



## Fatale, Vol. 1: Death Chases Me

*Ed Brubaker (Writer) , Sean Phillips (Artist, Letterer) , Dave Stewart (Colourist)*

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Secrets, lies, horror, lust and monsters from the time before time all collide in *Fatale*, Book One: *Death Chases Me*.

In present day, a man meets a woman who he becomes instantly obsessed with, and in the 1950s, this same woman destroys the lives of all those who cross her path, on a quest for... what?

Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips' best-selling series will leave you craving more!

**Collecting:** *Fatale* 1-5

## **Fatale, Vol. 1: Death Chases Me Details**

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## From Reader Review Fatale, Vol. 1: Death Chases Me for online ebook

### Sesana says

Noir meets Lovecraft. I didn't even realize how much I wanted to read this before I Fatale. Brubaker, we all know, understands noir, and Sean Phillips's art style is perfectly suited, especially when much of the story is set in the 50s. The supernatural elements have been very carefully blended in, with a minimum of impact on the development of the characters that drive the story. I'm very interested to see where this is going, since I expect that Brubaker has some great twists planned out.

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### Dave says

#### **Gritty, Nasty, Violent, & Seductive.**

As graphic novels go, Brubaker and Phillips produce some of the best. Fatale Vol. 1 boasts gorgeous artwork, gritty, dark, and seductive. The story has more than one timeline and is filled with at least one incredible femme fatale -Josephine, gangsters, Corruption, dark rituals, cults, murder, and monsters.

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### Sr3yas says

#### ***L.A Confidential meets Lovecraftian horror? Sign me up!***

The boss of neo-noir, Ed Brubaker brings life to roaring 50's with corrupt officers, investigative journalist, a fine dame (*to kill for, literally*), mafia bosses and .... uh.... *well, here goes*: evil cults, macabre deaths, blood magic, and tentacled monsters.

### **How do these even fit together?**

The story starts in the year 2011 where we are introduced to *Nicholas Nash* and *Josephine*. After establishing those two characters, we jump to **1956 San Francisco** where we meet the journalist, *Hank Raines*, the mysterious and corrupt officer, *Walter*, and *Josephine*.

Yes, it's the *same* Josephine. She is the ultimate femme fatale and she doesn't age. It also seems like she is the center of all trouble.

And the monsters want to take her any cost!

This is an interesting story. But Did it blow my mind?

\*Did it?\*

Well, not exactly. But it kept me engaged with its gory storytelling and beautiful art. The story also offers many unanswered questions and compelling mysteries that's good enough to continue with the series. A good-ish start!

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### **Jeff says**

Anything having to do with the occult gives me the shivers.

In *Fatale*, Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips attempt to combine Lovecraftian horror with noir/pulp fiction. It's been done successfully before in the novel, *Falling Angel* by William Hjortsberg. Here it just provides some minor tingles.

The lynch pin that the plot revolves around is Josephine, a striking woman of indeterminate age and youth who weaves her life around a variety of men. Of course, any man that gets involved with her is not only in for heartache by the mile, but also some devilish times as well.

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### **Nicolo Yu says**

One thing I realized that I loved about creator owned independent titles was how good the product in comparison to that creator's mainstream work. A great example would be *Fatale* by Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips.

The critically acclaimed team of Brubaker and Phillips have work on some excellent material before. I've heard of *Sleeper* and *Criminal*, but I only really read their *Incognito*. With this team, the reader would expect some excellent crime noir stories. This is *Fatale* since the name already alludes a femme fatale, a noir staple; but the reader would not be expecting the deft crime noir meets Lovecraft Brubaker does here. Who would have thought of doing it?

The first arc ends quite satisfyingly. The reader would want more but the ending for the first five issue arc could not be executed better.

A satisfying read indeed.

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### **Kemper says**

Abbot & Costello. Mulder & Scully. Starsky & Hutch. Ben & Jerry. Now I'm adding Brubaker & Phillips to that list of great partnerships.

