



## Suspicious Minds

*Gwenda Bond*

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## Suspicious Minds Gwenda Bond

An upcoming book A mysterious lab. A sinister scientist. A secret history. If you think you know the truth behind Eleven's mother, prepare to have your mind turned Upside Down in this thrilling prequel to the hit show Stranger Things.

It's the summer of 1969, and the shock of conflict reverberates through the youth of America, both at home and abroad. As a student at a quiet college campus in the heartland of Indiana, Terry Ives couldn't be further from the front lines of Vietnam or the incendiary protests in Washington.

But the world is changing, and Terry isn't content to watch from the sidelines. When word gets around about an important government experiment in the small town of Hawkins, she signs on as a test subject for the project, codenamed MKUltra. Unmarked vans, a remote lab deep in the woods, mind-altering substances administered by tightlipped researchers . . . and a mystery the young and restless Terry is determined to uncover.

But behind the walls of Hawkins National Laboratory—and the piercing gaze of its director, Dr. Martin Brenner—lurks a conspiracy greater than she could have ever imagined. To face it, she'll need the help of her fellow test subjects, including one so mysterious the world doesn't know she exists—a young girl with unexplainable, superhuman powers and a number instead of a name: 008.

Amid the rising tensions of the new decade, Terry Ives and Martin Brenner have begun a different kind of war—one where the human mind is the battlefield.

## Suspicious Minds Details

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Author : Gwenda Bond

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## From Reader Review Suspicious Minds for online ebook

### Rebecca McNutt says

If you've read Firestarter, you've read this book. Seriously, I couldn't tell whether *Suspicious Minds* was a parody of the former, or a thin-veiled attempt to copy it outright. I've never watched *Stranger Things* (nor really seen the appeal). My side job this semester was to ghostwrite articles on *Stranger Things* character costumes so that's the extent of my knowledge there, but from what I'd heard, you didn't need to be a seasoned fan of *Stranger Things* to understand this book. While that's true, it was so unoriginal it wasn't even funny, leading me to wonder if the hype surrounding the TV series is based on that it just copies common tropes and themes from Stephen King and Spielberg.

Mind you, I think the author legitimately tried to work with the material she had, but I found it heavily predictable and ultimately kind of lame. Very little is done to make the story its own. I kept thinking Charlie McGee was going to pop up any minute. The prose was dry as well, and the book suffers from that typical movie novel trouble of telling, not showing, with limited vocabulary and simplistic descriptions.

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### Josh says

I love the *Stranger Things* TV series and was very excited to see that the universe was being expanded to include a series of novels and comics with *Suspicious Minds* being the first official prequel novel published in February 2019.

The themes that make the TV series so appealing are prevalent here though with a slightly skewed focus. Rather than a bunch of kids goofing around with Dungeons and Dragons, fighting monsters real and imagined, and having to contend with the horrors of the upside-down, *Suspicious Minds* takes the story back to the Hawkins Institute; a mysterious laboratory in which dangerous experiments are undertaken on the consenting and non-consenting alike for the betterment of evolution (trying to invoke superhuman abilities through unrealized potential).

There are some nice cameos from characters I won't name to avoid spoilers but will say that this novel (set in the late 1960's and early 1970's) leads in nicely to the series proper while also providing plenty of wiggle room for more stories set prior to season 1.

My rating: 4/5 stars. I like that fact the book has a different focus to the TV series while still being able to feel like a *Stranger Things* story (which, obviously it is).

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### Holly (The Grimdragon) says

**'''Monsters,' she said., 'of course my brain has them.' As long as they stayed in there, everything would be all right. Wouldn't it?'''**

Are you slowly rotting away while waiting for the next season of *Stranger Things* like me? If so, this first official novel may take the edge off temporarily. *Suspicious Minds* tells the backstory of Terry Ives. Sound

familiar? That's right, Eleven's mother! It's set during 1969 in Hawkins, Indiana. Dr. Brenner is conducting LSD experiments under a covert operation called Project MKUltra. Terry signs up to become a test subject along with her friends Gloria, Alice and Ken. They undergo just.. fucking awful, terrible things at the hands of the manipulative Dr. Brenner and his quest to research the full extension of the human mind.

As viewers of the television series, we already know the ending of Terry's story. To be able to go back in time and have some of the mysteries surrounding her unveiled (including the identity of Eleven's father), while this feeling of apprehension lingers in the background was interesting.. and more than a little gut-punchy.

