



## The Night Eternal

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## **The Night Eternal** Guillermo del Toro , Chuck Hogan

The magnificent, if monstrously warped brainchild of cinematic horror master Guillermo del Toro (*Pan's Labyrinth*, *Hellboy*) and Chuck Hogan (*Prince of Thieves*) begins where *The Strain* and *The Fall* left off: with the last remnants of humankind enslaved by the vampire masters in a world forever shrouded by nuclear winter. Still, a small band of the living fights on in the shadows.

## **The Night Eternal Details**

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# From Reader Review The Night Eternal for online ebook

## Bonnie says

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Night Eternal: the final installation in the Strain Trilogy. As the title may tell you, you're in for a very dark and desolate journey. I will keep this short and sweet as much of this novel needs to be experienced firsthand, instead of through a review.

### The Storyline

As the story opens, Dr. Ephraim (Eph) Goodweather is still reeling from the loss of his son, Zachary. Due to the vampire nature, his mother Kelly came back for him after she had already been turned.

*"The insidious epidemiology of the virus spread in a vampiric perversion of human love."*

Norah and Fet are slowly developing a relationship between each other as Eph has been continually absent from Norah's life.

The world they live in now is an extremely bleak one. The vampires control everything and you don't get fed unless you work for them or reside in a blood farm.

*"The farms were the only entirely different thing in this new world. That and the fact that there was no more educational system. No more schooling, no more reading, no more thinking."*

The blood farms were exactly as they sound: humans were rounded up as they were in concentration camps and they are drained of blood. Only the young and healthy were kept; the older humans simply weren't kept around.

*'The darkly quiet exterior of the camp spoke to an oppressive efficiency that was almost as shocking.'*

### The Vampires

I had been anxiously awaiting how the authors decided to handle the creation aspect. I'll keep this as a spoiler as some readers may be pleasantly surprised and I would hate to ruin this for them. (view spoiler)

### The Writing

I had complained early on in the trilogy that the books read like a screenplay and that they would do fabulous as a movie, but left a little to be desired as a novel. The writing in the third, despite the bleakness, was completely enthralling and was worth suffering through the darkness. And dark it was; there was not one single iota of happiness until maybe the very end and even that can is up for debate.

### Final Thoughts

I'm quite pleased at how the trilogy was wrapped up. Ending a series well always seems like such a struggle in trying to wrap up all the storylines and loose ends but I think the authors pulled it off sufficiently. I'm not sure that it's exactly what I had anticipated, not sure what I would have changed if I could, but you're still left with a feeling of completion. All in all this is one of the best vampire series I have read; definitely one of my favorites.

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## Kristina says

I am amazed that a series which started so well with *The Strain* ended so badly. The second book was

disappointing, but sometimes the middle book of a trilogy is, but *The Night Eternal* is simply awful. Mostly I was bored because not much happened in the book. Not only is it not scary or interesting, but it didn't make any kind of logical sense, and yes, even vampire apocalyptic novels should follow some sort of logic. So much is wrong with this novel I'm not sure where to start. Let's see. First, our little gang of survivors/vampire hunters/so-called hope for the human race is fighting with each other. Eph has turned into some kind of alcoholic druggie due to his son being kidnapped by his vamp wife. Everyone's irritated with him because he's never where he's supposed to be. Which begs the question: why would you all be separated anyway? Everyone has his own little hide-out, which I thought was weird. If vamps are looking for you, why would you split up? Isn't there strength in numbers? Who guards your back while you're sleeping if everyone is hanging out at his own hidey-hole in different areas of NYC?