They had already shown that they can deliver terrific hard boiled stories in their *Criminal* series, and that they could also put clever twists on the superhero genre in *Incognito* and *Sleeper*.

With *Fatale* they've combined a gritty crime story with a disturbing horror tale and created a unique supernatural noir. It's kind of like if James Cain and HP Lovecraft would have gotten drunk together and

come up with a story for EC Comics.

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### **Forrest says**

A couple of months ago I had a sudden hankering for noir. Now this isn't a subgenre I have much experience with. I've read a few short stories in the genre, but if I've read a noir novel, I can't remember (well, in the case of one, I don't want to remember it - see my previous reviews). Still, I had the fever, the fever for more noir. So I poked around the interwebs to do some research and stumbled on a few very positive reviews of Brubaker's *Fatale* that I felt I had to investigate (no pun intended, really).

I knew, from both the reviews and the cover art, that there was something Cthulhoid going on here, which is almost never a bad thing. I like tentacles and red cowls, they're just my thing. So I figured that this had potential.

Still, I was a bit hesitant. I don't like to read bad books. Really can't stand my time and money being wasted on what I consider to be trite or poorly written. But I gambled on this one, a hedged bet, yes, but still a gamble. I put my money and my time out on a limb for this.

And I WON! I won BIG! I feel like I cheated the house, I won so big!

I'm in literary/graphic novel love. I cannot wait for the next collection to come out. I'm sold.

Even without any deep history in noir, I knew some of the main tropes. Damsel in distress, investigator being played by his client, crooked cops, etc. And, yes, *Fatale* has all of this, and more. But the way Brubaker and Philips introduce and develop the plot and characters is sheer genius. They've taken what could have been trite and made it a thing of utter, horrific beauty.

There's a certain darkness, a fog or mist, that overlays the mood of this graphic novel. It's like walking on the edge of a slow-motion nightmare of conspiracy and entrapment. And, just when you are about to sink and give in to the gritty depression of the story, you are awakened only to discover that the reality behind the dream is more terrifying than you had imagined. There's also a certain complexity to the characters that I don't often see in graphic novels. Their motives are believable, even if their stories are fantastic. I am amazed that the writers could pack this much complexity and subtlety into a book of this size. Pound for pound, this is the best deal on criminals and tentacles that money can buy. Don't say I didn't warn you.

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### **Shelby \*trains flying monkeys\* says**

Paranormal Noir?

I don't think I liked this one.

This guy meets Josephine and gets all hot and bothered about her. So her becomes obsessed with her and cheats on his PREGNANT WIFE with her.

Then he finds out the same chick was around and looks exactly the same in the 1950's.

This is an odd little book. I think it's me today because I've read two books that are out there and I haven't cared for either one.

In this one you have corrupt cops, cultish behavior and of course...tentacles!

I'm usually a Brubaker fan, but this one just didn't hit the home run with me.

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### **Evgeny says**

Nicolas Lash attends his godfather's funeral where he meets a mysterious woman (it is a noir novel, there has got to be one). He also finds himself an executor of his godfather's estate, so he gets to look at the papers left. Among papers he finds a manuscript of an unpublished novel - the late Hank was a famous writer. At exactly this moment a squad of goons shows up trying to kill Nicolas with some serious firepower; fortunately the woman from the funeral also makes a visit and saves Nicolas in the nick of time.

The attack leaves poor guy crippled with the manuscript being the only trophy for his troubles. He starts reading it while recovering just to kill time and hoping there might be some answers for the attack.

We now go back in time to fifties following the story. It starts as a typical noir tale with all the attributes: corrupted cops, mafia, a damsel in distress, and journalists trying to get the truth for their newspaper - until Chtulhu-like monsters and cultists join the fun which makes the novel is a mix of noir and horror.

The only serious problem I had while reading is that some of the people's faces looked kind of the same - not by design - which sometimes made it difficult to figure out whose POV the tale switched to.