My favorite thing about this book is that the women are front and center! They are the primary focus in the story, which is so fucking refreshing. Each character feels fully-realized, rather than wooden background figures.

Unfortunately, I didn't find that similar level of nostalgia that I feel for the television series in this book. A lot of that has to do with the time period, which is one that wasn't super captivating for me. I found myself longing for more of the 80's!

Stranger Things means the world to so many people, myself included. It's one of those rare things that feels like it was made for all of us. It's just so fucking special!

I've watched both seasons multiple times and will probably dive in for another rewatch before season three premieres in July! It's like wrapping myself up in a comfortable sweater. IT JUST FEELS SO DAMN GOOD!!

I will read anything set within the Stranger Things world! Clearly I'm not the only one. I was happy to find out that there will be at least one more tie-in novel coming out this year, Darkness on the Edge of Town by Adam Christopher. The focus this time around? My boyfriend, Jim Hopper. YES PLEASE!!!

*(Thanks to Penguin Random House Canada for sending me over a copy!)*

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### **Gillian says**

I AM SHOOKT ABOUT THIS.

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### **Spencer says**

This was disappointingly unexceptional, the pacing was slow, the characters lacked character and the plot felt drawn out and uninspired. I hate to be so negative about the book as I love the tv show but it isn't a particularly good book and I fail to see why it has so many high ratings on goodreads.

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### **Emily says**

"What a beautiful little piece of evil."

Suspicious Minds is a prequel to the Stranger Things show, and the story focuses on Eleven's mom, Terry Ives. It's set in the late '60s / early '70s in Indiana, and whether this is a Stranger Things book or not, I found it to be an easy story to get invested in. Terry and her friends are likeable characters, and the story is occurring amidst the Vietnam War and everything else that was going on - yet with a Stranger Things spin that makes it even more fun.

I wasn't entirely sure how I was going to feel about this book, but Gwenda Bond did such a fantastic job, and I would definitely read more in this series from her. This book stands on its own well enough apart from Stranger Things, but it's also an excellent companion piece for the series. It doesn't add any serious details that we didn't already know; it just dives into the MK Ultra backstory and shows the path leading to Eleven. It ties in the series so well without it feeling contrived. Dr Brenner is a disturbing character, and the Hawkins lab is a horrifying place.

It's always an interesting experience to read a book when you already know how it ends. Terry has so much life and hope in the book, but we know what happens in the end from the show. It creates a very ominous environment, and I felt dread throughout so much of the book since I knew where it was heading.

I think this book can work for both fans of Stranger Things and people who are new to the series. It's so entertaining, and I feel like it has a great balance of new story and series tie-in. Thank you so much to Random House for sending me a copy of Stranger Things: Suspicious Minds to review. I was very impressed with this introduction to the novel series, and I can't wait to read more!

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### **Sarah Elizabeth says**

#### **IT'S A STRANGER THINGS NOVEL AND WE HAVE A COVER**

(read the first chapter here! <https://ew.com/books/2018/09/27/stran...>)

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### **Mogsy (MMOGC) says**

3.5 of 5 stars at The BiblioSanctum <https://bibliosanctum.com/2019/03/09/...>

For those of us who can't get enough of Stranger Things, the good news is that Random House has partnered up with Netflix to publish a number of books based on the hit sci-fi horror web show. Of these, Suspicious Minds by Gwenda Bond is the prequel novel featuring Eleven's mother, Terry Ives, who has been a figure shrouded in mystery ever since the series began. If you've ever wondered how she became a test subject in the government research program into the supernatural and paranormal, this book will reveal the story and more.

Suspicious Minds opens in the year 1969, and from Woodstock and the moon landing to the Manson murders and war in Vietnam, it was an eventful summer for the youth of America. For a group of college students in the heartland of Indiana, however, life is about to get even more interesting. After learning of the paid volunteer opportunities offered by the psychology department on campus from her roommate, Terry

Ives decides to take part in a research experiment in the hopes of earning some extra cash. There, she meets others who have been selected for the program, including Alice, Gloria, and Ken.

But within the research facility known as the Hawkins National Laboratory, Terry soon suspects that not all is as it seems with the experiment or with its director, Dr. Martin Brenner. As she and her fellow test subjects are made to undergo more demanding and unsettling tests, Dr. Brenner also grows more controlling and tight-lipped about the exact nature of his research. Then, there are the children. One day, Terry happens to meet a little girl in another wing of the building, whose files identify her simply as Eight. The presence of other records indicates the possibility of even more kids kept behind the locked secretive doors of the facility, and Terry and her friends are determined to find out why.

