells that police have arrested Chauffeur. Leo and Caddie go to south at Genesis preserve.

Fourth chapter is about Candy's mountain where Meric Landseer lives with his wife Bree. This place is near Genesis preserve which is huge grassland where different wild animals live. Emma Roth is an officer of the grassland. One day they heard about a pride-family of a Leo and Meric decides to enter in Genesis preserve. When he visits he saw the pride and lives with them for few days and decided to stay with them. In the

office of Genesis preserve at the Candy Mountain, three Federal agents from USE come to Emma Roth and ask about Leo-Painter. They told that he has murdered Dr. Jarrell Gregorius and so they want to arrest him. They enter in the Genesis Preserve with ranger of the Genesis Preserve Grady. They capture Leo and took away him with them.

In fifth chapter Leo escapes from the police station on Columbus Avenue due to a blast by which whole building collapse. He enters in the cellar- an underground room where Sweets-a dog came after a shooting of a bullet on him by a police. Both of them they decided to escape from the city with the pack of dogs and all of them released many animals from the zoo. All of them they went away towards the tunnel and crossed the tunnel where one guard tried to stop them but one dog Doberman killed him. They came out of the tunnel on opposite side and went through a barren part of island city at the boundary of island city and Northern Autonomy. They walked through it which was reported by a police through helicopter. Finally they reached at a boundary where a police van came to arrest them. Painter ordered the pack to run towards the horizon and all of them ran away. Painter also ran away.

Sixth chapter is again about the Loren Casaubon who is now on a research project on flock of Canada geese at an Island in the river. When Dr. Jarrell Gregorius was murdered, Loren, Sten and Mika stayed in the farm house. But they were under burden of federal government. Loren continued his training to Sten and Mika on Hawk. One day they *watched a documentary on TV channel on a pride of Leo-Painter filmed and narrated by Meric Landseer. This changed the mind of Sten. Sten wanted to help the pride.* When Nashe was imprisoned there was a watch at Sten's house. Sten felt this change *and he with Mika fled away towards pride. Finally Loren Casaubon informed to police and went on his own project where Reynard came and tells him about Sten and*

Mika. He asked him to help Sten and Mika. When Reynard went away Loren came to his project. In that week the Geese fled away as the season was changed.

Seventh Chapter is about Painter who is caught by federal government. Reynard and Caddie tried to release him from the prison which was previously a public mental hospital. Barron was an officer of federal government as a custodian/jailer of the prison. Reynard discussed with Barron about the health condition of the Painter. Barron permitted Reynard to meet Painter. Reynard told to Caddie that he had killed Painter's Son as well as he had guided federal police to arrest Painter in Genesis Preserve but now he is guilty and wanted to pay for this by relieving Painter from the jail. Further with the permission of the Barron Reynard freed painter through the back gate of the prison and made a bomb blast and showed that Painter is dead in the blast. Finally Painter went away with Barron. Reynard was injured.

Last, eighth chapter is the gathering of all characters at the tower where in the beginning Loren Casaubon started his training to the young Falcons. After releasing from the jail Painter came to the tower with Caddie. Sten and Mika also arrived their on next day. Sten came to know that, Caddie has killed Reynard as per his plan, because Reynard wanted to free Painter on behalf of his death. One day Loren came to tower. Loren told them that Reynard had told him to help them. Painter asked Loren to teach hunting with trap. After few days Sweets joined the group at tower. All of them they saw a Hawk like something Black flying in the air which came to them. Reynard's son came through this flying machine with some boxes. He told that to whom Caddie shot was his father while he was made by the process of cloning. He also told that Painter will be the king.

As mentioned earlier, the novel is about the genetically engineered animals-a fox Reynard and a Leo Painter. Other main characters of the novel are Caddie, a woman

who lives in Painter's pride, Loren Casaubon a trainer, Meric Landseer, a forest officer, Sten and Mika the children of Dr. Jarrell Gregorius and Sweets a dog.

Michael Andre-Driussi in an article entitled 'John Crowley's Great Blond Beasts' from the book 'Snake's-Hands the Fiction of John Crowley' said that,

"BEASTS (1976) is John Crowley's second novel, a dark and gritty science fiction of the near future. It features bio-engineered beasts-men (a man fox and the Leo, a species of lion-humanoids), and involves a quest to save the Leos from the genocidal plan of USE (the Union of Social Engineering). So in superficial way *Beasts* is like a Narnia for adults, a daydream/nightmare of sex and violence, bondage and submission, and thorny ethical dilemmas, all centered on an enigmatic lion King. It is a meditation upon the ambiguities of "charisma politics" and the dangers of political maneuvering in the always muddled present." ('Snake's-Hands the fiction of John Crowley', Michael Andre Driussi, 35)