Two years have passed since the nuclear explosions took place in the second book. I don't know what our intrepid vamp hunters were doing during that time (other than Eph who raiding pharmacies and hospitals for drugs) apparently because the authors have no idea either. The vamps are busy turning humans into cattle for their feedings and setting up different camps. Also, which made no sense to me, apparently whatever humans aren't in camps as food or being used as labor are allowed to go about their daily lives and go to work and there is still electricity and limited internet and tv broadcasts (all reruns). Huh? What jobs? This is explained by the authors as a way of keeping the humans in line--the vamps give them some semblance of their old lives as a way of keeping them under control. That makes no damn sense. Why would the vamps have to cater to humans? It's quite clear the vamps are physically more advanced and are pretty much in charge of the world. Also, now that there's very little sunlight due to the destroyed environment, the vamps are pretty much out all the time. So where are these humans going on the subways? What jobs are they working? Are they getting paid? Is there still a government? All questions worthy of being asked but do not get answered.

Also extremely annoying is the Harlequin romance that crops up almost immediately. Nora and Eph used to be a couple, but ever since he turned druggie, she and Fet have been making goo-goo eyes at each other. Okay, fine, but this turns into a weirdo love triangle with Eph finding out and getting jealous and there's an absolutely *ridiculous* scene in which Fet and Nora are reunited (after something stupid happens) and the passage goes something like this: "Nora knew now was not the time to give into her feelings for Fet, but she couldn't help herself and they kissed." Really? Oh, gag. And of course Eph is lurking in the shadows and when he sees them kiss he vows revenge. WTF. How much more awful could this book be? A whole lotta nothing happens in this book. Nothing makes sense and I skimmed a lot of it, just reading enough to keep track of the plot (such as it was).

There's a whole senseless subplot in which Nora needs to escape her hiding place where she's been keeping her mother with her. This makes NO SENSE AT ALL. Supposedly the future of the human race depends on their actions yet this woman keeps her mother with her. Mom has dementia and can't do much except be a burden. If Nora (and the authors) had half a brain, they would have allowed Nora to euthanize Mom. Her death by Nora's hand would be more peaceful and painless than what would happen if the vamps caught her (old people are useless & the vamps drain them and then kill them). But oh no, Nora drags Mom around with her while trying to escape the vamps tracking her--and you can guess how well that turns out. I figure the authors allowed this to happen because they needed Nora to get captured so she could be sent to the camp so what happens there can happen (which is dumb, but again the whole book is dumb). Eph's son has been hanging with The Master and he's turned into a little shithead (he was more or less brain-washed but still I can't forgive him for killing the zoo animals) and I don't care what happens to him. I actually hoped a vamp would get mad and eat him.

The book ends just as stupidly as it began and I'm beginning to think authors who get lost in their plots and can't figure a way out turn to religion, specifically Christianity, and even more specifically, the story of

Sodom and Gomorrah from the Bible. I don't really know how that story and these different angels connected to the plot because I didn't care enough to read those parts of the book (the infamous "interludes"). Suffice it to say the authors wrapped it neatly with a bow by borrowing Christian theology and somehow working vampires into it. I won't comment on the end of the novel except to say it smacked of being written in a hurry just to finish off the book and be done with it. And that's how I read it--quickly so I could be done with it. Awful, boring, dumb, horrible book. I will be deleting it from my Nook library.

#### **Attention to those who want to comment on my review:**

I enjoy comments. I do. But if you want to explain to me the plot of this stupid book, *please don't comment at all!* I understood it. Really, I did. I just thought it didn't work for *many reasons* which I explain in my review. If you want to argue my **REASONS** for not liking the plot, fine. But quit trying to explain the plot to me! Just because I didn't like the book doesn't mean I'm an idiot who didn't understand it. I'm sorry that I have to add this cranky comment to my review, but I'm tired of having the book explained to me by people who loved the book. If you loved it, great. If you can't handle dissent, then stick to reading reviews that agree with your point of view. To those of you who didn't agree with me but managed to leave thoughtful comments, thank you.

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#### **Silvana says**

A bit spoilerish but not too dangerous...

