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Befriended as a young teenager by a beautiful and mysterious benefactress, Eugene Evans believes the downward trajectory of his white trash existence has finally been arrested and his life turned around. Then, after he becomes a man, he is confronted by a horrifying and unavoidable choice between two unacceptable options.

But it doesn't stop there.

For once his decision has been made, and the consequences accepted, he finds himself in a new and terrifying reality threatening all that he loves, where his first wrong choice will be his last.

House of Shadows Details

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Author : Walter Spence

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From Reader Review House of Shadows for online ebook

Missy Lamarre says

As much as I love horror and all the fantastic characters it produces, I have never sank my teeth (haha) into a vampire book before this one. I was tired of the vampire clichés, modernized vampires and the young adult interpretations, so there was definitely nothing out there to convince me to change my mind. I was hesitant to even read this one, but after much procrastination (it stayed in my shopping cart for months), I finally decided to take the plunge. I had received a tablet for Christmas and was anxious to use the Kindle app, so I decided to make this my first purchase.

This is the kind of book that really sticks with you. The first night I bought it, I made it almost halfway through (I'd say I'm an average-speed reader). The only reason I stopped was because it was late and my contacts were practically glued to my corneas. I spent the rest of the night - and the next day at work - thinking about what I had read so far, and I couldn't wait to read the rest. This book is one of those that gets even better the more you think about it. The main character, Eugene, is very well-developed throughout the entire book. His thoughts and feelings are easy to identify with, and it's amazing how you find your own perspective changing along with his during the course of his journey. It really makes you wonder what you'd actually be capable of doing if you were in his shoes. I liked all the other characters as well, and while some may say that they weren't very developed, I thought they fell right into that cozy category of not wearing out their welcome. The overall build of the story came to a perfectly-timed climax and left you wanting more. I could easily see this becoming a movie (and one that I'd even pay the outrageous theater prices to see!)

Lastly, I just want to say that the thing I like the most about this book is that it is very smartly done. The writing style is smart (kudos, Mr. Spence, for using more than 10 different adjectives in the entire 200+ pages), and all the details put into "these" vampires are refreshing and very well constructed. If you're looking for a new spin on vampires (habits, etiquette and all!), this is a definite must-read.

Zombie Kitten says

<http://monsterkids13.com/2014/04/29/b...>

Abinanaaa says

I am totally in love with this book. I have only a few pages left, and I am going to savor them- as hard as that is, literally I did not want to put it down. I am glad that I chose to read it on the train commute to work everyday so I was forced to make it last.

Why should you like this too? Vampires are terribly interesting creatures, especially when they don't sparkle and there is no "love triangle" nonsense. The author here has used some of the very well known lore and has introduced some new twists to what you thought you knew about the BREED. There is enough of both to be very interesting.

The plot is carefully crafted and not too extravagant- a simple story that moves at a great pace. Characters that you enjoy getting to know the both the good and the bad. Dialogue is well done and believable. Just enough of the "gore" you expect with vampires on the loose but, not over the top. Cheers for the glossary and list of

characters at the back.

Really the best thing I can say, is grab a copy of this and read away- but be warned you will not want to put it down, but if you don't it will end far too soon ;-)

M.T. says

This is an interesting and unusual vampire story. The approach is very different from the traditional gothic horror but at the same time also far removed from the misunderstood and loveable creatures that we have grown used to in the past few years. 'The Breed' that Walter Spence introduces us to is something akin to a mysterious race. As the story unfolds and we learn about their traditions and history, we may not grow to like them but we do grow to understand them.

The story is written in the first person and, whilst I know that many readers prefer the third person, I think that is was a good choice in this instance. The gradual and seamless change in narrative tone shows the development of the main character, Eugene Evans, from child to adulthood is gradual and seamless and is only obvious by re-reading earlier chapters and comparing the difference. In fact, I thought that character development generally was very good.

I have only two criticisms. The first is that the ending felt a little rushed and I would have preferred the pace to have slowed down just a little. The second is that, although there were some very good similes, too many of them were in the first few pages of the book. However, the writing style overall is very good and neither of these criticisms are major problems so I would only remove one star for both of them taken together.

Fangs for the Fantasy says

Eugene has a difficult life with his sister, impoverished and with a mother who is, at best, neglectful and at worst outright abusive it is not a life with many opportunities. So when Penelope, a wealthy, generous benefactor appears to give them every advantage it seems like a wonderful gift and that they're finally given a chance at life.

That is, until the price arises and one of them has to die. Faced with an impossible choice, Eugene elects to be Penelope's prey – but death is hardly the end of Penelope's plotting. After decades of unconsciousness, Eugene arises as one of the Breed and the last scion of a major House whose legacy (and his continued existence) requires him to learn extremely quickly.

There are a lot of vampire books out there and it sometimes feel like many of them are telling very similar tales. It's always a pleasure, therefore, to find a book that seems to be bringing some genuinely unique elements to the genre and some fresh angles. Eugene's reluctant passage into vampirhood, how he was moulded before transition, even following his journey from childhood adds its own angle.