*According to my opinion 'Beasts' is perhaps strangely drawn to Crowley's vision of a post-apocalyptic/balkanized United States with roving bands of genetically manipulated Leos (lion/man hybrids) hunted by the government. Main characters Reynard and Painter are the beasts which are human-animal hybrids created by unchecked genetic engineering without proper knowledge. But they too are strangely attracting (even sexually) to humans whom they come into contact with. Crowley's work explores humankind's repulsion and simultaneous fascination with their ostracized creations.*

In the Second chapter of the novel namely 'Sphinx' Crowley had explained the Sphinx-Painter. Caddie who is orphan was purchased by Painter from her owner Hutt. Crowley has explained Caddie's first visit to Painter in a different way. He writes,

She felt the thunder of dream realization: she had come to the wrong house, she shouldn't be here, it wasn't the Leo but the Sun who lived here: that was why it was so hot. She awoke as the Leo appeared, suddenly, towering over her; he was simply a lion standing like a man, yet his face glowed as though made of molten gold, and his mane streamed whitely from his face. He seemed furious at her (*Otherwise-Beasts*, John Crowley 1976: 189).

Crowley has put different plotlines of the story in the novel. One plotline follows Loren Casaubon, an ethologist, who loses government funding for research on hawks and becomes a tutor for two gifted children of Gregorius, the leader of Federal Government. Another follows Painter, an outlawed *Leo*, on the run from the USE. Very clearly a Messianic character, Painter gathers together a vast assortment of humans who are drawn by his presence and way of life. The ways of his pride contrast with the moral strictures of purely human society:

“The Leos' only loyalty was to their pride. Whether they had inherited this trait from their lion ancestors or had consciously modelled themselves on lion society wasn't known.” (*Otherwise-Beasts*, John Crowley 1976: 242)

Painter, violently opposed to human civilization. embodies a vision that many humans find alluring. Chased by agents of the USE, Painter journeys through decaying cities returning to the wild...

And as though he knew that his watchers would have just then come to see that, the mild voice began again. "Like gypsies," he said, "like all nomads, the Leos, instead of adapting their environment, adapt to it. In winter they go where it's warm. Far south now, other prides have already made winter quarters. For these, though, there will be no move this winter.

*(Otherwise-Beasts, John Crowley 1976: 291)*

Donn Seeley of University of Utah had said about this novel that, the book is worth reading for the quality of its writing and characterization. It investigates the problem of how human beings preserve something unearthly like Leos at several different levels, from the experiences of humans in direct contact with Leos to the incredibly tangled politics. Although the problem is not really resolved at the end of the book, it is still thought-provoking. He has also asked a question about telepathic communication of Leos with dogs. Further he criticizes this assumption of Crowley as silliness. He writes about Leo,

"Painter is a Leo, a member of a breed that was created by fusing human and leonine genetic material using recombinant DNA techniques. The government of the US has crumbled and all that remains are petty 'autonomies' which struggle to maintain a semblance of authority. The Leos have evolved their own alien culture living in the wild apart from humanity. When we meet Painter, however, he is on the run -- Leos and other synthetic species have become undesirables under a new revival of the central government. How is it



possible to persuade human beings to preserve something so unearthly as Leos?" (Donn Seeley, [www.megalexoria.com](http://www.megalexoria.com))

Painter is a central character of the novel that has relationship with the human female, Caddie. Crowley has described his movements in quiet authoritative voice that paints a compelling picture of lion man. Reynard the one-of-a-kind fox creature is another perfect character of the novel. His motivations are a constant mystery throughout the book and even to the end; he remains an enigma, defying those who don't realize that he is simply a creature slave to his nature. Crowley elicits a simple beauty from the manner in which the animal characters, despite any human manipulation or enhancements, maintain a slavish adherence to whatever is their essential nature; lions roam and hunt, foxes cunningly plot and escape, etc. The plight of Sweets and the other dogs in this slightly dystopian future was one of the standout chapters in this book, a complete surprise in a novel that kept refreshing itself with each new section with a scenario that was as different as the last. The section on the Mountain and the Genesis Preserve provided the best insight into this future world that was on the mend from some great wars clearly, but Crowley chooses to only give the reader the bare minimum as to what has happened. Some of the politics of the time do rear its head through Reynard and the story of Sten and Loren as they deal with the increasing reach of the Union for Social Engineering who serves well as the heavies for the book. The perils of humans tampering with nature on all levels is the undercurrent theme to the novel and adds elegiac quality as even the best intentioned of the humans, such as those in the Mountain, are seen to clash with the enhanced forces of nature unleashed, such as the Leos.

