



Red Moon

Benjamin Percy

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"A werewolf epic. Can't stop thinking about it."--Stephen King

They live among us.

They are our neighbors, our mothers, our lovers.

They change.

When government agents kick down Claire Forrester's front door and murder her parents, Claire realizes just how different she is.

Patrick Gamble was nothing special until the day he got on a plane and hours later stepped off it, the only passenger left alive, a hero.

Chase Williams has sworn to protect the people of the United States from the menace in their midst, but he is becoming the very thing he has promised to destroy.

So far, the threat has been controlled by laws and violence and drugs. But the night of the red moon is coming, when an unrecognizable world will emerge...and the battle for humanity will begin.

Red Moon Details

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Author : Benjamin Percy

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From Reader Review Red Moon for online ebook

Patrice Hoffman says

Red Moon by Benjamin Percy is an interesting take on the classic werewolf craze that has kept many people awake at night. He suggests that there has been werewolves since the beginning mankind. A pathogen that inhabits the body and results in an organism part human, part wolf. The humans infected with the Lobos bacteria are known as lycans in Red Moon and they walk among us medicated and often times undetected.

Red Moon follows a few characters who's individual stories converge. Claire is journeying to find her aunt because her parents have been slaughtered by government officials. Patrick is the sole-survivor of a plane crash that was derailed by a lycan attack. Mariam is woman living in seclusion, trying desperately to walk away from a time in her life when she was involved in the Movement. A lycan organization that is fighting for their right to just be. Finally, we have Chase. The incumbent president who's platform is in support of eradicating the very people he is becoming.

Percy instantly grabs the readers attention with Red Moon. The word flow is easy, graphic images tattooed on minds, main characters are compelling, and the world he creates seems plausible. Actually... a little too plausible. Percy brings life to the idea that there are "others" living amongst us and plays into the fear society has towards "others". I enjoyed the similarities between Percy's fictional world and my real world. Part I of Red Moon is going to entice readers to keep turning the page to discover what happens next.

Sadly, Part II does not live up to it's predecessor.

In the spirit of being fair and honest I admit the second half totally lost me. Characters I wanted to prevail no longer mattered to me. Until Part II it's hard to see past the similarities between this book and real life. What was once endearing about that aspect became grating. The idea that the lycans are similar to societies views on Middle Eastern Muslims following 9/11 is not lost on any reader. And the conspiracy adopted by many that our president Obama is possibly a muslim extremist laying in wait is most relative to Chase's storyline in Red Moon. There is also a Balor character that is very Bin Ladin-esque. All these instances become too much. Part II does not have the same impact as Part I as it explodes into a war.

Essentially, I have a more love than hate relationship with Red Moon. It's hooking from page 1. Percy gives life to the world's oldest phenom in a way that will feel fresh to readers. My introduction to Benjamin Percy has been quite enjoyable and has placed him on the short list of authors I must explore further.

Lynne says

I DID NOT LIKE THIS BOOK. I had read so many great reviews about this book so I think I went in with really high expectations ... and it fell flat. The concept - werewolves have become the enemy of the state - it's them against humans - what side are you on? Basically it was an attempt to discuss prejudices when one group of people (aka the werewolves) attack another - do we group everyone that shares their basic beliefs together as terrorists? I didn't like the writing, didn't like the characters and didn't like the story. Huge disappointment.

Richard Thomas says

THIS REVIEW ORIGINALLY RAN AT THE NERVOUS BREAKDOWN.

Red Moon is not merely about the werewolf, that familiar history and archetype—no, Red Moon (Grand Central) by Benjamin Percy is a brilliant blend of genre horror and literary poetics that reveals the creature in us all, and a debate about what it is to be human and where our priorities rest. Weaving a hypnotic tapestry of connected stories, Percy allows us to follow a cast of characters, good and bad, on an epic journey that distills the heart and soul of other classic post-apocalyptic tales such as *The Stand*, *The Road*, and *Swan Song*. Part of the new movement of genre-bending work that is dominating publishing today, Percy has written a novel that is approachable and yet layered, familiar and yet unique, ancient and achingly visionary.