Disappointing end. Not just the ending of the trilogy but the whole book. It tasted so different if compared with the predecessors. I don't even know where to start pointing out the things I dislike from this book. The archangels and Sodom & Gomora & Old Testament tales are so ridiculous I spent much time frowning and shaking my head. Too much *deus ex machina* here and there. Why can't the authors make an original tale of the vampire creation? And the romance between Ef, Nora, Vet...booooringgggg. And Ef's inner battles? His diary entries are ok, sometimes it's way too melodramatic and repetitive. The big ending? Yawn.

It felt like ages, reading this book. It lost the arresting quality the first book has. The scariest part is not about the vampires but when Zack killed a snow leopard \*sigh. Scary level down to almost zero.

I am sure there will be a movie on this but not sure whether I want to watch it or not. Hell, maybe if it's only based on the first book.

PS: Mr. Quinland is Blade, right? right?

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#### **Παναγι?της Δεληγι?ννης says**

Η μυθοπλασία φανταστικ?. Τα πολλ? μικρ? λαθακια που οδηγουσαν σε ατοπα, δεν εξηγηθηκαν στο τρ?το μ?ρος της τριλογ?ας.

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## Eliasdgian says

Η επικρ?τηση του Αφ?ντη ?φερε τη βασιλε?α του σκοταδιο? και την ανατροπ? της φυσικ?ς τ?ξης μ?ρας και ν?χτας. Τ?ποτε δεν ε?ναι το ?διο σε ?ναν κ?σμο που ο ?λιος ?χει χαθε? π?σω απ? ?να αδιαπ?ραστο π?πλο στ?χτης, σε ?να ρημαγμ?νο περιβ?λλον που αποτελε? πια τον ιδανικ? βι?τοπο για βαμπ?ρ. Η μο?ρα του ανθρ?πινου ε?δους ?χει προδιαγραφε?, το ?διο και ο πολιτισμ?ς του. Ο κ?σμος γ?μισε ξαν? στρατ?πεδα συγκ?ντρωσης και ανθρωποφ?λακες.

Το τρ?το και τελευτα?ο μ?ρος της τριλογ?ας The Strain εκτυλ?σσεται στο σκοτ?δι? και περιγρ?φει το ?ρεβος, τον ?λεθρο, την επικρ?τηση της Αι?νιας Ν?χτας και της μ?στιγας που διαβιε? κ?τω απ? τις μα?ρες φτερο?γες της. Το απ?λυτο κακ? εγκαθ?δρυσε την επ? γης εξουσ?α του κι οι περισσ?τεροι ?νθρωποι συνθηκολ?γησαν, υποτ?χθηκαν, ?γιναν οι ορντιν?ντσες των βδελυγμ?των, του υποε?δους που κυβερν? προσωριν? τα ανθρ?πινα.

Υπ?ρχουν κι οι ?λλοι, ?μως. Εκε?νοι που ονειρε?ονται ακ?μη, που αγων?ζονται μ?χρις εσχ?των, που δεν θα λυτρωθο?ν αν δεν ελευθερ?σουν τον ?νθρωπο απ? τα δεσμ? του Αφ?ντη. Ο Εφρα?μ Γκουντγου?δερ, ο Βασ?λι Φετ, η Ν?ρα Μαρτ?νεζ και ο Γκας Ελιζ?ντε ε?ναι μερικο? απ? αυτο?ς. Σ?μμαχ?ς τους ο γιος του Αφ?ντη, ο Κου?νλαν, μισ?ς ?νθρωπος, μισ?ς στριγκ?ι, που μολυσμ?νος απ? την κατ?ρα του Αφ?ντη δι?λεξε στρατ?πεδο απ? νωρ?ς, και το Occido Lumen, το βιβλ?ο που εξιστορε? την πρ?τη εμφ?νιση των στριγκ?ι και περι?χει, ?σως, τον τρ?πο να απαλλαγε? κανε?ς οριστικ? απ? αυτο?ς.