The good news is, whether you're a diehard fan of *Stranger Things* or someone who has never seen a single episode, pretty much anyone can pick up and enjoy *Suspicious Minds*. Because it is a prequel that takes place well before the events of the show, no prior knowledge is strictly required, though of course if you are familiar with the series you will get much more out of the references and other little Easter eggs thrown into the narrative. No surprise perhaps, but one of my favorite things about this book was getting the chance to meet Kali as a little girl.

However, make no mistake, *Suspicious Minds* also offers up a completely brand-new experience. We are thrown into another era, the late 60's in this instance, where the country is a very different place than the 80's setting of the show—socially, culturally, economically, and politically. Bond has done her homework, ensuring that her story feels at least historically convincing. Furthermore, instead of focusing on a group of middle school protagonists, this novel follows an older crowd—college-aged, to be exact. This not only puts Terry Ives at the right age when all this went down, it also serves to make this book more appealing to a wider audience, i.e. older viewers of the show who might find a “new adult” book more palatable than a YA label.

That said, I can't help but wonder if this desire to please everyone may have contributed to the story's general lack of focus. There are times when our 19-to-20-year-old characters seem to act, think, and speak like preteens, or certain sections of the book that droned on and on about the sentimental dramas of youth without adding anything relevant to the overall plot. I also thought the first half of the novel was also better written and organized than the second half, which felt a little rushed and messy—a pattern you see often with an author who has a pretty solid idea of what the beginning and end of their book should look like, but struggles to connect them with everything that happens in between.

Still, despite its flaws, *Suspicious Minds* was a fun read that offered me exactly the right kind of enjoyment and escapism. I wouldn't say that it's absolutely essential for *Stranger Things* fans in that it won't reveal any great secrets or hidden plans for the series, but what this novel manages to do is what all tie-ins should—that is, provide more background history into the original's story and world. If you're like me and that's the sort of thing you're into, I highly recommend giving this novel a go, especially since there's plenty in it to appreciate if you like the show.

Audiobook Comments: At first, I felt that narrator Kristen Sieh's voice was a little off (too peppy, too young) for the kind of book I thought this was going to be, but as the story revealed more of its nature and the “new adult” vibes, this discordance became less and less. I ended up being generally pleased with her performance and overall thought this audiobook was a very light and easy listen.

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## **Out of the Bex says**

I can't tell you this enough: Do not bother reading this book. Yes, that's a hardcore heads up from one Stranger Things fan to another. It's not what you hope it is. Not even a little bit.

Full ranty review to come on Youtube later this week.

If I were the sort of person to blatantly curse in my writing, this review would be riddled with four-letter words.

Suspicious Minds is a disaster of a book.

This is meant to be the backstory of Eleven's mother during the MKULTRA experiments in 1969. I can promise you, whatever history your own mind has imagined for this character is going to be more fulfilling, exciting, and well-developed than the entirety of this 300 page novel. Stick to your own theories on the Stranger Things universe. There is nothing at all new in this book. It adds nothing to the grander ST storyline. In fact, I think it actually manages to take something away.

It is my opinion that the release of this novel is little more than a money-making scheme for the license holders. They know that fans will fall over themselves to get their hands on a copy. The fictional world and successful story within it already exist and an incredibly relevant, dedicated fanbase comes right along with it. It seems this book was made for the same reason as to why so many terrible movie sequels are made. It's just guaranteed to make money. You can't help but believe it will be good when you see it promoted because you already love the original work. You're convinced it has to be even half as good as the content you fell in love with.

Trust me. It's not.

I am absolutely shocked at the both the style and the writer they chose for this story. It seems they set out to please everyone, a tactic I've never known to go well. Have you? It simply doesn't work. Who is this novel for? It's written so simply that it's almost an offense to my intellect. Were they aiming this at middle grade readers? Twenty-somethings? Or mature adults? The people on the panel for this project don't seem to have made that decision and it shows. In an effort to be something for everyone, it became nothing for no one.

I'm going to save the rest for a ranty youtube review and possibly a blog post because I have far too much to say.

This was extremely difficult to get through and an incredible disappointment for me. I'm a huge stranger things fan. I hoped this novel would add to the incredible world the Duffer brothers created. It did the opposite. After I'm done with my full review, I will do my best to pretend it never happened.

I should have just waited for season 3 of the show like a good, patient little nerd.