Red Moon is the story of Claire Forrester, a young woman who sees her parents killed in the name of national security, soon to become one of the hunted. It is the story of Patrick Gamble, the lone survivor of a terrorist act aboard an airplane flight that feels eerily similar to recent terrorist acts, and shows us exactly how violent the lycans (what Percy calls his werewolves) can be. And it is the story of Chase Williams, a newly elected president who inherits the nightmare of the lycan uprising, and vows to repair the damaged and fractured United States.

Driving this novel is Percy's uncanny ability to write with authority. This ability reveals itself in many different ways—in a narrative of the near future where a lycan presence feels like a possibility, not a fantasy; in using his knowledge of technology and firearms to educate us as a Ranger or Green Beret might; and in his portrayal of rural landscapes, mostly the Pacific Northwest, as lush, haunting, and layered settings where the violence and desperation unfolds at an alarming rate.

Take this brief excerpt from early in the book, where Patrick is describing Portland:

“He doesn’t mind the landscape. The deep-rutted glaciers glowing from the Cascades. The thickly forested foothills with their hiking trails and bear-grass meadows and whitewater rivers. And then, to the east, the sprawl of the sage flats interrupted by the occasional striped canyon, the bulge of a cinder cone. Hanging above all of this sky, that high-altitude sky, as clear and blue as the stripe inside a marble.”

It is not only a depiction of nature in all of its tranquil beauty, but a language that is certainly foreign to city-dwellers, the flora and fauna a backdrop that urban residents may never have seen. Percy shows us the landscape in a way that educates and informs while painting a vivid and visceral picture.

Or take this quick description of a handgun by Miriam, an ally of Claire’s, her distant aunt, and weapons expert:

“Miriam gives her a quick lesson on the Glock 17. Austrian-made semiautomatic pistol. Self-loading. Polymer frame. Checkered grip. Used by virtually every law enforcement agency. Outperforms any other handgun on the market for ease, accuracy, and durability. Seventeen-round double-stack magazine.”

If you’ve never shot a gun before, you just got schooled, and if this were your aunt, and the woods were contracting around your cabin, movement in the night, a heavy thud on the roof, windows nailed shut, and boarded up—this is the lesson you might need.

Beyond the authority that Percy lends this novel, there is the constant sense of unease and foreshadowing that permeates this story. It is something as simple as a word choice here and there—teeth snapping together with a clack, an open mouth gasping for air, lips smacking, muscles tightening, every snapping stick in the forest the revealed weight of your impending doom. Take this passage from early in the novel where a lycan struggles to hold down his transformation, waiting for the right moment to rise up and destroy the passengers of an airline flight, his every twitch and shudder taking us that much closer to the violence of his release:

“He has not eaten this morning, his stomach an acidic twist. But the smell of fast food, of sausage and eggs, is too much for him. His hunger rolls over inside him. He orders a breakfast sandwich and paces while he waits for it. When his number is called, when he collects the bag, he rips it open and can barely find his breath as he shoves the sandwich in his mouth and gnaws it down. Then he licks the grease off the wrapper before crumpling it up to toss in the garbage. He suckles his fingertips. He wipes his hand along his thigh, unconcerned as he smears his pants with grease, and then glances around, wondering if he has caught anyone’s attention. And he has. An old woman—with a dried-apple face and dandelion fluff hair—sits in a nearby wheelchair, watching him, her mouth open and revealing a yellowed ridgeline of teeth. ‘You’re pretty hungry,’ she finally says.”

You almost laugh, and yet, you know what is coming. The details of this scene are intense, the camera slowing down to capture every moment and clue, and you are the lycan for a moment—the anxiety and panic washing over you, waiting for the scene to unfold, the restraint to disappear, and the beast to unfold.

And it doesn’t take long for that first violent scene to appear on the page as well. While Percy’s prose isn’t quite as dense and obtuse as the passages Cormac McCarthy made famous in books such as *Blood Meridian*, the scalping, bloodshed, and graphic feeding frenzies of the lycans are not ignored. It would have been easy for Percy to turn the camera away, and let us fill in the gaps, but he doesn’t do that, and he should be applauded for that courage. In lesser hands, the gore would be the story, instead of a necessary part of the dangerous ability the lycans carry with them at all times. In a stuffy literary voice, the nature of the beast might be glossed over entirely. Percy finds a balance—one that supports the story, the character of his protagonists, and the dark tone of the novel, inherent in every page.

