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Opening the X-Files...

Meet Mulder and Scully, FBI. The agency maverick and the female agent assigned to keep him in line.

Their job: investigate the eeriest unsolved mysteries in modern America, from pyro-psychics to death row demons, from rampaging Sasquatches to alien invasions. The cases the Bureau wants handled quietly, but quickly, before the public finds out what's *really* out there. And panics. The cases filed under "X."

Something out there is killing people, remaining invisible and unseen by human eyes until it strikes with deadly force...

The X-Files: Goblins Details

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Author : Charles L. Grant

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From Reader Review The X-Files: Goblins for online ebook

Supratim says

This is the second The X-Files novel that i have read and must say that I found this one to be much better.

Brief synopsis: An ex-sergeant and later a corporal is murdered and as usual the testimony provided by the witnesses does not make sense. Mulder and Scully, this time accompanied by another pair of agents are sent to investigate. There you have hints of covert military experiments, a nosy reporter trying to find the killer, a lady who claims to see goblins etc. - enough elements to create a decent thriller.

The story is intended to be a fast read and the writing is simple. Parts of the mystery are fairly obvious but the suspense factor was present. I enjoyed the twists at the end.

If you are a fan of The X-files then you would enjoy it and even if you have not seen the TV series and want a decent thriller for quick reading I would recommend it to you.

Kim Dyer says

For the first X-Files novel that was not based on an existing plot-line, Goblins was unfortunately pretty weak. The plot played through like a mediocre Monster of the Week episode, as Mulder and Scully are sent to investigate a couple of murders perpetrated by an invisible assassin. The result is, unfortunately, incredibly messy.

The story is very slow to find its feet, with Mulder and Scully not even reaching the scene of the crime until 70 pages into the novel. While it doesn't really require you to know much about the X-Files to appreciate it, I unfortunately found it very unsatisfying as a long-term fan. The third person narrative is unfocused, filling between may different groups of characters that the reader was not given chance to care about. Most of these are characters of the author's own creation, and we don't know much about their relationships with Mulder in particular other than what is expositied in the chest.

The narrative itself is clunky and slow moving. It wastes no time on descriptions and is badly paced, leaving large stretches of the novel were little seems to happen. Although we see glimpses of a conspiracy beneath the surface - of super-soldiers and secret military goings on - this is always kept very vague. We never learn the identity of Mulder's informant, or why there are certain "plants" in the Bureau to discredit him. We don't find out the nature of the "experiments" that created the Goblin. We don't even learn if there ever were true goblins in the woods, or if these were the ramblings of a crazy woman.

The ending of the story is very abrupt and carries none of the excitement of an episode of the series. There is neither a reveal or a cover-up. The monster is simply defeated and the story rounds off in a single chapter in which Mulder laments that they may not have put a stop to the experiments. Though I certainly hope this will not be a returning plot thread!

Yet the worst thing about this book by far are the characters. It really felt that Grant only had the vaguest idea of how an X-Files story worked as the characters seemed to be exaggerated caricatures of how they are in the series. Scully is sceptical and cold, bluntly brushing off someone attracted to her and showing little

empathy towards new agents. Mulder felt even further off the mark. He seemed world-weary, lacking the charm of his character. He was also deeply respected at the Bureau, which was certainly something that never came across in the series.

The supporting cast were all incredibly shallow. There were a lot of secondary characters in this story but none made an impression. The townsfolk were all one-note characters, existing purely to flesh out the cast. Worst still were the characters that were presented as long-term associates of Mulder - such as the two younger FBI agents that were forced to join them on the case and the repulsive sports reporter. Really, these characters added nothing to the story. The author spent too long introducing them and then they failed to do much to warrant this.

All in all, you might be able to tell that I was really disappointed. This was not a strong start to the novel series and makes me worried about what the next instalments will hold.