In terms of pacing, it started slow, introducing us to the characters and bringing us towards the inevitable. Thankfully, once we get that transition, we hit the ground running. Eugene has to learn a lot about his new life extremely quickly and nothing is going to stop to allow him to catch up. There were a couple of tangents that were, perhaps, not entirely necessary but I think they all added up into building the character, the worlds

and different facets of the story.

The world building is nicely restrained. It's clear, especially if the lexicon in the back, that this is a very broad world and a lot of work has gone into characterising it. But the author resists the temptation to dump vast amounts of unrelated information on us. In fact, in keeping with Eugene's own confusion, we often have words and references used and have to extrapolate their meaning. Like Eugene we're plunged into a world we don't know and have to keep up and learn as we go. I think this lack of explanation both keeps the story moving and excellently conveys the theme of being out of depth, of being overwhelmed by the new information he was faced with.

The decisions made by the characters, while not always perfect, were well informed – or, at least, based on reasonable emotion and didn't frustrate me. The action stayed good and the story progressed well.

I found no great flaws in this book – but I did find a couple of minor stumbling blocks.

The first stumbling block I found in this book was the language. It's not as bad as some books out there, certainly, but it is overly elaborate and overly formal. Part of that is because Eugene is trying to "better" himself with a determination to be educated and well spoken after Penelope gives him the resources. It's even lampshaded in the book with his sister accusing him of having swallowed a thesaurus. But this language starts long before he meets Penelope and is used in everything from dialogue to describing action. Sometimes I think a more casual tone would have been better.

Read More

Ctgt says

This may go up to 5 stars after I mull this over some more, I enjoyed it that much. I must confess I'm not a huge vampire fan, I don't avoid the character type but I don't actively seek them out either. While this is a vamp story there were enough small twists and tweaks to the standard vamp style that I never found myself thinking I had read this before. So while I found the changes around the vampire mythos interesting, what really intrigued me was the background and history of said vamps. There are "houses" of vampires(i.e. House Lannister for you ASoIaF fans) who operate independently of each other, as well as lesser houses that are "sept" to a greater house. This is what I found so compelling about this story. There are some disappearances from a lesser house and a great deal of mystery and machinations going on in relation to these events.

I typed out some more plot details and then decided, screw it, you really need to read this yourself, come on, it's only a bit over 200 pages. I finished it in a day. Even if you're tired of the whole vampire thing give this a shot, I know I wasn't disappointed.

Well, one small problem.

Now I have to wait for the next book. (wink,wink,nudge,nudge Mr Spence)

Update: Well after about a week I went back over my highlights and decided to bump this to a 5 star book. Still catch myself thinking about the story from time to time.

Pulled this highlight:

"In modern popular culture, various writers have populated their tales with all manner of bastardized versions of our kind who feed on animal blood, synthetic blood and Christ knows what else. I wait for a vegetarian vampire who subsists entirely on a diet of tomato juice."

C.J. Pinard says

I picked up this book by Walter Spence because it looked like a great read - something right up my alley.....and it definitely was!

This story begins about a teen brother and sister who meet a mysterious woman who begins to provide them with necessities and luxuries but never tells them why. She is rarely seen by them, remaining a mystery, mostly to the boy Eugene, who longs to see her.

The book takes a very dark turn in which we fast forward thirty years and watch Eugene go through some serious changes and a lot of danger. The book itself has a lot of violence and gore, and if you're looking for a romance or a love story, keep looking because you won't find any of that here!

I really enjoy the way this author writes. The book was well constructed and edited, and it was refreshing to read a book where the writer actually cared about constructing dialogue and proper grammar usage. I will definitely be reading more books by this author!

5 Stars!

Kimberly says

Walter Spence has woven a tale of unique vampire creatures, and given the vampire sub-genre a fresh new look. The Breed are set apart from others in most aspects of their existence and are truly a species unlike any others.

Let me start out by praising the language and smooth narrative style of this novel. This area alone sets House of Shadows leagues ahead of other similarly themed books. The pacing was perfect throughout--I never once found myself feeling that it was either lagging, nor being rushed. The highest praise I can offer is that I felt the style reminiscent of some classic works written by those that I consider to be "literary greats".

House of Shadows captured my attention from the first page, and never let up. Although it is the first of a reported series, the novel ends on a very satisfying note. I will immediately be checking out the author's website in anxious anticipation of the next book in the series.

Highest recommendation!

Staci says

House of Shadows was a wonderful surprise! I enjoyed this book so much I read it in one day! Walter Spence plays with the vampire genre in an interesting and new manner. There was a bit of confusion as the vocabulary of the characters are a bit more advanced then the storyline can support and due to that makes this book geared towards adults as I do not think the average YA reader would be able to follow. There are some minor editing/proofing errors as well. All that being said, I am anxiously awaiting the next book in this series and giving it a solid 5 stars!

My rating system is as follows:

5 stars - Excellent, Worth Every Penny, Made It Into My Personal Library!

4 stars - Great book, but not a classic.

3 stars - Good overall, generally well written.