Στις τελευτα?ες εκατ?ν πεν?ντα σελ?δες αδυνατε?ς να αφ?σεις το βιβλ?ο απ? τα χ?ρια σου, η δρ?ση ε?ναι φρεν?ρης κι οι ανατροπ?ς σε σχ?ση με την τηλεοπτικ? παραγω? εντυπωσιακ? πολλ?ς. Αν?μεσα στο α?μα που ρ?ει ?φθονο και στα τρ?α βιβλ?α, τα παρασιτικ? σκουλ?κια που ως φορε?ς του ιο? αναζητο?ν τον επ?μενο ξενιστ? τους, τους αμ?τρητους θαν?τους και τις αναρ?θμητες μεταμορφ?σεις ανθρ?πων σε στριγκ?ι, επιτρ?ψτε μου να διαλ?ξω την ειδυλλιακ? εικ?να του τ?λους, τα λ?για που σκ?φτηκε η Ν?ρα Μαρτ?νεζ κοιτ?ντας το γαλ?νιο προσωπ?κι του βρ?φους της:

?ταν κοιτ?ζει κανε?ς π?σω τη ζω? του, καταλαβα?νει ?τι η αγ?πη ε?ναι η απ?ντηση σε ?λα .

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## Evelina | AvalinahsBooks says

***The third book is... absolute bull.*** The only reason I kept reading is because I kind of wanted to know how it ends, but more importantly – so I can record the bull and put it in my review!

So get this. ***You know how Chernobyl crashed like 40 years ago, and you STILL need permits to go there, and there are STILL areas that are totally off limits cause they're very dangerous? Well, apparently, this is not the way nuclear waste works in the universe of The Strain.*** There are going to be spoilers now, but I strongly advise you to click them and read them, cause I also advise you to NOT pick up this series. (view spoiler)

***All of these incongruencies were wayyyyy too much for me to deal with.*** Even a middle grader knows this stuff won't work. When (view spoiler) in book two, I was wondering what book three was even going to be about, cause considering the damage, nobody should be alive in book three, apart from the bad guys, and they don't have anything to eat without humans, so they wouldn't be alive either. But nope. ***The authors found a way to somehow drive this plot off the cliff and still have book three.***

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### **Nate says**

My original review is below. I revisited this book and, though I thought it impossible, my loathing has only grown. I now hate this book and the catastrophic end it brought more than Donald Trump hates our President. More than the Kardashians hate privacy. More than hippies hate soap. More than children hate broccoli. This book is an abomination that made me stupider to read it. This book is a tragedy filled with faux mystical nonsense that the hack writers of the Left Behind series would feel ashamed to put on paper. If a monkey had drunken sex with the Old Testament, this would have been the aborted offspring.

For the love of all that's unholy, do not read this book. You've been warned.

\*\*\*\*\*

Oh, Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan. You roped me in with your awesome, tense first book. You kept me going through deprivation and fear in the second.

And then you give me this drivel.

The vampire plague goes from a biological threat to Biblical baloney. Eph goes from a character I feel for and root for to someone I want to kick seven kinds of hell out of. I actually root for the vampires to bite his ass. His son is a douche. Nora and her exterminator lover are 2 dimensional as they come. This isn't a story about degradation for a purpose; that I could handle. This book just SUCKED.

Don't read it. Quit at #1 or #2. DO NOT READ THIS BOOK.

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### **Carol says**

Book 3 The Night Eternal of The Strain trilogy resumes with the resistance and *The Born* (Mr. Quinlan) out to find and destroy *The Master* at his site of origin, but there is a traitor among them and another with his own agenda....

While there is a bit more history and background information than necessary on how "it" all began in this finale, it was still full of action and very entertaining if you like this genre and accept it for what it is.

The ending was not exactly what I had hoped for, (view spoiler)

Anyway, I have never read anything quite like this before, and as a new experience in reading, I'm not sure it

will be on my priority list going forward, but *oh it was gruesomely fun!!!*

?????? ???? says

**Debra says**

I've read through a few of the negative reviews about this final book in the trilogy, and although I saw some valid points, I didn't see anything to sway me from giving this book a good rating.