Much like vampires that sparkle in the sunshine, pale imitations of the dark night fliers that haunt Stoker and King alike, Percy’s werewolves are animals first, and human second, their transformations startling and violent, their behavior terrifying and convincing. Here is what finally happens when the lycan we just witnessed finally loses control, a terrorist weapon unleashed on the innocent, with horrific results:

“The lycan moves so quickly it is difficult for Patrick to make sense of it—to secure an image of it—except that it looks like a man, only covered in a downy gray hair, like the hair of [a] possum. Teeth flash. Foam rips from a seat cushion like a strip of fat. Blood splatter, decorating the porthole windows, dripping from the ceiling. It is sometimes on all fours and sometimes balanced on its hind legs. Its back is hunched. Its face is marked by a pronounced blunt snout that flashes teeth as long and sharp as bony fingers, a skeleton’s fist of a smile. And its hands—oversize and pouched and decorated with long nails—are greedily outstretched and slashing the air. A woman’s face tears away like a mask. Ropes of intestine are yanked out of a belly. A neck is chewed through in a terrible kiss. A little boy is snatched up and thrown against the wall, his screams silenced.”

And that’s only one paragraph of the scene, which sets the tone early, and never eases up. This is not a novel of gore and slick violence—it is a journalistic reporting of a horror that will hopefully never materialize in our reality, told with a lyrical voice that is hypnotic and unsettling. By showing us what Patrick sees in a cold, calculated manner, we are made to feel what Patrick feels—terror, revulsion, and vulnerability. The

violence is a necessary part of this tale, but not sensationalized. Much like in war, and the battle scenes he shows us, it is not pretty, not heroic—but tragic, and that is clearly evident in the remorse and suffering his surviving characters endure, the depth of emotion that Percy reveals.

Once you've tucked into the narrative, it is impossible to put down. We follow Claire on the run, we track Patrick into forbidden areas, and we watch the rebellion of beasts named Magog, Puck, and Balor. We root for the good guys, and when they get infected, our loyalties waver—the outcome not as cut and dry as when we started—the vaccine hidden in a backpack, waiting for a fall or bullet to shatter the glass. And we are uncertain which is the better fate—because love, friendship, and trust overcome these differences, and the violence, selfishness, and vengeance of man become the real monster in this story.

I'm not a huge fan of werewolf stories, and my relationship with another popular horror staple, vampires, has been limited to Stoker, King, and Rice. What Ben Percy has done for this niche of horror is elevate it, transcend it, and leave behind a literary narrative that we will be reading for years to come. I was a fan of his last novel, *The Wilding*, and his short story collections, *The Language of Elk*, and *Refresh, Refresh*, but this may be his best work to date. Don't take it from me, but from the words of Peter Straub, a master of literary horror: "With *Red Moon* one of our most blazingly gifted young writers stakes his claim to national attention." I couldn't agree more.

Mike says

The bartender bends over to peek at the book I'm reading. I'm holding it just high enough for him not to have to squat down like he's picking up a dropped coin just to see the cover.

"*Red Moon*," I tell him. "It takes place in an alternate reality where 5% of the population is basically werewolves. They call them lycans."

His eyes light up.

"But they are all drugged up so they can't change, and it's illegal to turn into a lycan most places anyway," I say. "Then some of them become terrorists."

The bartender smiles. I see his lips move silently, repeating the title to himself a half-dozen times so he can remember it later.

He'll like it if he likes action. He'll like it if he likes books with fast-paced plots. He'll like it if he likes descriptions of carnage where blood practically rolls off the page into his lap. That's where this book comes most alive, when people (or lycans) are dying.

I want to tell him, read this one for the story. Read it for the action, for the plot. Read it for fun. Billed as one of the literary entries into the thriller/horror genre ala Justin Cronin's "The Passage" and Max Brooks's "World War Z" this book works because of the quick pacing and the blood-filled plot.

There are broader themes at work here, I'm thinking, such as terrorism and domestic surveillance and the AIDS epidemic and prejudice against different races and religions and even the distribution of corn syrup and fructose through our food. (At one point I picture Charlton Heston yelling, "Soylent green is lycan!") But mostly that aspect is just there and not explored. It's also written in the present tense, making everything that

happens feel of grand importance. But eventually, everything comes back to the center, which is Lycans Attack! or Lycans Attacked! Bloody good fun it all is. The movie will certainly be rated R.