2 stars - Would not recommend based on personal criteria.

1 star - Difficult to read, hard to finish, or didn't finish. Wouldn't recommend purchasing or reading.

In accordance with the FTC Guidelines for blogging and endorsements, you should assume that every book I review was provided to me by the publisher, media group or the author for free and no financial payments were received, unless specified otherwise.

Bill says

There is someone hunting the members of House Ember. Newbie Mordant may be the last. He has a lot to learn in a short time frame if he and the rest of the Breed have a chance at survival. Who can he trust?

Well done and intelligently written, Walter Spence's House of Shadows is a very good debut. The characters were fleshed out very well and Mr. Spence was able to create an entire mythos surrounding the Breed in a short framework. Just enough closure to be thoroughly satisfying and enough cliffhanger to keep me looking forward to the second installment.

Solid 4 Stars! Recommended!

Melissa Bryan says

I loved this book...what a plot. Mr. Spence has written an impressive book with such a fresh storyline. When I first started the book I had no idea what type of adventure I was going to be taken on and man what an adventure. Once I started this book I couldn't put it down. You would think that every story had been written about this subject matter...that it has been beaten to death...but Mr. Spence has created a world of its own in this narrative. I would tell you what the story is about but I don't want to say too much about the story itself...I want the reader to have the same experience I had...not knowing what the book is about, no preview.

The characters are developed and well rounded, very credible individuals. Mr. Spence has built a very

plausible world and I can't wait for the next book in the series.

I think Mr. Spence is a great author and I am looking forward to any new stories from him...can't wait for the next adventure...I am sure it is going to be a grand one. Thank you Walter, for the wonderful ride.

Char says

4.5 stars, rounded up to 5!

I read this book with my horror group at Shelfari and found it to be an original twist on an old theme.

Young Eugene looks out for his sister Barbie, because his mom is often otherwise engaged. Sometimes they are left alone for days at a time without anything in the house to eat other than bread and ketchup. Then, a mysterious woman catches sight of him and Barbie and their lives are changed forever. In a good way? You will have to read this book to find out.

I was pleasantly surprised at the turns taken in this story. The characters were well drawn and believable, (as believable as can be in a story of this type), and I took a great liking to the protagonist, Eugene.

As I understand it, there is more to the story coming from Mr. Spence. I will be looking forward to that release. Recommended!

Note: In the interest of full disclosure, the author is part of our horror group at Shelfari, but welcomed honest opinions on his work. He also offered free copies to our members. I paid for my copy and even if I had not, my review is an honest one.

Cindy Lyle says

I purchased a copy of House of shadows as part of a group read through Goodreads and I'm glad I did.

Being a vampire fan, I was happy to read a new and believable take on the species. In this story his vampires are called the Breed, and they make it quite clear that they don't even consider themselves in the same league as traditional vampires. There are some similarities, but I think Walter was successful in trying something new.

The main plot follows the story of a young man named Eugene who is saved from his destitute life by a beautiful woman. However unknowingly he becomes an intricate part in her plan to become not only a member of the Breed but to also save her household. All goes according to her plan, until Eugene awakens as a member of the breed, only to discover that the woman who turned him has disappeared and he has been left alone. Eugene must discover how to cope with his new life and discover what has happened to his sire, but being a newly born vampire has enough problems on its own. He is attacked on all fronts, not only from members of his own kind, but also from the predator that now lives inside him.

House of shadows is a fast paced well written adventure, which kept me turning pages. It is a wonderful addition to the vampire genre and its hidden mystery left me wanting more. My only regret was that it was

short. I wish I could have learned more about what Eugene would have to face in the future but I guess I will have to wait for the next one. I recommend this to anyone who loves vampires and a good supernatural mystery.

Thomas Strömquist says

Not a single word of praise from my fellow group members (and others) is not well earned and I'll just join the chorus. First off, Walter Spence writes *really* well, beautiful prose with a very nice flow. Secondly, the story is fantastic; enough due is paid to the vampire myths and sagas so that we feel quite at home, and what is different with these vampires and their communities and traditions is different enough to make one feel that we are reading a new story. Finally (yes, there's more), the pacing is relentless, the protagonist(s) get out of the frying pan and into the fire enough to render the reader breathless at times.

Highly recommended, cannot wait for the next book in the series!

mountainmama says

Pygmalion with a twist

A young boy is befriended by a mysterious wealthy woman who saves him and his sister from abject poverty. Although her support is practically anonymous throughout his childhood, eventually he is required to repay the kindness. He finds himself in a world of non-humans where he must learn to protect and preserve a culture he never knew existed.

The first part of the book documented Eugene's (known as Ace) journey from the dregs of society to an educated worldly young man with a bright future. His character is well-developed and the reader quickly identifies with him, and anxiously follows his quest to save his new existence.

Mr. Spence has created a dark fantasy that keeps you turning pages to discover how the story ends. Sinister and unsettling, the story slowly sucks you in and does not let you go. A very well-written book with some good plot twists. I am not usually a big fan of vampires, but this one is well worth a read!