I enjoyed the entire trilogy and the last book was very good, IMHO. It was a page-turner with plenty of action and intrigue, and I enjoyed the biblical implications (whereas others didn't). I liked how the authors explained the rising of the first vampires. It was uniquely different from what we've heard in the past.

Character-development was excellent through-out the series, and I cared about our little band of heroes very much. They weren't perfect, and more complex than the standard infallible heroes, which made them more believable.

Anyway, I think the whole trilogy was great and well worth the read. A creative take on the vampire mythology.

## Stuart says

**"The vampires have established themselves at top of the food chain, Tescos is out, express blood banks are in. Humans are now the cattle."**

I found myself rooting for Eph to kick the Masters arse towards the end. What a blaze of glory the ending had. I know, I know, I've said several times how dull this novel is, how much it borrows from Del Toro's other works and genres. I couldn't help it. Damn it, I feel somehow, tainted.

Anyway, so *The Night Eternal* is the last in Del Toro and Hogan's *The Strain* trilogy. The vampires have established themselves at top of the food chain, Tescos is out, express blood banks are in. Humans are now

the cattle. It's a vampiric paradise out there, 22 hours a day of darkness and meals on legs. Brilliant.

Ephraim Goodweather and his merryband, Nora, Vasily Fet and Gus are still entrenched fighting the good fight. The timeline has moved on by a few years. Food is in short supply and the group have been busy. Fet travelling across the world to find out more about Lumen, a book which is essentially the Bible of the vampires. Yes, complete myth you see. OK, sarcasm aside it's written in a language no one can decipher. A bit of a dead end then? No not really. The Born has arrived. Mr. Quinlan, NO, not Mr. Anderson! The Q-man is a off-spring of The Master. There is a lovely little backstory, which delves into both The Born and Masters past. The tale involving the creation of the Master was complete waffle and jibberish, Arch-Angel indeed. Pfft. The Born really vampiric arse, he is one rather all, just a more pure-strain (or something).

Eph and The Born become fairly tight, watching out for each other, especially as Eph is obsessed with finding his son. What Eph doesn't know is his son, Zack, is now under the influence of the Master. The horror! One thing the writers aren't afraid of is killing off their chess pieces. A lot of characters are gnawed on, chewed over and bleed. I won't be naming names, but things go all grimdark for half the novel. Not a bad thing.

The prose is woefully bad. There are some very basic grammatical errors. Am I being picky? No, this is meant to be a professional piece of work, so should reflect that. The biggest problem with the *Strain* trilogy is that a lot of the characters and creations are heavily borrowed from Del Toro's movies, such as Blade I and II and Mimic. This was my main problem with the entire series. Surely someone who is so creatively unique can come up with something, well, different. Obviously not in this case. I've also stated how standard the characters are, they are a dull affair. Nothing really grabs me in there regard. Another element that I found weird was that the group i.e. Eph, Nora etc, were killing vampires with ease. Yet the world was being held 'hostage' by ten thousand vampires? Come on give me a break. I know it's a work of fiction, but at least sort the continuation out. Out of balanced comes to mind.

I could go into detail and talk about how one could view this as a sociological rant at society. How we've become owned by the things we own, and the need to break free of this mundane items in our lives. However, these novels are what they are, pulp-fiction. So I won't be wasting my time in this case. Over the entire series it's been a average read. Average doesn't mean I didn't enjoy it. You may more than me. I'd be interested to see what you have to say.

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## **Lou says**

A great cataclysmic finale to a story of biblical proportions, a story that unearths a history as old as mankind.

A father and a son separated across the Atlantic, are two important characters in this third and grand finale of a book. The father Dr Ephraim Goodweather, once a prominent epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, has a very important role, for the end of times is near either for the humans or the vampire race. For some reason, which will be unveiled in the book, Ephraim is drawn to the deciphering of the 'Lumen.'