There was no doubt in my mind that this is a decent novel, but I hesitated whether it is bad enough for 3 stars, or good enough for 4 - until I realized I was reading it very late at night and the idea of going to bed simply had not crossed my mind; 4 stars it is.

This review is a copy/paste of my BookLikes one: <http://gene.booklikes.com/post/883396...>

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### **Jan Philipzig says**

#### **A Mixed Bag**

This book should have been right up my alley: I usually enjoy both pulpy noir and Lovecraftian horror stories, don't mind genre mashups, and generally adore the Brubaker-Phillips team. Yet the story did not grab me to the degree I had anticipated, and I think there are two reasons for that.

First, both Brubaker and Phillips have a very controlled, organized, low-key approach to storytelling. While this works brilliantly for the cynical attitude towards emotions that marks hardboiled fiction, it does not

exactly lend itself to Lovecraftian horror with its emphasis on fragility, helplessness, and confusion. As a result, the story's horror elements feel out of place – they are just too neat and orderly and boxed-in to be truly disorienting or scary.

Second, the psychology of the story's main characters is not always sound. I mean, I am all for complex and unpredictable characters, but the behavior of the characters here occasionally becomes disjointed and contradictory to the point that it does not make any sense at all. Our leading lady, for example, is a cold and cunning person on one page and an emotional and compassionate one on the next - I get the impression that Brubaker wanted to create a more politically correct version of the femme fatale archetype, but it simply does not work.

Still, Brubaker and Phillips are too strong a team to completely disappoint, and there is a lot of style and beauty to be found even in this surprisingly misguided effort. I'll keep reading.

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### **Josh says**

'Fatale: Death Chases Me' is a delectable feast of gore, horror, mystery, and noir. Spanning the 1930's, 1950's through to present day, the complex and utterly captivating story masterminds a plot that is equally addictive as the concept behind Josephine, a timeless beauty who's curse is gift in the eyes of men.

The artwork exemplifies noir, while the story is a fusion of Megan Abbott and Joe Hill (of which the author confessed inspiration upon). Brubaker and Phillips have great chemistry in bringing this tale to life. The initial arc in the series ends with more questions than answers, this is more noticeable on the second read through as some plot elements are just left hanging, hopefully to be picked up in later installments.

Fatale has a little something for everyone, corrupt cops, attractive dames, monsters, cults and good old fashion gumshoe investigation. I've read the book twice and can see myself going back for more.

My rating: 4/4 stars.

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### **Brandon says**

*But what good was it loving someone so perfect when you were watching yourself crumble to dust every morning in the mirror?*

The reigning *comic book* world tag team champions of the world return for another round of awesome with a new series! This time around, Brubaker and Phillips are weaving together two genres, noir and Sci-Fi.

In *Fatale*, Nicolas attends the funeral of his Godfather, an author who in his later years, became a notorious shut-in. Following the funeral, Nicolas meets Jo, a mysterious and stunning woman who after some time, saves his life. As the novel continues, we're shown that Jo isn't just a pretty face but a woman who has been embroiled in a heated conflict with a couple of tough customers stretching as far back as the 1950s.

I can't get enough of these guys working together. For those of you that remember, one of the *finest* episodes of *The Simpsons* involved the introduction of Poochie, a 3rd character in the *Itchy & Scratchy* universe.

When the show initially tanks, Homer comes up with several solutions on how to improve the product. One of which is whenever Poochie isn't on screen, all the characters should ask, "Where's Poochie?" Whenever I haven't read anything by Brubaker and Phillips in quite some time, I often find myself asking, "Where's Ed and Sean?"

The difference between the insertion of Poochie and the many Brubaker/Phillips collaborations is that rather than confuse audiences and bring down the product, Ed and Sean are revolutionizing their field, crime comics. Whether it's bringing down the house with their Criminal series or testing new grounds with Sleeper and Incognito, I truly believe they embody the best partnership in comics today.

