



The Strain, Volume 1

David Lapham , Mike Huddleston , Sierra Hahn (Editor)

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When a Boeing 777 lands at JFK International Airport and goes dark on the runway, the Center for Disease Control, fearing a terrorist attack, calls in Dr. Ephraim Goodweather and his team of expert biological-threat first responders. Only an elderly pawnbroker from Spanish Harlem suspects a darker purpose behind the event--an ancient threat intent on covering mankind in darkness. In one week, Manhattan will be gone. In one month, the country. In two months--the world.

This horrifying first chapter introduces an outbreak of diabolical proportions that puts a terrifying twist on the vampire genre!

Collects issues #1 through #6.

The Strain, Volume 1 Details

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Comics

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From Reader Review The Strain, Volume 1 for online ebook

Crystal Starr Light says

Bullet Review:

Can't help but be reminded of Vampire Chronicles and more recently, Justin Cronin's "The passage" trilogy. It's decent - just wish that Nora was more than the coworker that Ephraim occasionally has sex with :/

And must EVERY post-apocalyptic story have to have some dumb bit with an estranged son and a divorced wife?!?

Christopher says

Not sure if it's because the story is better suited to the medium of comics, or if it's just that David Lapham is a better writer than Chuck Hogan (probably a little from Column A and a little from Column B), but I really liked this adaptation of Hogan and Guillermo Del Toro's hugely disappointing novel. Of course, the first book is by far the strongest of the trilogy, and this adaptation only covers the first half of that installment (which begins much stronger than it ends), so maybe I just haven't hit the really terrible stuff yet, and therefore my opinion of this one may change once I reach the end (kinda like what happened with the novels). In any event, this is a fairly engaging read, and one that hits all the important beats while abandoning some of the more cringe-worthy stuff from the book (primarily the really shitty writing). Even though I know where everything is heading, I'm definitely interested in checking out more of the comics, to see if they are able to continue to improve upon the mostly terrible source material.

???? says

Vampire stories just don't get old. Not with Guillermo Del Toro anyway. "The Strain" is a graphic novel adaptaion of a "Not-So-Bram-Stoker's-Dracula" vampire story. Things started to look really interesting since the very first pages, with this ominous illustration of Sardû; The Original Vampire:
I haven't watched the series and I guess I won't like it as much as the comics, specially with art like this.

Paul Nelson says

Not the best vampires I've ever seen, I'd love to know where you would keep a 6 foot long tongue.

11811 (Eleven) says

I haven't read the novels or seen the TV series but now I want to.

Kate says

A CDC doctor is called to help investigate a landed airplane at JFK, there has been no contact with the plane since landing and it is up to Ephraim Goodweather and his team to respond to what is thought to be a biological terrorist attack. What they find on board may be the end of mankind.

I really enjoyed the story with this one, especially the folklore, the origins of the virus and how Abraham came to do battle with the vamps. The volume does a great job in setting up relevant back story and characters, the lead characters in particular are engaging and I felt invested in their storylines.

This art was good but seemed a bit inconsistent at times and perhaps due to personal taste not quite as engaging as some other graphic novels I've read.

A good read all in all and I'll definitely be picking up the second volume.
Recommended.

Latasha says

I liked it. If your watching the show it's the same. Nothing new but still good.

Sooraya Evans says

Great pencil work as well as color scheme.

As a huge fan of the TV series, I personally vote the mystery surrounding the plane as one of the best openings to a story ever. The Strain has an interesting take on the vampire genre (million times better than Twilight).

The vampire design however, reminded me a lot of the 'reapers' from the Blade 2 movie (with their long tongue thingy).

Can't wait to get my hands on Volume 2.

Timothy Ward says

I watched the TV version first, which I thought was pretty good. For someone looking for a fix between The Walking Dead seasons, this is better than most options, though I couldn't help wanting to yell at the screen for how people waited around for the vampires to eat them. The comic is almost identical to what we saw on TV, if a bit shorter. The story's strongest element is the father scientist who struggles with his duty to career with his duty as father. I really empathized with that, though as a writer, not a scientist. I like the mythology of vampires and the threads of conflict our characters weave through. Very solid story, but I'll pick the TV version over the comic. Maybe I'll give the novelized version a shot before I start season 2.