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## **Eloise says**

This book has very different vibes from the Stranger Things show, but that does not mean it is bad. It really reads as a YA novel, set in 1970 but with a very contemporary writing style (which can sometimes seem a little odd but you can easily look past it). You can definitely read this without having seen the show but of course the Stranger Things fans will love the nods to the show.

What I loved the most was that this is the story of a group of young adults who care for one another deeply (yes, found families, my fave trope).

I also really appreciated the implications of the story being set in 1970, when these kids were likely to be sent off to fight in the Vietnam War. It isn't a subject i've ever come across in YA novels, let alone ones whose main subject is something completely apart from that.

These kids are dealing with exams, love lives (i ship), a corporation doing weird dubious stuff to them and monsters and visions and powers, but ultimately... it is about kids having to deal with the reality of life as a young adult in 1970.

It was actually refreshing.

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### **R.J. says**

2018/08/09 - HOLY SHIT PLEASE LET THIS NOT BE YA I WANT A GRITTY NOVEL ABOUT HOW HORRIFYING MKULTRA LEGIT IS I AM SCREAMING THIS IS ONE OF THE CONSPIRACIES THAT'S TRUE THAT I'M OBSESSED WITH

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### **Lisa says**

Review from Tenacious Reader: <http://www.tenaciousreader.com/2019/0...>

Suspicious Minds was not quite what I expected, but it turned out to be a wonderful read that gave a great backstory on Eleven's mom, and how Eleven came to be in Dr. Brennar's care and more about the origins of Dr. Brennar's crazy experiments and meddlings with the natural world. Pretty much it was full of lots of the things we've wondered about since the show started.

Terry Ives is a college student in the 1960s and while there is a lot of turmoil in the world at this time, she is somewhat sheltered in her college life, but she wants to feel like she is doing something more, something more meaningful. It's this desire that gets her tangled up with Dr. Brennar, whose research project seems like an honor to participate in and "important" in some way to her. She basically signs on to be a human guinea pig for a study that she really knows nothing about.

As the study progresses, Terry definitely starts to see signs that maybe everything is not quite as on the up and up as she first thought, and that there might just be cause for concern. I quite enjoyed Terry and her friends, and genuinely felt concern for her friends as they found themselves entangled in Dr. Brennar's dark web.

A couple of things about this book that were not quite what I expected. First, I think I expected a bit more of a horror vibe while reading that, which it's not. It feels more like an urban fantasy. , or urban fantasy with a science fiction slant? Is that a thing? I also think that all gets a bit blurry with things like this. The creatures

can make it very much feel more fantasy. The science behind how they get there will make it feel more science fiction. But it's the style of the prose that makes reminds me most of urban fantasy. What there is not is a that really creepy, scary foreboding quality that makes a book horror. This is by no means a negative, just was different from what I expected.

Overall, I found this to be a fun read that gave a great backstory for Eleven's mom. If anything, I wish there was a bit more so I look forward to see what the next Stranger Things book brings!

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## Teepa Prince says

I'm going to be blunt with this, because I had such high expectations going into it, and felt so utterly let down by it that I am glad I marathon listened to it over three days. (Spoilers abound, you've been warned)

This is a very wordy novel with not a lot to say. What was pitched to us as a peek into the backstory of Eleven's conception/birth and of what MKUltra experiments led to the catatonic Terry Ives we meet in Season 2 was more like the framework of an "original" work that was adjusted to contain the Stranger Things universe.

Our story begins with Brenner's entrance to the Hawkins laboratory which has become an integral part of the ST lore. We get a small glimpse of his relationship with Kali in the form of him getting her set up and comfortable in her new home. We are also introduced to the cold, calculating Brenner that we know and love from the show. This will however rapidly change.

Enter Terry Ives, a very average university student posing as her roommate to make a quick \$15 (\$100+ when adjusted for inflation) a week undergoing psychological testing on her college campus. She is obviously quickly found out, but inexplicably allowed to continue participating in the study. Enter also: A very stilted and awkward depiction of college students engaging in mild use of drugs and alcohol. Any time drug use is brought up within the story, we are given very ABC Afterschool Special descriptions and word usage, as well as depictions of behavior that push the limits of suspension of disbelief. Within the first chapters of the book we are berated with things to remind us that we are /IN/ the 60s. The moon landing, Nam, the draft lottery, Terry being treated with little respect for being a woman on her own, the draft lottery, the sheer absurdity of a woman of color being admitted to the Biology program at the university, the draft lottery. Have I mentioned the draft lottery? Because nearly every chance she gets, the author smears on foreshadowing that grows tired by the third time in a single chapter.