I want to tell the bartender all that, but I don't. Instead, he drifts away to the end of the bar to serve a beer to someone who is definitely not a lycan. Instead I take another bite out of my taco and wonder if the lycans would ever eat human tacos and what kind of beer they would wash it down with, and if the bartender would side with the lycans or the humans, and which presumed-dead characters will reappear in the inevitable sequel in a couple years. Which I'll be reading at the bar.

Dustin says

Overall, I really enjoyed it a lot, as my 4 stars indicates. What an awesome, wild ride this was.:) I wanted to give it 5, and after the monumental 1st Part, I couldn't see it going downhill, but I don't know, it seemed to lose some of said momentum, sadly.. Also, some of the characters could have been further developed and I found the resolution somewhat lacking.

Benjamin Percy's exquisite writing, however, is often poetic and constantly awe inspiring. From start to finish, I couldn't get over his wholly impressive talent. That reason alone kept me reading! I look forward to read his debut novel, *The Wilding*, along with his two short story collections, and whatever future project(s) he's compelled to pursue.

Roxane says

This book is trying to do a whole lot and for that I'm going to give it 4 stars. Interesting political allegory via a werewolf story. Great characters, engrossing plot, crisp writing with lots of lovely detail. Percy clearly put his all into this novel. In some ways, reminiscent of *The Passage*. The end is a hot mess, rushed, overly convenient. I'd have liked to see the book either 200 pages longer or 150 pages shorter. Nonetheless, lots to love here, and this is well worth reading.

Samantha Allen says

This is exactly the kind of book that makes me want to start a book review blog. From a writer's perspective, this book had a lot going for it. I didn't expect to like it at all. In fact, I started reading it because it was laying around when I had the flu and needed something light to occupy me. But the way it was written drew me in. Percy's prose is really quite lovely, full of startling images and precise verbs. I'm a fan of present tense, which this book uses to its advantage. Percy allows the urgency of the present tense to propel the plot and maintain a sense of danger that is crucial to this story. The story only works as long as it feels real and plausible. Up until that point, it succeeds pretty spectacularly for a book that is actually about werewolf

terrorists.

Then the book jumps the rails. What began as a story about individuals reacting to extraordinary situations becomes something of a melodrama, and a transparently allegorical melodrama at that. It becomes a military story, then a post-apocalyptic trope. Instead of becoming more complex, the characters stagnate and flatten out. The point of view fractures, giving the narrative a disjointed feel. It must be unbelievably tempting to sink into too many points of view instead of sticking to just a couple, because so many authors do this unsuccessfully. The book is so tense and rife with danger all throughout that when the climax finally comes, it feels too easy. Much too easy. The main villain, who we hardly get to see, goes down essentially without a fight. All of part 3 feels incredibly rushed, which doesn't make sense, because the way it ended indicate that this book might have a sequel. Percy should have broken the book into two and fleshed out the second half. By the end I was begging for it to be over. Strong start, but very disappointing finish.

Amantha says

3.5/5

I wanted to love this book - and in fact there were many aspects of it that I did love - but the symbolism of the werewolves hits you like a slap in the face. Werewolves are meant to represent every repressed minority in American/world history. They are shunned for being who they are and a few radicals give the whole group a bad name (Muslims), they were given their own country in 1948 (Jews), they had a civil rights revolution in the 1960s (African-Americans), lobos is likened to AIDS (homosexuals), and so on and so forth. Re-appropriating these historical milestones into one lump allegory makes them feel trite and insignificant, which is disheartening. Not only that, but sometimes the symbolism contradicts itself. Werewolves (or lycans) have been around since the 7th century, but it is mentioned that they got their own country in 1948 after nearly 2000 years of diaspora. Last I checked 1400 years does not equal "nearly 2000."

Nevertheless, the action is up to Percy's usual standards. The use of present tense makes everything feel very immediate and creates a high tension that is maintained throughout all 500 pages. It was a relatively fast read, and the prose is imaginative and beautiful.

Jim says

I thought this would be an urban fantasy since it has werewolves in it, but they weren't paranormal in origin. Instead, they are the result of a prion disease like Mad Cow. An excellent basis for a story of prejudice & segregation, revolution, extremism, & terrorism - a minority defined & undercut by the few. Overall, it was a 5 star world that Percy created, very innovative.