Oh, if that opening line wasn't enough to wet your whistle;

*"Hank had gotten too drunk. But missing her hurt...in his body and his mind. So he poured alcohol on the wounds."*

\*I can't believe I referenced Poochie.

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### **Patrick says**

Interesting noir-type story that slowly slides into something darker and more lovecraftian. Very subtle. A lot of good mystery.

In the interest of full disclosure, some of the male characters looked the same to me, and that led to some slight confusion. But I was reading it late at night after going to a party, so it's perhaps unfair of me to blame that on the comic.

Overall, some great storytelling in a unique sub-genre. I'm really looking forward to the second trade.

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### **XX Sarah XX (former Nefarious Breeder of Murderous Crustaceans) says**

**You would think** that Ed Brubaker + Sean Phillips + Noir + Horror = AWESOME, right?

**Wrong.** Because in this case, Ed Brubaker + Sean Phillips + Noir + Horror =

**Sigh.** I've been trying to think of what I liked about Fatale and since I couldn't come up with anything, I decided to downgrade my original rating from 2.5 to 2 stars. Sigh. I don't know why this didn't work for me. I guess **it all just felt flat**. The characters are one-dimensional and archetypical. The plot is based on your typical, very clichéd love triangle: a girl, a soon-to-be-dad/married guy and a corrupt cop. The fact that some

paranormal elements were thrown in **didn't make this any better** for me. If your basic plot is weak, no immortal character or tentacled monster will make it more interesting. Especially when there is nothing horrific about the supposedly horrifying parts of the story. I mean, **look at this guy here**:

I'm sorry but **he looks more ridiculous than terrifying**. Well to me, anyway. I don't know if it's the whole "tentacled demon in a suit" thing that doesn't work for me, or just the fact that it looks like his head is **disconnected from the rest of his body**. I definitely think Phillips should forget about monsters and stick to human beings instead. Then again this didn't work out that well for him here either, but **more on that later**.

**The main problem** with Fatale is that the story seems completely disjointed. It feels like Brubaker and Phillips decided to **throw a bunch of themes and concepts together** but never managed to piece them together coherently. You get the stupid love triangle, a mysterious woman, a murder investigation, corrupt cops, the Noir setting, a little bit of gore, an evil cult, violence, demons, an inheritance... You can shake it and stir it as much as you want, you'll go nowhere **without a solid storyline**.

**Now, for the art.** I usually like Phillips' work. I think he did a fantastic job in The Fade Out and was looking forward to see him teamed up with Brubaker again. The art as a whole isn't bad and it actually has a pulpy feel that perfectly fits the mood of the story. Plus I really liked the gory bits. **Because gore is fun.**

**That being said**, there is a huge problem with Phillips' work here. Because most of **the characters' faces look the same**. Apart from the female lead, this is basically an all-guy cast with several changes of POV. Now how the hell are you supposed to understand what is going on if you can't tell the freaking characters apart?! **The funny thing is**, we get the opposite problem with Josephine's character. The girl never looks the same, it's **ridiculous**.

?? **And the moral of this story is**: messy, uninteresting plot + confusing art = **real winner**.

?? **Bye bye Fatale**, next time I need a Brubaker/Phillips fix I'll either read a new Fade Out volume or **give Criminal a try**.

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### **Malum says**

Pretty good mix of noir and Lovecraftian strangeness. It takes a while to really get rolling but, by the end, it is pretty interesting.

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### **Anne says**

Also reviewed for TattooGirl Reads.

### Tentacle Monster Alert!

If I were going to start worshiping a demon, he'd have to be the sexy kind. Not some gruesome bastard with bad teeth, you know?

Also, I'd want to get some decent perks out of it.

Some sort of useful power would be nice, robes made out of that soft jersey cotton, and (*most importantly*) I'd like a nice insurance package. Maybe even toss in a 401k and some retirement benefits?

*I'm just throwing that out there for any of you who are considering joining a cult. Don't sell your soul to the first one that comes along.*

*Negotiate for the best deal.*

What I wouldn't want, for example, is for the highlight of the whole thing to be my head turning into some kind of an octopus butt...complete with tentacles.