Dark Faerie Tales says

Review courtesy of Dark Faerie Tales

Quick & Dirty: This horror filled encounter is more than just the biological attack, it's far more dark and dangerous they believe.

Opening Sentence: Once upon a time... there was a giant.

The Review:

I applaud this recent trend of re-imagining a popular novel and expressing it through the graphic novel format. It not only offers a visual representation of beloved characters for established fans, but also provides an easy and convenient look into a book that someone might not have read before. Personally, I have yet to read The Strain Trilogy though I have been eyeballing it for a while now. This first issue is said to follow the first book in the series, The Strain, closely. It definitely pulls nightmares and terrors out of the dark corners of our minds and onto paper.

The story starts with a flashback to Romania and a little boy named Abraham. His Bubbeh, his grandmother, tells him a story over dinner about a giant named Jusef Sardu. Born into a polish nobleman's family, Jusef was good and kind but freakishly tall. He had a beautifully crafted wolf head cane that he used in order to get around. His father's decision to go on a journey in order to find a cure for his son's condition costs him and his party their lives. The sole survivor was Jusef, but he was greatly changed by the event. No longer the kind and loving giant, he is now only spoke of in hushed tones by candlelight and used as a warning to disobedient children.

The story now cuts to the present day and a father and son playing a violent video game. Though this gives the appearance of normalcy, it also looms like the calm before the storm. Dr. Ephraim Goodweather is a workaholic and is part of the CDC's rapid response team. They are called to JFK in order to establish if an attack on an airplane is the work of bio-terrorism or not. We don't know what is going on but it looks like an old man with a familiar wolf head cane watching what happening on the news, has a pretty good idea.

So far, it looks as if this issue is establishing the main characters and the initial catalyst that dominates the full story. The reader gets the idea that this is the calm before the storm, not just from the narrative, but from the illustrations. The use of dark and bold coloring give credence to the rising tension along with the conversations the characters have. I also really enjoyed the lack of color used to express the nighttime scene at the airport. It gives it a more realistic feel, since colors are viewed so muted and indistinguishable at night.

This issue, in particular, is reminiscent of the television show, Fringe, and their first episode. I doubt very much that there are more similarities between the two, but you never know. Overall, I think that this is a wonderful start to a fantastic horror story. Depending on how it all plays out, I may even go and read the book this comic is based off of.

FTC Advisory: Dark Horse Comics graciously provided me with a copy of The Strain Issue 1. No goody bags, sponsorships, "material connections," or bribes were exchanged for my review. The only payment received came in the form of hugs and kisses from my little boys.

Elia says

These are the grossest looking vampires I have seen in a while, but they are of course based on a concept by Guillermo del Toro, so there you go.

This take on the vampire myth begins as all the old folklore begins - in a spooky village in Romania. The story jumps around in time taking us to the early 1930's, Nazi Germany and into the present day in New York city, which is where the real meat of the story takes place - a plane lands at one of the country's busiest airports and not one person gets off.

Ephraim Goodweather is an investigator with the CDC called in to try and figure out how nearly all the people on board died (three survivors say they don't remember anything). Enter a creepy old man who seems to know a LOT about this and wants to help and another, creepier old man that seems to be glad it happened. The visuals here are deliciously repulsive (especially in the gorgeously detailed splash pages in between chapters) with a LOT of blood and guts and even in one disturbing panel what appears to be a shriveled and rotting penis. The story itself is an interesting take on vamps, intermingling bits of the old Dracula legend with the more modern theory that vampirism is a disease (or in this case possibly a parasite) though this volume did not get a higher rating from me because it leaves a LOT of unanswered questions and is fairly slow in the buildup. Still, it's an intriguing premise, and should earn itself some fans among vamp lovers and lovers of the macabre in general.

Nessie McInness says

I've been interested in the strain since the TV show came out (I have to thank Samwise Gamgee for it, as he was the reason I started watching it). I have since bought the book and started collecting the issues for the current Strain series.

I wanted to do things properly and save the current issues for after I read the older ones. And I finally got volume 1!

I really liked the TV show until about halfway through. There was a lot of what felt like filling, Samwise Gamgee died and then I still watched, but I wasn't as interested.

Volume 1 of The Strain only has the good bits. The things I'm actually interested in and make the story so good.

I'm not keen on the illustration, hence 4 stars instead of 5.