There were some great characters, too. No super heroes, just regular people in tough, but rather ordinary (by this world's standards) situations. Oh, the main character, Patrick, saw more than his share & the players pushed coincidence & congruity to their limits as they kept interacting, but it was usually well done. Even the bad guys had a great agenda & motivations. Better yet, there were good & bad guys on both sides of the arguments & no one was perfect.

Percy's descriptions were fairly exhaustive; good, but long. I could see & feel the world, although they

weren't always helped by the reader's low, baritone voice. It worked especially well in many scenes, but cast a pall on the best & happiest moments & areas. It was tough to hear sometimes, too.

This was only a 3 star book, though. This 'one' book was actually 3 main parts, each of which could have been expanded into a novel of its own or should have been edited down. I'm into the short form, so I didn't ding it too hard for this. Still, they were a bit too long to be satisfying, yet so much more could have been done with them if the author had the freedom to expand a bit more. There were several half developed issues that were left dangling in the wind. Each section had an overriding theme & picked up from the last. It would have made a great trilogy.

What really ruined the book for me were the logical flaws. Most weren't awful, but some were critical & pervasive. This is story encourages - no, it requires - the reader to think & then undercuts itself.

Possible spoilers below. Purists, don't read any further!!!

The biggest logical flaw was the infection itself. It is a prion & there is quite a bit of 'scientific' explanation of what that means, how it is spread, & how infectious it is. 5% of the population are infected & it has been around for at least several centuries. Very well set up & it created the grounds for a wonderful conflict with historical precedents set by minorities & resource rich Third World countries.

And then the story proceeded to undermine this whole wonderful premise! The infected are indistinguishable until recently except under stress. In the course of the story, everyone who is bitten, scratched, or has sexual intercourse becomes infected & remains so for life & are infectious in their own right. Not one thought about their chances for becoming infected: Exposed = Infected. So how did such an infectious disease remain so isolated? It doesn't make sense.

Bruising, adrenaline, & bleeding made sense, the extra teeth & rapid hair growth didn't. The science was so rigid & well done in most places, then a bit more was added that weakened it. It was a shame, because it kept knocking me out of my suspension of belief.

Book 2 takes place in "The Nation" where either too much or not enough takes place. On the one hand, we get into heavy metal toxicity & occupied country syndrome with critical resources. On the other, the hero & his father. This could have been a great novel on its own or should have left out much of the detail because only the father/son thing is fully developed. The hints of toxicity & in-country syndrome are cut short.

And finally, the ending. In some ways it was excellent, in others it sucked. (view spoiler)

So, there was a lot of good stuff here, too much in some ways, not enough in others. Certainly it was interesting. I think I'd rather have read this in paper format so I could have skimmed parts, though.

Matthew Brockmeyer says

An epic werewolf story of mammoth proportions.

Be prepared for a long journey that was at times exhausting. If written by another, parts of this would surely drag, it is a long book, but Percy's writing is simply fabulous and keeps you going.

Bonnie says

A copy of Red Moon was provided to me by Grand Central Publishing/Netgalley for review purposes.

'Plagues don't just kill people - and that's what lobos is, a plague - they kill humanity.'

Red Moon deals with an alternate world history, one where lycans are real and all are aware of their existence. The story is told from several different points-of-view and spans several years. At its core, Red Moon is about xenophobia, racial discrimination and acts of terrorism, a subject that can be applied to today's world even when you remove the lycan factor. It touches on several genres, but ends up ultimately being a blend of horror and dystopian.

With the multiple story lines, various points of view and length of elapsed time from the first to final page, Red Moon seemed like an attempt to write the lycan/werewolf version of 'The Twelve'; key word attempt. The writing ended up being excessively descriptive and lacked a flow which left it feeling forced, like the author was attempting to incorporate poetry but resulted in an overall clunky feel. For example:

"He feels the snow of the Republic weighing him down and he feels the darkness of the grave pressing around the fire and infecting his vision so that there seems to be no separation between the living and the dead, a child born with a mud wasp's nest for a heart and its eyes already pocketed with dust, ready to be clapped into a box and dropped down a hole."

