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The Strain (The Strain Trilogy Book 1)



Synopsis

“A high-tech vampire epic....Terrifying.”
—San Francisco Chronicle
“Part The Andromeda Strain, part Night of the Living Dead.”
—Salon.com
“Chuck Hogan is known for his taut thrillers, Guillermo del Toro for his surreal horror films|The Strain brings out the best of each.”
—Minneapolis Star Tribune
An epic battle for survival begins between man and vampire in The Strain—the first book in a heart-stopping trilogy from one of Hollywood’s most inventive storytellers and a critically acclaimed thriller writer. Guillermo del Toro, the genius director of the Academy Award-winning Pan’s Labyrinth and Hellboy, and Hammett Award-winning author Chuck Hogan have joined forces to boldly reinvent the vampire novel. Brilliant, blood-chilling, and unputdownable, The Strain is a nightmare of the first order.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After watching the excellent TV show, I thought I would give the novels a try. Books are almost always better, right? No exception here! Follow the delightfully creepy adventures of Ephraim

Goodweather, a CDC doctor-turned-vampire hunter; Abraham Setrakian, a now-frail Holocaust survivor who has been waiting his entire adult life for this showdown; and Vasiliy Fet, whose fascinating ability to think like his prey has developed over years of serving as a New York city exterminator, as they try to save the world from a rogue vampire bent on taking over the world. The characters are very relatable; they are human beings with flaws and baggage, and as such they are easy to love. The vampires are not your typical Dracula type in that they don't have pointy teeth or funny accents, and the show follows the book pretty closely. I think fans of horror novels will enjoy this book very much regardless of whether or not they've seen the show. I am well into the next book in the trilogy, *The Fall*, and have yet to be disappointed.

I think that people too often attempt to apply harsh literary standards to fiction and what is essentially supposed to be simple entertainment and that often leads to bad reviews. If you are used to reading *Moby Dick* and *The Scarlet Letter*, then books like this might be tripe to you. However, I was thoroughly entertained and I really enjoyed the story! What I liked best was the intro. This book had one of the most intriguing, engrossing, and scary intros I have read in a very long time! The only problem I had with this book was 1) the pacing...it seemed to bog down at times and lose its momentum...and 2) I had seen the concept before (*Blade II*). That being said, I've already purchased book 2 and will be finishing the story with book 3!!

Instead of the pretty boys, hot sexuality and six-packs that you find in many vampire stories, Guillermo Del Toro goes for the viral approach in the strain. His vampires are neither pretty, sexual or witty, and their bodies are not perfected in any way. This is more a story of a virus introduced and starting to run amok, with the CDC virologists, Ephraim and Nora doing everything possible with their Canary team to stop the spread. The action and pacing in this book is non-stop. It is literally like an express train; you get on at page one and you are still on that train after you read the last page, because you are still thinking about the book and everything in it. Setrakian was my favorite character. He is a little boy at the beginning of the book, having soup with his grandmother while she tells him a scary but true story. Later, he is escaping from the Nazis with his family. He also is a prisoner at Treblinka, where he meets his first vampire. He later becomes a University Professor, a Vampire Hunter and a Pawn Broker as well as a specialized arms dealer. By the time the book ends he is an old man, but still hunting vampires. He gets together with the folks from the CDC to try and stop the plague of vampires. You see, someone in the U. S. purposefully brought the strain into the country. Someone with much wealth and influence. The next book should be quite exciting. The only

downside that there was to the story is that many of the characters don't have a lot of depth, not only emotionally, but from a sheer sense of backstory. Even the main characters have limited backstory with the exception of Setrakian. I don't know if this is the cinematic influence or not, but I was surprised that Nora, Zack, Kelly, Matt, Vaz and Ephraim have little to no backstory. There were tidbits of Zack, Kelly and Ephraim but these were more like tiny sound bites. All we know about Matt is his job and that he is average and fearful. The book would have reached another level if readers could have really connected deeply with the characters. It would have made this book a classic if the action had been teamed with world-class characterization - then it would have been truly world changing. This is why I gave it 4 stars, the characters, outside of Setrakian felt rather flat to me. I have to say I enjoyed the novel immensely and was riveted to my seat the entire six hours it took me to read the book. I highly recommend this novel to anyone looking for good action novel, a Vampire novel, or just a good thumping read, with the caveat that some of the characters are a little thin - though that doesn't get in the way of the story, if you don't let it.

Then this book is for you. By all appearances this reads like a vampire story that uses pathology to explain the outbreak from loosely medical terms. But it completely ignores basic human behaviour and any plausibility. I hate long reviews so I will only give one example but it's a big one. The four survivors of some mysterious illness or attack on a plane resulting in the deaths of 206 others are allowed to leave CDC quarantine in less than 24 hours of being found. All 4 showing symptoms of illness. The book seemed to want to blend a vampire story with a sense of reality. But the actions and the reactions of the characters never felt realistic. The protagonists were so idiotic that I couldn't feel sympathetic to them. And, thus, I hoped the vampires won. I'm not going to bother with the subsequent books.

I bought this 1st book in the trilogy because I simply love the TV show but, I was really surprised at how much written background you pick up. Some of the people that I don't particularly like in the TV show, I came to like in the book. This is a short read but, it does get you sooooo interested in the next book. Buy it if you love the show or....if you like Vampire stories with a really hard twist!

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