Dillon says

The X Files: Goblins, was a book that was easy and fun to read. Without being difficult and mind boggling, it's a great book to just kick back and relax without thinking too much. While this is a plus, I would've enjoyed a little more mystery instead of being so blunt and obvious. Other than that, I quite enjoyed this book.

4/5

Katie says

Bad. Blatant sexism throughout. Women are simply present to nag, be appreciated visually, and supplement male characters. Speaking of the male characters, they're so bland the most expressive action they make is running their fingers through their hair. They seem to have ridiculously good luck that sucks the plot dry of all intrigue. And the humour? As funny as men eating steaks and women eating salads. Yeah, that's actually in there. Dated, boring, and thankfully finished.

Andrew says

Ok Its sunday and time for some retro reading - I will put my hand up (rather sheepishly) that at the time of its airing I loved the x-files. They were something new and interesting and had a sense of fun - even if they became harder and harder to believe - I remember the tag line on the first episode (or was it the pilot) where they said it was based on a true story, hmm how closely based I wonder. Anyway this book follows the same formula as the show - although it does not quote a specific time or location in the series I would place it somewhere around the second series. The storyline has the usual elements - cover ups, conspiracies, shadowy government projects, supposedly random killings which actually have dubious connections, you know the drill.

The book itself is pretty straight forward, the writing style though never quite the same as the way I perceive the TV show is not that far off, but I will admit its nothing special. The book reads more like an actual episode that was never made rather than a book of some special event outside the usual TV series and as such once I finished it there was a feeling all that was left was the rolling credits with a voice over saying what could be expected in the next book. Don't get me wrong I loved reading the book again, it gave me a

warm fuzzy feeling remembering the hours of enjoyment from watching the show but that's just it, it reminded me of the show, not how amazing the book was.

Angus McKeogh says

Love the TV series. Love the reunion episodes that have recently been aired. And knowing that it's near impossible to translate TV characters to book form without completely missing I was pleasantly surprised by this first *X-Files* novel. I thought Grant captured the characters fairly well. The beginning was slow and the writing was at times scattershot and skeletal. But I ultimately enjoyed another newly discovered "episode" of Mulder and Scully.

Jamie says

There's a folder on my hard drive— named "Apocrypha," what else?— that, like maybe anyone who came of age on the internet at the same time, is full of *X-Files* fan fiction. Stories I've saved, stories I've written (like an ambitious/incomplete undertaking where I elaborated greatly on the canon of seasons 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, episode by episode), so there's the understatement for you: that I've read and written, and still write and read, my share of *X-Files* fanfic. I may be able to speak with some authority on the subject, is what I'm saying.

A few weeks ago, I was at the beach. One afternoon was nothing but storms, and I ended up spending all of it in this little used bookshop talking to the owner for hours. We covered so much ground, and got around to fanfic and the joys of it, and talked about our favorite shows, and before I left with my stack of books she tossed this one in for kicks. Not even ironically or nostalgically or self-consciously— but plenty self-indulgently— this was the first book I went for as soon as I was back in the room. I got a bucket of ice to eat like popcorn and, already channeling Mulder and Scully enough in my choice of shitty motels, curled up in the big bed to read all night about Mulder and Scully working a case in shitty motels.

Sometimes the place and time you read a book is all you need.

This? This was surprisingly a blast. Terse, crisp language. Not choked with adverbs. Very little that made me cringe. Mulder was written pretty spot on, and Scully a little less than spot on at first but then better later on— which I completely understand because of how hard Scully is to write. The secondary characters needed more development, and the word "goblins" could have been used half as much and still been plenty, but beyond that, my complaints are few and far between. It's a serviceable little horror story with two familiar faces, that puts Waylon Jennings on the jukebox on page 2, that not once, not even once, describes Mulder as "lanky," and that has plenty of fun getting where it's going. There's my criteria, right there.

It isn't up there with some of the best fanfic I've read, but paid or not, published or not, there's something special about enjoying a story so much you make it your own, and Grant holds his own. On the dark, dark day gossamer.org is gone forever (heaven forbid), at least I'll have this book and my hard drive to keep me company.