The strange way things were described:

"She strikes a match and drops it on the burner and a blue flare the size of a child foomps to life[...]"

"She is sitting on a rock the size of a buffalo skull [...]"

"He imagines what his blood would taste like. Like cherry cough syrup."

Then the occasional line(s) that caused some eye-rolling:

'He hears a dripping and looks down to see the blood pooling from the open door. The blood of Trevor, uncorked by a bullet. It melts the snow into a red slushy pattern that reminds him of those Rorschach inkblot tests. What does he see? The fate that awaits him if he does not act.'

and

'He consults his GPS one more time before finding the center and parking his bike on the wrong side of the street in front of a fire hydrant. Sometimes it feels good to be so wrong.'

And these lines just irritated me:

'A black man named Jessie with half his teeth missing.'

'The black man, Jessie, says, "Why are you telling him that?!"'

'The black man's chest is rising and falling with the rhythms of sleep.'

The first sentence is the initial introduction of Jessie and describing him as such isn't an issue. It's the subsequent sentences that irritated me. Simply calling him Jessie would've been perfectly fine.

I will give Percy major credit, his evident research worked magnificently in bringing this alternate world to life and making the lycans existence all the more real.

'All known prion diseases affect the brain and neural tissue, creating vasuoles in the nerve fibers that eventually lesion and degenerate into spongiform encephalopathy.'

Detailed scientific explanations are given throughout the story and while they weren't always easy to interpret (and caused extensive Google searching) it was refreshing to see some legitimate research being put into the world-building.

The ending is not tied up nicely with a pretty little bow, but I actually preferred the open to interpretation ending and I don't usually. Despite this, I still believe Red Moon to be a standalone novel. In my opinion the author was trying to convey the situation as one that doesn't ever truly end, that it's an ongoing problem and doesn't have an easy solution. I think giving it the 'perfect ending' would have been far too unrealistic. Setting aside my issue with the excessive descriptive writing style, I still really enjoyed the physics of the story. Benjamin Percy is definitely an author with a talent for storytelling.

Recommended for fans of The Passage by Justin Cronin and The Strain Trilogy by Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan (although both are vampire novels) and readers looking for a literary story with paranormal elements.

Liz Barnsley says

So I read this a few weeks ago now, only just getting around to a review due to extreme book reading, but looking back I'd quite like to read this one all over again. And probably will a few times over the next few years.

It was an absolute genius of a story really – a Werewolf saga that is so much more than that, a real romp of a tale, with plenty of thrills and plenty of emotion, which is hugely satisfying and has a social message at its heart.

In a world where Werewolves exist alongside us, we follow an eclectic and brilliantly imagined cast of characters through a time of huge upheaval – as communities fracture, the government takes a supressing stand and, well, we all know what tends to happen when you try and dampen the human (or werewolf for that matter) spirit. Each “side” believing they are right, soon there will be a reckoning and the world after the Red Moon will look very different..

The story really is utterly addictive from start to finish – What Benjamin Percy has done is take the world we live in today, the prejudices, the divisions, the good and the bad and endowed it with a slightly different stance, a little twist in the tale in order to spin a yarn which will entertain you, engage you, give you a lot to think about, whilst also providing you with characters you will never forget and a distinct desire for him to write a book a week.

I like that it is mostly a character piece – werewolf or not, all the people you will meet within are extraordinarily well drawn, very authentic and as events occur around them they grow as the story does, the ever changing landscape of their lives affecting them in many different ways. I was fond of Patrick, stuck with Claire all the way but honestly I think that Chase Williams was probably the character that made this for

me. He is just so beautifully normal but then, not so much. How he copes with what is happening to him made up some of my favourite portions of the whole. Overall though, every character will have you feeling something – be it distaste, love, hate or indifference, with a huge spectrum in between. Even the ones who don't appear that often.

The mythology is elegant, feels terribly real and utterly possible – I lived in this one for the entirety of the reading experience, not at any point did I FEEL like I was reading a fantasy novel. The author has a great complexity to his structuring and descriptive prose that makes it a wonderfully flowing page turner, he throws unexpected little gems into the story that make you sigh and the whole thing really is beautifully done.

Overall definitely a book I would happily recommend to anyone, no matter what their favourite genre may be. One for the favourite author shelf. Don't miss it like I nearly did!