John Costello says

Brilliant adaptation of the novel

Lakis Fourouklas says

The Strain Volume 1 is a graphic novel that combines the genres of traditional vampire literature and ancient folklore in order to deliver a modern day tale of horror and nonstop action.

This is an adaptation of the first novel in the Strain Trilogy by Guillermo Del Toro and Chuck Hogan, or maybe not exactly so, as the authors point out in their introduction.

"This is not an illustrated version of our novels. This is a graphic retelling: a visual translation and a definitive one. As such, we asked only for the application of fresh energy and bold thinking. Other than that, we granted David Lapham and Mike Huddleston free reign and embraced them as true partners in this enterprise."

It all begins with a flashback. We visit a rural scene in the country of Romania in 1927. An old woman tells a boy that goes by the name of Abraham the story of Jusef Sardu, an eccentric nobleman, in order to make him eat his foot. According to her, and local legend, Sardu was a man unlike any other. He was so tall that he looked down on everyone, yet looked down on no one. And the children loved him. He was sick though, but what his illness really was nobody knew.

Sardu used to live a peaceful life, until one day his noble father, decided to take him with him for a wolf hunt that would lead to a disaster and which would change, in unimaginable ways, his life forever.

Young Abraham believed the story, even though at the time he didn't exactly know what had happened to the man. In the years to come he would come to find out, and thus find in a mysterious way his life's true purpose.

And back to the future, which is today, we go. Though we live in an era in which a terrorist attack is always the most frightening thing that could possibly happen, a yet more unusual and terrifying event takes place; an event that will bring the then boy and now elder man Abraham back to action. When an airplane lands in New York and rumors start spreading around about the fate of its passengers, he knows who's behind the whole thing. But how can he help the authorities cope with the threat? And how can he convince them that he, a frail old man, knows more about it than they do?

He has no choice but to risk his freedom in order to save innocent lives. So he comes in contact with the authorities. He tells them his thoughts, he yells at them that they have to do as he says before it's too late, but to no avail.

In the meantime the flashbacks continue and during them we get to know Abraham better, as well as his nemesis, Jusef Sardu, the man he's determined to stop no matter what. But how can one kill the undead? He knows how, but the stubborn young men won't listen to him. They've even thrown him in jail.

Now it's up to Dr. Ephraim Goodweather to save the day. But will he make it? It seems unlikely, since he doesn't really know what he's up against to. However his job is not the only thing in his mind right now; he also thinks about his son Zack and his ex-wife Kelly, whom he still loves, and he secretly mourns about the life that he dreamed about but that wasn't meant to be. He's a brave man, willing to admit his mistakes and do anything to right his wrongs, but at the same time he's just a human being, who's simply trying to make it through another day, and who at moments also seems weak and lost for hope.

This is a story with a good plot, great character built-up and beautifully dark illustrations which bring to life the bleak subject matter. I haven't read the Strain trilogy, but if this graphic novel is any indication about how good the books are, I think that maybe I should at least give them a try.

Jeannette Nikolova says

Also available on the WondrousBooks blog.

*** 3.5 stars ***

This comic book was definitely a pleasant and unexpected surprise! I've been hearing about the show for years, ever since it started. But it came out at a point when I didn't want to watch anything new, so I was cautious.

I'm so glad that I have the book a chance. It was really nice, interesting, well illustrated, and with so much potential.

The story itself is nothing too astonishing, in terms of mythology. As in, it doesn't come up with a completely unknown type of villain/monster/creature. It's the one and only - *the vampire*.

What is very well done in **The Strain** is the twist to the already famous tale of vampires and bloodrinkers. It creates its own folklore, tied to the existing one. In this case, this being the first volume, we could not see the full span of the myth. What was there was interesting and good for me. Although, and I am saying this right now, not having read anything further, I can see how this story can go wrong. When you are reimagining something already existing and famous, there's not a lot of room for error, because it's very easy to end up with something ridiculous.

The art was also cool. The good thing about it was that although it was not too complicated or detailed, it fit the story in a way that it gave everything the reader needed and didn't distract from the plot itself, which is very rich on its own.

Character-wise, I only had a vague feel of the people. I liked the introduction of almost all of the characters, the exception being Nora. From her very first scene I was just put off of her. The others have room to be developed but at least they started in a good way.