Omaira says

"A pesar de ser una novela relativamente corta, se me hizo eterna su lectura. No sabe crear un verdadero ambiente de suspenso y considero que no logra que puedas llegar a plantearte que está sucediendo algo sobrenatural. Los personajes no generan mucho interés y solo destacaría que las últimas páginas fueron un poco mejores que el resto del libro".

Reseña completa: <http://entrelalecturayelcine.blogspot...>

Simon says

Disappointed in this one. The book focuses too much on FBI politics and not Scully & Mulder.

Randolph says

I'm not sure why Grant picked up this and another piece of X-Files hack work Whirlwind. Maybe he needed to pay the mortgage or he just really liked the show. Hopefully he made a decent deal and did pay the mortgage since this particular copy I have is in the 22nd printing! Anyway, in my quest to read all things Grant, I dove into this one because I had it and it was the only thing around when I needed something to read.

I don't believe this is a novelization of an episode per se but a novel intended to mimic a X-Files episode for those that just couldn't get enough of the show. The problem with this kind of novel is what can you do? We all know the beloved protagonists are going to survive intact, so no suspense there, and we just don't care enough about all the red shirts to give a damn. We already know some of the nefarious are going to get their just deserts while others will slink away to pester the FBI in a future episode. What you are left to play with, if you are going to aspire to art instead of just entertainment, is pure weirdness and the twist(s). Shucking as many X-Files tropes as possible is also another angle. The problem is, as you aspire to art you are going to piss off the hard core X-Files fan who just wants a novelized teleplay of a "typical" X-Files episode. They are here to be entertained, not enlightened.

The ever capable Mr. Grant chooses to take the somewhat low road here and gives us what we want in a modestly literate manner (remember there's still that mortgage payment looming). There is nothing surprising here, just a bit of fun with a secret government black-ops experiment gone very bad. There will be conspirators, friends, traitors, and the ever-clueless, but Scully and Mulder will sort it out before the body count gets too high.

Grant has the advantage of two already well developed characters to start with so he doesn't have to spend a lot of time getting us to know and like them. What he must do however, is not screw-up our internal picture of the two dauntless paranormal G-men, which he doesn't. Where he could have done a little more inspiring job is with the twists. They are there but they are not all that startling when they arrive (I had figured out a key characteristic of the "goblins" but not the precise identity, pretty early on so the main twist didn't work for me).

I was a big fan of the show back when I used to watch television and films more than rarely so I enjoyed the

novel as a decent entertainment.

Oceana2602 says

More official fanfic that I read before I ever discovered "real" fanfic. Gods, how I ever survived my childhood (do teenage years qualify as childhood? Because I think they do) without the internet I don't know. Also, gods, how I ever survived my twenties WITH the internet I don't know.

Other things I don't know: what this book was about, if it featured Krycek and if he and Mulder got to make out while waiting for a UFO to land in an alleyway. Though I'm guessing that none of this happened. Still I'm sure I liked it anyway, because it was X-Files fiction, and there was a time when I got really really excited when I only saw the X-logo.

Gods, how I ever survived my childhood AT ALL, I don't know.

g

Monse says

[pero que en un giro argumental nefasto y bastante obvio, resulta

Greg says

Having been a fan of the television series since it started back in the mid-1990s, it's strange that I never got to read a novel based on *The X-Files* until now - nearly 20 years later! This book is also the first Charles Grant novel I've ever read, which again seems strange that I've not read one before. I suppose there's a first time for everything and it doesn't really matter when it happens!

As for the story itself, it wasn't bad but it wasn't exceptional either. It's written on the basis that the reader will know the characters from the TV series so there is little background information given about the protagonists, Fox Mulder and Dana Scully, except perhaps in the case of one of Mulder's dreams. I thought the secondary FBI agents, Andrews and Webber (hmm, was Grant a fan of Andrew Lloyd Webber, I wonder?), were under-developed, the one somewhat stereotyped as eager-to-please and goofy, the other arrogant and sarcastic. There was no incidental detail such as what books the characters liked to read, or music they listened to, or movies they watched, relationships they'd had, or even a hint of their politics, or anything like that. The team's investigation of two strange murders was the focus of the story rather than its characters.