Lee Thompson says

Crisp, biting prose. Great characterization. Excellent pacing. Would have been a five star book for me but the ending felt very rushed, too compressed.

LeAnn Suchy says

DNF, so no rating.

I just can't keep reading this book.

The premise of this book is that there are lycans (basically werewolves who can change form whenever they want, not just with a full moon) that have been in the world for centuries. The United States is currently fighting a war with the lycans in their homeland, and the discussion of this is clearly meant to remind us of the U.S. in Afghanistan/Iraq. The fear of lycan U.S. citizens living in the U.S. also mimics the fear of Muslims by some in the U.S. All of this was really interesting and seemed plausible, especially with some of the opening scenes of lycan "terrorists" killing people on planes and lycans living in the U.S. being targeted and on the run.

This started off really strong and I thought I would love this book, but it hasn't kept my attention.

People keep saying this book is like *The Passage*, but *The Passage* was written really well AND it was completely captivating. Here there is too much telling and not enough showing. For instance, in one scene we see Patrick (the only survivor of the plane attacks) being led off into the forest with a lycan who just tore into his car and then the scene ends. Later we're given a few paragraph summary from Patrick about what happened in the woods.

In another scene where Patrick discovers a person close to him devouring animals in her lycan form, the person sees Patrick and all of a sudden the scene is over. Later we are given a three paragraph summary from Patrick's perspective about how this person told him that she became a lycan.

Both of these scenes could've been so interesting had they been allowed to be played out. For such a long book, there are a lot of scenes that are never played out that I wish were. I don't want a few paragraph summary of a pivotal moment where Patrick discovers someone close to him has been a lycan for years and because of it her life and Patrick's life were drastically changed. I want to see that scene, not read a poorly described summary.

So much of this jumps quickly from one thing to the next, and with these quick jumps I'm not learning enough about the characters or story to keep going. So even though I'm halfway through, I'm done.

Cynthia says

If you like your Dystopia stories to have some literary merit you've found a book to your taste in "Red Moon". The monsters are real people...well, you know what I mean. The story is absorbing and though I almost hate to say it, it's believable. The whole time I was reading I kept wondering how this will be filmed because it's begging to be on the big screen in my opinion. The story grabs you right from the beginning and though the book is over 500 pages you won't be fazed by that. You'll just keep flipping pages.

The premise is that humans and almost humans, the wolf people, attempt to live together harmoniously but sometimes the wolves get crazy, or a certain sub group of them do, and this scares the regular humans (who also have some badly behaved renegades). Metaphors to current day events are an obvious subtext. This allusion to politics might alienate some readers but I found it interesting Two young lovers a la Romeo and Juliet are separated by their affiliations yet it's up to them to save their world. On the surface this might seem like a young adult novel but don't underestimate it. There's interest here for all or at least most readers.

This review is based on an advanced readers copy supplied by the publisher.
(Disclaimer included per FTC requirement.)

Stepheny says

Let me start by saying that my interest in werewolves or lycans (I still am unclear as to whether or not they are the same thing or not), has been almost non-existent. It has always come across cheesy and unbelievable to me. Now, I know they aren't real, but I still want to buy the story I am being sold. They never felt real to me. I could buy vampires, evil entities sucking the souls out of towns, Frankenstein's monster, psychotic serial killers....but werewolves...not so much. It just wasn't my cup of tea. So, when I saw that Stephen King was talking about **Red Moon** as a "werewolf epic" that he couldn't stop thinking about, I was somewhat hesitant about picking it up. I trusted in Stephen King's judgment though and after winning a free copy of it through Goodreads, decided I should give it a shot.

Red Moon starts out as an action-packed bloodbath. I was reading it like there was no tomorrow and I had to find out more, more and more. There was murder, blood, guts, gore, people on the run, even rape. I was turning pages so fast I thought for sure I would hammer it out in the matter of a few days. Unfortunately Part II slows down considerably. I was flying through this book when I hit a brick wall called **HISTORY LESSON**. Had I taken the time to lift my head as I was flying along, perhaps I would have seen that wall and prepared myself for it. I ended up reading *The Fifth Wave* (which I strongly recommend) in the middle of

Red Moon. I got bored and needed a break from it, and read an entirely different book in the middle... what a disappointment from the fast paced Part I of the book. I felt that had the history lessons been worked in throughout the book it wouldn't have been so bad. Unfortunately it made the middle and last part of the book seem choppy and disconnected.