The Occido Lumen is an important book, a wanted book by 'The Master'(the evil leader of the vampires), it is a book of revelations to the vampires, just like the holy books of the humans. It contains the creation and history of the worlds vampire race.

The son, Zack has also a vital role in the darkness ensuing, he is being controlled in the old art of the

vampires of telepathic mind control, groomed into a vessel that the Master the one vampire who wishes to soon inhabit his body. The boy Zack lived like a prince under the watchful eye of the evil Master, In a real castle in the center of a giant city. He was given anything he wanted and was handed a zoo to own. But, here is the big but! It all came at a price, a price Zack was not aware of due to the mind control. The price was he is to be the next body host for the master who at present is in possession of a rock stars body. Zack has been lied to his father he was told was dead and his mother a turned vampire in service of the master. The master was controlling his actions and thoughts and emulating the darkness of his heart, to make him more evil. The master gets kicks out acts of decadence and brutality. The boys young mind was an agreeable lump of dough, one the Master continued to knead. There is one scene that stays with you where the boy is placed in a position where he has to kill one animal, on orders from the master, to save the other animals and to keep and own the zoo.

The father races against time in saving the planet and his son from complete human extinction. The others on his side is 'the born' Mr Quinlan another ancient vampire who's against the master, and a band of people courageous souls who mostly have lost loved ones to the vampires.

They are against the master and his band of vampires (strigoi), feelers(four legged blood suckers), and humans that work in his service.

This proved, where many have failed! that a trilogy can really work and the third book can be one of the strongest stories. I don't really have nightmares after reading books but this gave me one hell of a nightmare last night. The two authors really take you back to the beginning with this book and answer all the questions you were left in doubt about in the first and second book, it tells the story of the genesis of the vampires, the ancients, the first few. Their are powers more greater than you can fathom at play in the order of the things that will or will not save humanity, time will tell.

Let me say that this, that the tale of Sodom and Gomorrah play an important role to the vampires history. I don't want to spoil the story but he has really plotted deep and added some real darkness to this story and genre on a whole, he has rewritten the script on vampires. Forget romance and the now vampire fluffiness ever present in novels, this is darkness true and true a real engrossing tale of humanities perilous battle for survival from the first novel to the third and grand finale.

I am in awe of the kind of movie Del Toro could make from these epic stories!

*"Eph wondered what time it was. Sometime o'clock in the morning, he figured, judging by his own failing circadian rhythm. It was summer-at least according to the old calendar-and so the sun should have been high and hot in the sky.*

*Instead, darkness prevailed. The natural order of the night and day had been shattered, presumably forever. The sun was obliterated by a murky veil of ash floating in the sky. The new atmosphere was comprised of the detritus of nuclear explosions and volcanic eruptions distributed around the globe, a ball of blue-green candy wrapped inside a crust of poisonous chocolate. It had cured into a thick, insulating cowl, sealing in darkness and cold and sealing out the sun.*

*Perennial nightfall. The planet turned into a pale, rotting netherworld of rime and torment. The perfect ecology for vampires."*

*"For the Master, it is best to consider the whole of recorded human history as a series of test runs. A set of experiments carried out over time, in preparation for the final master stroke. The Master was there during the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. He learned from the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars. He nested in the concentration camps. He lived among you like a deviant sociologist, learning everything he could from and about you, in order to*

*engineer your collapse. Patterns over time. The Master learned to align himself with influential power brokers, such as Eldritch Palmer, and corrupt them. He devised a formula for the mathematics of power. The perfect balance of vampires, cattle, and wardens."*

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New video with Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan discussing THE STRAIN Trilogy Here

### **Leah Polcar says**

After reading book two, I concluded that perhaps my love of The Strain was a result of hatred of friendly (and sparkly) vampires and being read by Ron Perleman. I can't rule out the former, but the lack of Perleman did not lessen my enjoyment of *The Night Eternal*. It is always difficult for me to know how to review books that are continuations of a series since by book three it is likely unfair to evaluate whether the book can stand alone. In fact, who would expect it to? Listening/reading 2 hours of back-story is enough for any series reader to want to choke the author -- so I actually appreciated that *The Night Eternal* didn't even bother. We went right to the action and that was actually a huge plus of this final entry in The Strain trilogy.