Some of you probably think I'm too picky about which monsters I devote myself to, but I like to think of it as being *selective* with my time. Devil worship can take a huge chunk out of your day from what I've heard, and I've got a lot going on right now.

That means, in all likelihood, I won't be joining a satanic sect anytime soon.

*Although, I'm seriously thinking about giving the PTA a shot, and I'm pretty sure some of those ladies sacrifice animals in their spare time...*

That being said, this was a pretty cool little graphic novel. I thought (*because I didn't read the blurb*) that this was going to be a straight-up crime noirish thing.

I also thought it might be set near the ocean since the folks on the cover look like they are being caressed by a squid.

Shockingly, I was wrong about **that**, as well.

This story falls into the *horror/noir/mystery/paranormal crime/graphic novel* category.

**I think.**

The plot goes a little something like this:

There's a guy who meets an *irresistible* girl, who used to be his godfather's lover (*there's a story there*), but for now she's in a weird relationship with a crooked cop who love/hates her (*which is another story*), and the *original* guy wants to save her...sort of.

Oh, yeah. And she's immortal or something.

Plus, there's a group of Octopus-Demon worshipers who need to sacrifice Sexy Girl to their deity in order to get rewarded with the Power of a Thousand Architeuthis (*that means squids, by the way*).

The art isn't what I prefer to look at since it's all dark and pulpy, but it kind of grew on me by the end. I doubt this one is for everybody, but I enjoyed it.

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### Saga Norén says

A noir comic, as usual in Brubaker style. Sexy woman, organized crime, dead bodies, smoke and all the stuff that makes the ambient for a noir comic. It was a little bit boring, but I like to read in English, to beyond my vocabulary.

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## Sam Quixote says

The book follows a mysterious beautiful woman - the Fatale of the title - called Jo who is attached to several men and, in true noir Femme Fatale fashion, proves to be the downfall of each of them. She's on a journey to escape the life she's leading - that of mistress to a detective who is getting more distant from her by the day - with a journalist but she's harbouring dangerous secrets and soon she's fighting for her life as a Demonic cult sets its sights on her as their next sacrifice.

Ed Brubaker and Sean Phillips' series "Criminal" is first class comic book artistry at its finest; "Incognito" not so much; and "Sleeper" was so boring I didn't make it halfway through the first book. So when I saw "Fatale" I was heartened that it looked so much like the "Criminal" series - perhaps this was one of the better Brubaker/Phillips collaborations! Alas it's not. Here's why.

The book might work well as a straight crime noir story much like "Criminal" but it veers off into the kind of horror territory found in Mike Mignola's BPRD series. The horror elements sit awkwardly within the noir and when the detective turns out to be somewhat supernatural himself the tone of the piece feels a bit off.

Then there's the plot. It's unclear what each character wants and why. The detective, Booker, is sick and dying of some mysterious illness causing him to betray Jo to the Demonic Cult but it turns out that he and Jo are both "dead" already (though how they could be dead but alive is never explained) so it must be some kind of illness that affects the living dead (but he's not a zombie). Then there's the Cult - what are their goals again - something generic like ruling the world? And how about the Fatale herself, Jo, what does she want out of all this? Her attachments to the men in her life are tenuous at best given that she hooks onto them without much thought, so it's a bit hard to believe she cares about any of them enough to motivate her to do half the things she does in the book. With no clear plot, too many strands and underdeveloped characters, "Fatale" becomes a convoluted mess.

And while there is a lot of action and spooky scenes amidst the noir, it's hard to keep interested as the action and spooky things keep on happening with such regularity that it becomes standard and uninteresting. As the characters are underdeveloped the danger they're in doesn't move you as you don't care about them very much.