Part III, however, brought me back around quite nicely. While it was still a bit choppy, it was the perfect combination of history and action for my liking. The ending of this story is one you will be thinking about for *weeks* after you have finished it. Absolutely mind-blowing. I never saw it coming, and no matter how far you stretch your mind, you won't either. I put the book down saying "Wowwwwwwwwwwwww!!" At that point, I understood precisely what Stephen King was referring to. It made my skin crawl and my mind race. It was just awesome.

While I do encourage you to pick this book up, I do so with a warning. Be prepared for the middle to slow down... a lot. It is a good book and I think Benjamin Percy has a promising future. I can't wait to see his progression as a writer. I will be keeping my eyes open for his books.

Now...if someone could explain to me the difference, if any, between a werewolf and a lycan...that would be great....

Stephen King says

A werewolf epic. Can't stop thinking about it.

Moira Russell says

Despite my notorious hatred of not finishing books, I might let this one go for a while. It's just not that well-written -- I'm pretty amazed at all the people here who think Percy's some kind of amazing prose stylist; Ben Aaronovitch, say, is *much* better -- and there's one narrative tic another reviewer mentioned which is just fatal. Time and again, there's a really suspenseful setup -- then a CUT TO BLACK which feels straight out of television -- and *then*, a much-diluted flashback which goes on for pages and pages. It's really dull after a while. It also subjects you to the tedium of someone writing in the oh-so-hip present tense who doesn't really understand how to mix past and present tenses.

There are too many books to read that are better than this -- hell, there are too many *modern werewolf pop novels* that are better than this.

ETA Wow, that turned out EVEN WORSE than I thought (mostly skimmed the last third or so) because suddenly SEQUELBAIT! We don't need endings, everything's in development, woo! What the *hell*. -1 stars.

karen says

i love this book like gravy.

i have felt pretty distanced from my books, lately. nothing has been grabbing me and sucking me in, not since The Last Whisper in the Dark. but this one grabbed me right from the start and i was immediately absorbed into the story and invested in its plot and characters.

was it perfect? no. i loved the book, but i totally agree with a lot of what mike says here. and other reviewers point out that the final scenes in the book felt a bit rushed and convenient and left a character or two stranded.

and that is all also true.

but it's a great *story*. you wanna hit me about the head and shoulders with your allegory, i can live with it as long as you are telling me a good story while you are doing it.

you wanna (view spoiler) that's totally fine, because *as* you were doing that, you wrote some of the most horrifying prose i have ever read about what happens to animals abandoned in a zoo. seriously - that really affected me, so the tidy and oddly brief wrap-up there didn't bother me the way it might have otherwise.

and i have never given a shit about werewolves before. (although Blood and Chocolate was pretty rad.) but this book really made me a fan.

i have never read benjamin percy before, but i have heard great things. and they were all showcased here. he writes crackling prose. vivid, detailed, lightning-flash descriptions, characters who make appropriate decisions based on their backgrounds, truly gripping and harrowing action sequences.

that plane scene?? i would love it if more horror novelists could write a scene like that. he is a great lit-horror stylist.

and even in his quieter moments:

A reporter interviewed a woman wearing a Looney Tunes sweatshirt and purple leggings. The tape at the bottom of the screen identified her as a family member of one of the passengers. "It's the most horrible thing in the world," she said, roughing away her tears with the remains of a tissue. "And it's happening right here."

i mean, that's freaking divine, that.

yeah, so he left me wondering about miriam, and what happened to her after the last scene we saw her in. i don't even mind. the ending definitely leaves room for a follow-up, so i am fingers-crossing that we have not seen the last of her.

and if none of those mini-gripes bother you, i am here waving this book at you and telling you to give it a shot.

for chase and augustus and their symbiotic relationship, for miriam's badassery, for claire's journey from discomfort to pride in what she is, for puck's evil in a small package, for patrick's shifting loyalties, and for that freaking amazing scene where miriam is hiding under the table.

holy hell.

benjamin percy can write, and if you have gotten this far into my review, you can read. do the math.

joyce g says

A tremendous read, werewolves and humankind blended together. Lots to ponder on this one.