In the last eighth chapter when Sten and Mika meet Painter for the first time, Mika says, "We thought, you were dead." Crowley has represented him as a prince of

peace. He replied to Mika, "I was." At crucial moments in the novel Painter has left his gun and surrendered. When Fed agent killed his son, when he led the dog pack for freedom at the last, he surrendered, but still at the end of novel he asks Loren to teach him how to hunt. This reflects his controversial character in the novel.

Reynard is a fox and he plays role of counsellor in the novel. When, Reynard comes to meet Dr. Jarrell Gregorius Loren, Sten and Mika discussed about his qualities.

"Loren," Mika said, "is that counsellor what Sten says he is?"

"Tell her," Sten said, wanting this victory at least. "Once and for all."

"According to the journals of genetics, yes. If you mean is he half a fox, *vulpes fulva*, and half a man, *homo* sort of *sapiens*, whatever 'half' could mean in this context," he took a long breath, "yes."

"It's eerie." She slid from the saddle. "Why is he a counselor? Why does Daddy listen to him?"

"Because he's smart," Sten said.

Loren looked up to where the blank, bullet-proof windows of the study could just be seen in the L of the house.

"Yes, I suppose," he said, "on, as they used to say years ago, dumb like a fox." (*Otherwise-Beasts*, John Crowley 1976: 216)

Crowley has presented Reynard as the trickster, an amoral Machiavellian five of the seven characters, the engineer behind the scenes event that affects several North American Countries (the continent has been Balkanized). After Reynard rearranges the political structure of the Northern Autonomy so that all the power rests on the man, Jarrell Gregorius, he then has that man assassinated, throwing the government into the

chaos, which in turn allows the Fed to annex the country. (The Fed is the vestigial Federal government operating out of the city-state of Washington D.C.) He betrays Painter and Caddie to Fed. The bomb that frees painter from the jail is the work of Reynard. But if the Reynard is the master mind, virtually the author of the plot of the novel itself, then what is his plan? Whose side is he on?

According to James Morrison of Claremont McKenna College, Southern California, *Beasts* has close genuine hard science-fiction as Crowley has come. This absorbing story is set in a near-future world of environmental decay and political chaos: at first sight the kind of off-the-peg background used in many an undistinguished Science Fiction novel. But *Beasts* describes the adventures and natures of several genetically engineered animals, given a variety of human characteristics and forced to make sense of their divided, unsettled natures.

“The relationship between Painter the ‘Leo’ and Reynard, the kingmaker behind the scenes, is a rich and believable one, and crucial to the unfolding complexity of that initially unexceptional background. Crowley also manages the extraordinarily difficult feat of writing believable animal characters, both genetically modified and ‘normal.’ These are not humans in furry suits, refugees from Water ship Down or Duncton Wood, nor are they sentimentalised or patronised. Taken on their own terms, their rich lives made visible through human words, these beasts are quite unforgettable. A moving, beautiful book, it’s one of the three Crowley novellas collected in *Otherwise*.” (James Morrison, [www.bookslut.com](http://www.bookslut.com))

Caddie has no last name, grouping her with Painter, and the various animals like Chet, Martha, Hawk rather than the humans. As the novel begins with we learn that Caddie has had a rough life. Her parents died in the civil war "down south", leaving Caddie orphaned at the age fourteen, with the choice of joining a brothel or becoming an indentured servant she choose indenture. After number of months, her gay owner sells to Painter. Caddie is humiliated, and needed Reynard later inform her sell was illegal, since "no human being shall be suborned by or beholden and subservient to a member of another species."

Crowley has written the conversation between Painter and Caddie as,

"Trouble is," said Painter, "how are we going to use the damn animals if I scare them to death?" He threw down the cigarette with thick, golden haired fingers. "We'll have a great time."

"We? Are you and Hutt going someplace?"

"Hutt?"

"Well, who do you mean, we?"

"You and me," Painter said.

She said nothing for a long moment.....

"What makes you think I'm going anywhere with you?" Caddie said. For the first time since she had seen Painter, she felt afraid of him. He lit another black cigarette, clumsily, as though his hands were stiff with cold. "Last night I bought you. Bought your indenture from him -- Hutt. You're mine now."

She only stared at him in disbelief. Then came a wave of anger, and she started up the muddy way toward the hotel, forgetting

the milk pails. Then she turned on him. "Bought! What the hell does that mean? You think I'm a pair of shoes?"

"I'm sorry if I said it wrong," Painter said. "But it's all legal. It's in the papers, that he can sell the indenture. It's a clause." He opened his stubby hand wide, and the flesh drew back from his fingertips to show curved white nails. She stood, confused.

"How can he do that? Why didn't he tell me?"