While Sean Phillips' artwork and Dave Stewart's colours make this an extremely attractive book to look at, Brubaker's weak storyline and unusually poor writing makes this a strangely dull read despite it's potentially exciting subject matter. I finished this after 3 sittings and this isn't a long comic book; I just lost interest quickly after picking it up. The Brubaker/Phillips creative team is a brilliant one but "Fatale" isn't their best effort - for that, try the "Criminal" series, which is.

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## Stewart Tame says

I've been on a bit of an Ed Brubaker kick lately. It's nice to find a comics writer who really knows how to do crime and mystery fiction well. I remember the days when Max Allan Collins' Ms. Tree was pretty much it

...

Fatale is sort of noir crossed with H.P. Lovecraft. We begin in present day San Francisco at the funeral of novelist Dominic Raines. Raines was Godfather to Nicolas Lash, who meets a mystery woman at the funeral. She tells him that her name is Jo, and that her grandmother and Raines were in love. Later, Lash finds an unpublished manuscript, and then all Hell breaks loose. In short order Jo barges in, there's a gunfight, a car chase, a plane crash, and then Lash wakes up in the hospital missing a leg.

And that's just the prologue. The action begins shifting between the 1950's and the present, and we begin to realize that Jo doesn't seem to age, and may not even be human. There are cultists and spells and tentacled things, but it's all done in fine noir style. This is a most intriguing first volume, and I'm definitely keen to see more. Recommended!

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## Ronyell says

### Introduction:

Now, I will admit that I have not read much of Ed Brubaker's works, other than one of his stories from his brief "X-Men" run, "Divided We Stand" which I kind of liked. So when I found out that Ed Brubaker had produced some well-acclaimed independent works, I just had to check them out! So, I guess you could say that the first comic book of Ed Brubaker's independent works I had checked out was none other than "Fatale: Death Chases Me Book One" and man, was I blown away by this volume!

### What is this story about?

The story starts off with a young man named Nicolas Lash going to the funeral of Dominic H. Raines and it was there that he meets up with a mysterious beautiful woman named Josephine who also happened to know Dominic Raines. Later on, Nicolas decides to explore Dominic's old house and he finds an unpublished manuscript that detailed Dominic's life back in the 1950s. It was then that Nicolas discovers that Dominic was harboring a dark secret back then that involved Josephine and a corrupted cop named Walter Booker and Josephine seemed to be connected to the tragic events of Dominic's past life.

Who is this mysterious Josephine woman and what kind of secrets is she keeping from the men who are mesmerized by her great beauty?

### What I loved about this story:

Ed Brubaker's writing: Now even though I had read plenty of comic books that were either horror or noir themed, I had never read a comic book that managed to combine both noir and supernatural horror into one story before and I enjoyed it immensely! Ed Brubaker had done a brilliant job at making this story both horrifying and exciting at the same time and I loved the way that the story first started off as a mystery noir as we are trying to figure out what was going on between Dominic Raines and Josephine to supernatural horror as demons suddenly start popping up midway through the story, when Josephine's mysterious nature starts overtaking the story. I was really into the mystery element of this story as I was trying to figure out throughout the entire story about what Josephine's true motives are and why do men suddenly fall in love with her as I was wondering to myself about whether or not Josephine is even human or a demon in some way.

Sean Phillips' artwork: Sean Phillips' artwork is just amazing in this volume as the characters are drawn in a truly realistic way and I really loved the scenes where the characters are in dark places at night and you can see the shadowing around the characters' bodies. I also loved the way that Sean Phillips gives the artwork a creepy atmosphere with the majority of the stories taking place during the night as it really provides a scary mood to this story.

**What made me feel uncomfortable about this story:**

For anyone who does not like strong language and gory violence in a comic book, this volume does contain some strong violence, which includes characters getting cut in half and blood spraying everywhere. Also, there is some strong language including several instances of the “f” and “s” words being dropped throughout the volume.

**Final Thoughts:**

Overall, “Fatale: Death Chases Me Book One” is definitely one volume that fans of both crime noir and horror should check out immediately and I am definitely looking forward to reading more of this series!

**Review is also on: Rabbit Ears Book Blog**

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