Further, it did a nice job of working well within the trilogy format -- which I quite liked from the entire series. One thing I have complained about is the recent trend to serialize everything with the huge downside that every book seems to end in a cliffhanger and I end up feeling like I am in a book version of the Sims where I have to keep paying for the expansion packs just to find out what happens. The Strain avoided this pitfall and I have to take a moment to acknowledge how much I appreciated that.

Overall, I thought this book was probably the strongest in the series. del Toro finally cut out the overly repetitive and long "action" sequences -- I said it before and I will say it again, how can you actually make sword fighting tedious? I found the character development here much better than in the rest of the series, new elements, like the human camps, interesting and adding a lot of twists and turns (view spoiler) kept it fresh and moving right along. (view spoiler). And I felt that the series did resolve itself well.

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Is this serious literature? No, but I find it did a fantastic, better than average, job of being what it was: well-written entertainment. Definite two thumbs up for me.

### **Winskillfull says**

One of the worst books I've ever read. Be warned, the following is full of spoilers!

This book is FULL of plot holes - like suddenly, an epidemiologist is a freaking ninja, able to wield a sword against tens of vampires at the same time (even though said vampires have 6-foot long stingers, so...). The vampire blood is now caustic (since when??) and vampires frow wattles (???) even though the Ancients didn't have these...

Also, apparently the UK is largely vampire-free, due to being an island. FYI, geography fans, the United Kingdom is England, Scotland, Wales...and Northern Ireland. So to be clear, Del Toro is trying to tell us that the island of England, Scotland and Wales (that would be Great Britain) PLUS Northern Ireland (on a

separate island) are vamp-free, which presumably means that the Republic of Ireland is full of vampires, who don't like to cross the border into Northern Ireland. Maybe they don't like Protestants.

Also, why would the UK, a global power with advanced weaponry, just leave the rest of the world to be run by vampires? What, did we just decide everyone else could go fuck themselves?

Speaking of everyone else, what about New Zealand, Australia, Hawii, Madagascar and all the other hundreds and thousands of islands in the world? Did the vampires get them? The UK is singled out as being different, so it would appear so.

Then we get to the planes - I think this was mentioned in *The Fall*, but I'm ranting here to stick with it. I can suspend my disbelief & allow for the Master to arrive in New York and infect passengers on a plane - but how did he manage doing this in airports around the globe?! Did he have an army of other master-level vampires all able to do his bidding?

Also the religion. The first book was genius in using science to add an element of reality to the vampire myth and it worked brilliantly; this book feels like a massive step backward by suddenly trying to explain vampires via the Bible ( sidenote, in the second book we get mention of this mysterious "Sadam and Gamrah" - I'm not even freaking Christian and I could guess that was Sodom and Gomorrah). If vampires came from the blood of angels and were accursed by God, then why doesn't Holy Water and crosses work against them?

The light at the end, over the bomb - was that meant to be God setting off the bomb, or just a coincidence? Why was the "murdered" angel suddenly okay? Why was an angel who went nuts & murdered another allowed to resurrect and go to Heaven? Why did ACTUAL ANGELS appear at the end? DAMN but that was stupid.

It seemed weird that Zack would also become a total sociopath; he was such a nice kid in the first and second books, had a strong relationship with his dad and yet in this book he's identifying with the Master and starving zoo animals trapped in cages, shooting at strangers. Seemed utterly out of character.

The grinding lack of characterisation continues in this book, too. There were frequent occasions when I genuinely forgot who was meant to be talking, because they all sound the damn same. Also suddenly Setrakian was this big father-figure to Fet. And Fet is Ukrainian instead of Russian.