"You sold him ten years of your life," Painter said. "On time. He owns it, he can sell it. I don't suppose he even has to tell you. That's not in the papers, I don't think. Anyway, it doesn't matter."(*Otherwise-Beasts*, John Crowley 1976: 192)

Caddie and Leo go north into wilderness, with Caddie acting as porter and local guide. Painter's powerful charisma work on Caddie, and she begin to entertain sexual fantasies about him. Though she is a virgin, she seduces with brandy and provocative shake of her lips. And then he rapes her. Caddie voluntarily stays on. In fact, Caddie's devotion to Painter become so strong that she become close to suffering on his behalf, murders Reynard and Fed agent. True, Crowley does not imply that total submission to a dominant male is always the case for all women. Painter is a very special case.

Like Caddie, Meric was a child refugee, but he fared much better. When he was six, his mother brought him to Candy's Mountain, a skyscraper in the centre of Genesis Preserve, where a commune of dedicated ecologists lives there in happy harmony with nature. A dark-skinned girl named Bree led Meric into the Mountain. At present Meric is of twenty six years age and Crowley has presented him as another beast. He has written about Meric,

Merik was so fair, his hair so pale a gold, that his sharp-boned face never grew a beard; his hair ran out along his ears like a woman's, and if he never shaved, a light down grew above his lip, but that was all. Bree loved that; it seemed so clean. She loved things she thought were clean, though she couldn't express just what "clean" meant to her. His face was clean. She had depilated herself because she felt herself to be cleaner that way. The softest, cleanest feeling she knew was when he gently, with a little sound like gratitude, or relief, laid his smooth cheek there. .”(*Otherwise-Beasts*, John Crowley 1976: 231)

Michael Andre-Driussi in an article entitled ‘John Crowley’s Great Blond Beasts’ from the book ‘Snake’s-Hands the Fiction of John Crowley’ said that,

Merik is another blond beast, but the description explains that Merik’s wish to be Bree has been answered through a suppression of his Masculinity. Bree and Merik is stable unmarried couple, which we take to be the norm for inhabitants of Candy’s Mountain. Other norms: strict vegetarianism, strict pacifism, non violence and free love, equality of the sexes, and worship of Jesus as prince of peace. But, when Merik meets Painter, he eats meet for the first time and loves it. Gun of Painter fascinate him. So does the polygamy of Leos, not to mention Caddie’s odd situation. Raw, unfettered maleness suddenly seems “natural” to Merik. (‘Snake’s-Hands the fiction of John Crowley’, Michael Andre Driussi, 43)

A sweet is a dog-half German shepherd, half mutt raised by experiment to near human level intelligence. As society begins to breakdown due to civil wars that shaped Caddie's life, this enlightened dog is released on to the mean streets. At first he is consort to a fighting female named Blondie, a golden retriever another blond beast. When Blondie dies, Sweets fights the other dogs to immerge as the alpha male, leader of the pack. But when Sweets finds Painter hold up in a basement, Painter's magic odour is followed by animal telepathy, and Sweets licks his hand for friendship.

Making as much obeisance as he could with three legs, he came by inches toward the Leo; he made small puppy noises. The Leo made no response. Sweets felt this indifference as a huge grace descending on him: there would be no contention between them, not as long as Sweets took him for master.

*(Otherwise-Beasts, John Crowley 1976: 273)*

The first character introduced in the novel is Loren Casaubon, who is an ethnologist. He studies animal behaviour. Crowley has presented Loren as the only character of the novel with dark hairs and beard as all other are blond. He trains various birds for hunting. At the beginning of the novel Loren becomes fascinated with a magazine photo of young Sten Gregorius. Then by kind of alchemical magic, Loren is called to be Sten's tutor. His two passions are birds and boys which he fused in to one. He gives Sten a falcon for training. After murder of Dr. Jarrell Gregorius, Loren becomes a responsible surrogate father to Sten and Mika.

His leg ached where Sten lay on it, but he wanted not to move. He wanted never to move. He put a careful left hand, as though only to accommodate his bigness between the two of them, in the hollow between Sten's neck and his hard shoulder.

He waited for it to be thrown off, willing it to be thrown off, but it wasn't. He felt, within, another self-made rampart breached; he felt himself sink further into a realm, darkness, he had only begun to see when the children and he inherited their kingdom; when it was too late to withdraw from its brink. (*Otherwise-Beasts*, John Crowley 1976: 286)

Even though Loren express himself as a caretaker of Sten and Mika with the kind of duties he follow, there was a controversy began to develop in the thinking of Loren and Sten about the pride which they observed on the television. As an ethologist and an unsentimental naturalist, Loren argues that Leos are not human. But Sten and Mika are not convinced.

At last Painter, Caddie, Sten, Mika, Loren and Reynard's cloned son came together on the tower where Loren had been started his first experiment on the Falcon.



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