In short order we are introduced to our main cast of characters, none of whom are really developed until the final act of the book. These characters are all participants in Brenner's studies, each displaying a talent which he manipulates via application of LSD treatments and acquisition/regurgitation of knowledge.

From the beginning, only the accidentally admitted Terry has anything to show for it, though the others' skills eventually emerge.

Alice is used to fairly gracefully dip our toes into what we know to the the Upside Down, as well as introducing the Demogorgon and Demodogs. Not much is done with this knowledge, other than occasionally reminding us that it is there. Her real time to shine is when she can capitalize on her visions, and use them to the gain of the team.

Gloria's skills include the memorization and compartmentalization of facts (coordinates mostly), but while

this is never used to further the plot, she is taught various “Superhero\*” skills that do help. (\*one of her defining traits is being a fan of comics, which is actually quite nice and used well)

Ken never truly comes into his own until the final pages of the book. He is the only male in the experiments, and while we are told along the way that he is a psychic, he is more like a precog in that he “gets a feeling” regarding certain events or actions, whether already passed or future. This comes in handy multiple times, allowing him to ultimately bring Terry a shred of hope regarding her stolen baby girl.

Outside of the laboratory testing we also get to know Terry’s boyfriend. Barely. There is a specific scene where Terry mentions that Andrew “turned out to have a personality” after all, but we as readers never get to see it. Andrew is mostly distilled into a grab bag of anti-Vietnam tropes. He spends a large quantity of time passively protesting the war, including an active protest that becomes the lynch-pin for his unceremonious disposal. He is also incapable of entering a scene without some combination of cracking a beer for himself and offering it to anyone else in the room.

Brenner suffers the most in this story. Throughout most of the events of “Suspicious Minds” he does not act anything like the man we are introduced to in the opening pages. A man who commanded an entire room was suddenly transformed into a man who missed obvious misdirections, and truly had no control over the staff he was supposed to be in command of. There are constant plot holes forged when Brenner attempts to discipline a staff member by firing, which is never followed up on, and the author never takes even a second to explain how he’s keeping this people bound to their NDA’s. Desperate to reclaim the personality that the Duffers have conditioned me to, I chose to believe he executes them and writes them off as casualties of war. A man who was steely and kept you on your toes in the show was reduced to a fist-shaking Lex Luthor by the end of this novel.

The final thing that feels completely mishandled and a bit story breaking is Terry’s pregnancy. We are not introduced to even an inkling that Terry might be pregnant until well into the second trimester. Even then, it is a one-off exchange between Brenner and an orderly following a blood draw done on Terry. Not once does anyone suspect anything may be “up” with her, nor does she experience symptoms for most of the book. Shortly before the “Big Reveal”, she begins to complain that none of her pants fit and she’s switched exclusively to skirts (Never commented on by other characters including her roommate). By the time the secret is blown wide open to Terry herself, no one around her believes she could have possibly been pregnant all along.

All in all I wanted to like this novel. I was thrilled to receive something to expand the universe of ST. But I was let down so badly by what was essentially a YA Novel for grades 8-12. It didn’t fit the tone or the storytelling style of the source material, and felt like it was more foreshadowing than actual content. In closing, nobody skips Tom Bombadil unless they want to miss out on the experience of a wordy novel with a wordy point to make. I can only hope we go up from here.

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### **Michael Cook says**

My biggest problem with *Stranger Things* is that there's too much pre-teen drama and not enough spooky stuff/weird government conspiracy stuff. I find myself far more interested in what's going on in Hawkins Lab

than I am in what Dustin, Mike, Will, and Luke are up to. So, getting through the show is always a bit of an ordeal for me as I just want the weird, spooky stuff. So, when *Suspicious Minds* was announced as the first official *Stranger Things* tie-in novel, I was pretty excited. It sounded like I'd finally be getting my wish. I'm happy to report that this novel is *full* of weird, creepy government stuff and I adored every page of it.

First off, this novel is dark. I mean *Stranger Things* has always been a bit dark, but it always had that same kind of lightness that a lot of Spielberg films had, which lightened that darkness some. *Suspicious Minds* does not have that lightness. First off, it's focused on young adults - not children - so, it's immediately a bit more grown-up than much of the TV series is. Add to that the new information about just what went on during Project MKUltra - Acid trips, electro-shock tests, and the full story about what happened to Eleven's mother in this program - and you've got a story that might actually be a bit too dark for a family-friendly TV show to tackle. That being said, I love how dark this book is. Like I said earlier, I've always wanted *Stranger Things* to focus a bit more on the government conspiracy storyline and that's exactly what this novel does.