The book seemed at its best in building atmosphere and suspense and this makes me forgiving towards shallow characterisation, although some nostalgia for Mulder and Scully on my part would've contributed to this forgiveness! Indeed, the banter between Mulder and Scully would be familiar to fans of the series and caused me to chuckle once or twice.

The basis for the shenanigans going on in the town of Marville is interesting and strange - very much *X-Files* territory - although with a military base nearby it's difficult to shrug off that clichéd conspiracy feeling that the army is somehow involved. But is it? ;)

Alessio says

Praticamente come guardare un episodio in TV.

Bryan Cebulski says

I thought that Charles L. Grant's "quiet horror" would appeal to me--the phrase brings to mind something slow and broody and culminating in something absolutely chilling or shocking (Adrian Messmer's *Psychopomp* and *Circumstance* comes to mind, or maybe some of Shirley Jackson's work). But aside from some beautifully evocative descriptions in the short stories I've read from his collection *Nightmare Seasons*, "quiet horror" seems to be code for "nothing actually happening".

I was really looking forward to an *X-Files* novel, too! A novel, rather than a TV show, for me has two things that it can offer to the series--an opportunity to actually get into the headspaces of its protagonists and a chance to further explore the mythology of its monster-of-the-week. Unfortunately we get only a little bit of the former and none of the latter.

Goblins is essentially an okay filler episode, with unnecessary new characters who distract from the infinitely endearing protagonists, wonky plot progression, and an underwhelming monster to fend off.

An *X-Files* novel could expand upon Mulder and Scully's dynamic—give us extended scenes of them interacting and let us know what they're thinking about each other. Basically just give a richer example of the dynamic we see all the time in the show. We get a little of this—just small comments detailing how they understand one another's idiosyncracies, but nowhere near sufficient. It feels like they barely even interact in this novel, honestly, as their place in the narrative constantly gets set to the side by a novel-exclusive pair of agents who team up with the iconic duo, an extremely boring sports-writer side character, and the antagonists. The process of their investigation feels all off besides, which just adds to the overall disappointment—like some of the lesser episodes of the series, they merely stumble into the plot points rather than find their own way to them.

The personalities of Mulder and Scully are close but not quite right. Mulder is far too well-liked by others and Scully is far too stand-offish (reminds me of the exaggerated bully version of her in "Bad Blood"). Perhaps it has partly to do with the fact that we don't have the actors to bring these characters' charisma to life, but the writing itself isn't doing itself any favors. We're also shown little from Scully's point-of-view, something I unfortunately expected from Grant because male authors of that generation often think women are so alien that they're impossible to write from the POV of (for example, Stephen King preferring to write from Bev's abusers' perspectives rather than Bev herself in *It*). But even given this casual misogyny, c'mon—it's *The X-Files* and it's Scully! She's supposed to be our point-of-view character, doesn't anybody remember the pilot?

As for the monster-of-the-week, don't go in expecting much of anything. You get an ever-so-subtle suggestion of what it is in the title of the book. Barring a light twist, don't expect much more in terms of origin or motivation or, well, much of anything. Even bad *X-Files* episodes could be elevated by an interesting monster or one that at least has an interesting history outside of the episode (ie the Jersey Devil).

Here though, it's okay but there's no history behind them or detailed enough exploration of why they're scary. It's actually a monster that would be much better suited to a visual medium—like those extremely creepy tree guys in “Detour”.

I'll probably read more X-Files novels, if only because I love the characters and if only because I suddenly have all the audiobooks available at my new library. This wasn't a great introduction though. I just didn't see what Charles Grant wanted to do with the material.