Basically, the second and third books were just error after error after error. Don't bother.

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## **Jay says**

*The Strain Trilogy* is comprised of three separate volumes published between 2009 and 2011: *The Strain* (2009); *The Fall* (2010); and *The Night Eternal* (2011). Written by Guillermo del Toro and Chuck Hogan, it chronicles a vampiric takeover of the world and the efforts of a band of humans to resist.

The trilogy as a whole is entertaining. Certainly not with great literary quality but it will make, under Guillermo del Toro's direction, a heart-stopping movie. The writing is not bad. I presume that the primary author is Chuck Hogan; and, based only on the one novel of his that I have read, *Prince of Thieves*, he is talented. As in *Prince of Thieves*, the action in the trilogy is charged, breathless and easy to follow. All three books are quick reads that will keep you turning pages to the last.

Here is the real strength of the trilogy. The vampires—creations, I assume, from the imagination of Guillermo del Toro—are great. They look as vampires should look. They act as vampires should act. No handsome men or beautiful women romancing here. They suck blood and nothing else—preferably type “B”. And they smell bad.

Actually the vampires in the trilogy are not all the same. There is an hierarchy with the Master at the top then the “strigoi” who are linked to the Master telepathically. There are also “feelers”—vampiric children blinded and who scramble on all fours and who are also under the direct control of the Master. This array of the undead makes human existence exceedingly problematic. To be turned is not a pleasant experience. Worms that carry the vampiric virus pass from the vampire to the target through a huge stinger that rolls out of the vampire’s mouth much like a frog’s tongue extends to catch his food. And once turned, the targets loose many of the features that mark them as human: ears, noses, hair, genitals, opaque skin, refined digits. Also, as all vampires starting with Brian Stoker’s Dracula, they don’t react well to silver or to daylight or ultraviolet light.

The Master has some unique characteristics that the “strigoi” lack. He can and has changed bodies: his essence survives body jumps. (This ability has an importance in volume 3.) He, alone, travels with a casket layered with dirt from his home of origin. He thinks, strategizes and reasons. He communicates telepathically. He is fixated on one of the humans, Dr. Eph Goodweather, although it is never clear exactly why.

The band of humans, if the truth be known, is no more attractive in regard to its souls than the vamps, who really don’t have souls. We like them because they are human; and, in short measure by the end of the first volume, they become as agile killing and stalking vampires as Bruce Willis would be if he had a part in the action. The action in volume 3 takes place 2 years after the ending of volume 2. By then, our band of humans is ragged, worn and mal-nourished. One, Dr. Goodweather, a recovering alcoholic, even pops vicodin with regularity. But they barely show their deteriorated or drugged condition when confronting the strigoi: they can take out gaggles of them in short order as if they were in the top of their form. The authors have given humanity’s defenders some back history to flesh them out a bit, although even then we would still not take them home to meet our Moms. They are just not overly loveable as a group or as individuals.

The trilogy is really about action and not people: good versus evil in the broadest brush strokes. And by volume 3 the authors have enfolded the Master into a creation myth rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition. Turns out there is a God. He just is not pulling the strings as aggressively as one might anticipate. He did, however, have a hand, unwittingly it would seem, in creating vampires. And he eventually intervenes after a fashion, although through a glass darkly.

I presume that there are some loose and dead ends that are never fully explained by the authors but I can’t pull any up as an example. I was tracking several myself, but they were all eventually explained, more or less, by the end of volume 3. I have a sense, however, that the world of *The Stain* is not as tightly nor sophisticatedly constructed as something Margaret Atwood has done.

Had it not been for Guillermo del Toro’s name on the first entry in the trilogy (I am smitten by his *Pan’s Labyrinth*), I probably would not have bought the book. With the movie certain to hit the screens, there is no reason to tackle the original text unless you are at the end of your “to read” list or unless you are really looking for an undemanding but page-turning read.

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