*Suspicious Minds* is also surprisingly scary. Most of the scares in *Stranger Things* comes from the visual horror of the various monsters - and the Upside Down itself - so I wasn't sure how that horror would translate in a novel. Gwenda Bond was smart, however, in not trying to replicate that horror. There are some monsters and supernatural stuff in *Suspicious Minds*, sure, but most of the scares come from the horrific things people in power - like Dr. Brenner - are doing to other people. The real scares come from seeing just how far Brenner is willing to go with this project; how many lives he's willing to ruin, how many people he's willing to hurt. The experiences that Terry - and her friends - go through in this novel are where the true horror lies, and Gwenda Bond does an amazing job at exploring that horror.

I don't wanna spoil much of what happens in the book, so I'm not going to go into much detail about the actual plot of the book. I will, however, talk some more about the characters and the writing. There are four main characters in this book: Terry Ives (mother of Eleven), Alice, Gloria, and Ken. All four of them are part of the MKUltra research and all four of them are subjected to some pretty awful stuff by Dr. Brenner. As hinted at in the show, Dr. Brenner is trying to research the powers of the human mind and what it can do while also researching superpowered people - like Kali (Eight) and, eventually, Eleven. The book is told, primarily, from Terry's point of view, though the point of view does occasionally shift to the other characters as needed. This works really well as it lets us get into Terry's head and really see her as a fully three-dimensional character. In fact, Gwenda Bond does a great job at making *every* character in this novel feel fully developed, even side characters such as Andrew - Terry's boyfriend - and her sister and her roommate. Like the show, the characters in this novel are some of the best parts.

The pacing in *Suspicious Minds* is also really strong. Things get moving pretty quickly and once they've started, they don't stop. Each chapter is fairly lengthy - it's a 320-page book with only 12 chapters - so each chapter feels almost like a mini-episode in a season of a TV show. This format works really well as every time you finish a chapter, you really feel like you've moved ahead in the overall narrative of the story. Every chapter has a point and a natural ending but each chapter also works with the rest to tell a complete, satisfying story. Bond perfectly balances a good amount of description with the narrative drive of the story. There is never a moment where you feel like the energy has been killed because too much time has been spent describing something but there is also never a moment where you find yourself longing for more description; it's a really good balance. In general, Bond's writing in this novel is just superb. Each character sounds distinct, the pacing is superb, the prose is engaging as hell. It's just all around enjoyable.

All in all, I think I like *Stranger Things: Suspicious Minds* more than I like the actual TV series. It is everything that I wish the TV series was. It's filled with lots of spooky government shenanigans, some truly horrific moments, and a bunch of characters that are fully formed and immediately relatable. Gwenda Bond's

writing is superb, immediately drawing the reader into the world of the novel and keeping their attention as the story unfolds and more and more mysteries begin to unravel. The pacing is superb; once the story gets started, it never stops and you find yourself never wanting to set the book down. Overall, I just really adored this book. It's an absolute must-read for anyone who's a fan of *Stranger Things* and I'd honestly even recommend it to people who didn't love the show. If you like weird government conspiracies tied in with pseudo-history, you'll like this book. It's absolutely fabulous.

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### **Brittany (The Book Addict's Guide/Novelly Yours) says**

**Marked as DNF 2/11/19:** Admittedly, I didn't make it far with this but I was struggling right from the start. I just didn't feel like this translated well into a book at all. I'm not sure I've ever read an adaptation of a movie or TV show aside from the Clarissa Explains It all adult contemporary adaptation, which also felt clunky and awkward.

The *Stranger Things* TV show just has something special that does so well in so few words. I love that so many things happen in scenes witnessed, stolen moments, little gestures, relationships between the characters... Truthfully, Terry's story wasn't one I was really interested in but I'm always up for prequels of my favorites. I just didn't feel captured by her story at all and unlike other prequels where you know what's coming but still can't look away, I more felt like we already know what happens to Terry and I just didn't have a connection with her at all. Maybe that's unfair considering we really CAN'T get to know her in the TV show, but it was a book about two characters that I didn't have an attachment to so I just couldn't get into it.

I also didn't care about the time period. I have much more nostalgia for the 80s and 90s but the 60s and 70s don't particularly interest me so I wasn't pulled into the book through that either.

When I decided to stop listening to the audiobook, I checked to see how much time I had left and it was still five hours. It seemed like a quick book but I was already actively not interested so I just decided to call it quits instead of forcing myself to push through it.

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