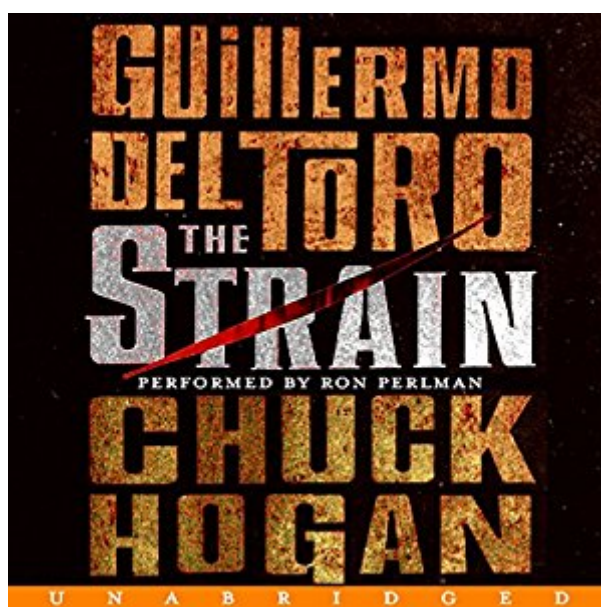


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# The Strain



## Synopsis

Siempre han estado aquí. Vampiros. En la oscuridad y en secreto. Esperando. Ahora ha llegado su momento. En una semana, tomarán Manhattan. En un mes, el país entero. En dos meses, el mundo. El visionario creador de la película ganadora del Oscar *El laberinto del Fauno* y un escritor ganador del Hammett Award, vuelcan sus imaginaciones en esta audaz novela épica sobre una horrorosa batalla entre hombre y vampiro que amenaza a toda la humanidad. Es la primera entrega de una espeluznante trilogía y un evento editorial internacional extraordinario. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours and 36 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: HarperAudio

Audible.com Release Date: June 2, 2009

Language: English

ASIN: B002BX6QIE

Best Sellers Rank: #112 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Horror #293 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Supernatural #537 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Mysteries & Thrillers

## Customer Reviews

Well, if your idea of fun includes vampires, biological horror, scary folk tales, and the undead walking the earth, then I have a recommendation for you: *THE STRAIN* - book one of the trilogy of novels from Guillermo Del Toro and Chuck Hogan. If you're a big GDT fan then you are getting some classic, old school Guillermo here. This is his triumphant return to horror in a whole new medium. The end result? *BLADE 2* meets *CSI*. *THE STRAIN* is not a meditation like *PAN'S LABYRINTH*, or a metaphorical folk tale like *THE DEVIL'S BACKBONE*. It is an in-your-face horror thriller that is not for the squeamish. Needless to say, I really enjoyed this book. It is very well written and honestly, I couldn't put it down. For my money, nothing holds my interest like a vampire plague, and this book has some cool new twists to the vampire mythology. The premise of a vampire "infecting" its victims with a virus is not completely new: I've seen the idea before. What *THE STRAIN* does well is explore the infection of the unfortunate victim in great detail. The main

character of THE STRAIN is Ephraim Goodweather, epidemiologist for the Center of Disease Control. His investigation as to the nature of this sudden and mysterious plague requires understanding the nature and effects of the virus itself. In other words, the entire book is like playing in GDT's sandbox of the scientifically weird and grotesque. It is a medical journal for Guillermo's vision of the ultimate vampire. Talk about Gross Anatomy. But let's not forget Mr. Hogan's contributions.

"The Strain" starts off with a nice hook that pulls you into the story quickly. Unfortunately, it soon bogs down into a pretty standard mishmash of horror/crisis story cliches, including the main character with the failed marriage (cuz he's just so damn dedicated to his job), incompetent bureaucrats, etc., etc., etc. As far as reinventing the vampire genre, as the jacket blurbs claim it does, not so much. They give a virus/parasite (it's a little confusing as to which, actually, since the characters refer to a virus but there are also visible "blood worms" swimming in the blood of the infected, which seems more like a parasite) as the cause, which is different than the traditional vampire, but certainly has been done before. Probably the most interesting plot development, which is that there are factions within the vampire ranks with differing views about how to interact with humanity, is barely dealt with (probably to be explored in future volumes), but at any rate is certainly not new. I don't mind tinkering with the vampire mythology (especially since there are a number of myths anyway, so there are always some ground rules to set in a vampire story), but "The Strain" seems to have some consistency issues. For example, vampirism has a biological cause, but the infected are unable to cross running water without assistance from living humans. Why? The sleeping in earth myth is attributed to a sort of nesting instinct that the vampires have, rather than to a true need...however, the Master carts a giant coffinful of Romanian soil around the globe with him and takes some risks to recover the coffin when it's threatened (also, one of the human characters refers to needing to purify the earth so the Master can't use the coffin anymore).

- Setrakian (about to face off against the Big Bad): "We split up."- Fet: "Are you kidding? Never split up. That's the first rule. I've seen too many movies to ever go out that way." I dig the horror genre so much, but I can't deny that there's a lot of trashy stuff out there. Vampires, in particular, have been featured so often in literature that, in my brain, these books have begun to bleed together. It's hard to meet the standards set by Bram Stoker, Richard Matheson, Stephen King, P.N. Elrod, and Brian Lumley. Nowadays it takes an exceptional vampire novel to knock me out of my state of Yeah, whatever-ness. Then along comes filmmaker Guillermo del Toro, obviously evilly bent on

conquering all forms of entertainment media and now branching out into horror literature. He and his collaborator, award-winning author Chuck Hogan, have brought it with THE STRAIN, brought the chills, that sense of "Oh, crappitycrap!" and the big-time storytelling. THE STRAIN is the first of three novels, and it grabs the readers by the nape and drags them to some really dark, creepy corners. It starts with a just landed Boeing 777 taxi-ing on the JFK tarmac but then abruptly coming to a stop. Sensors in JFK's control tower indicate that the airplane, Flight 753, has incurred gross mechanical failure. The window shades on the plane have all been pulled down. And closer inspection reveals that the onboard crew and passengers are dead. Epidemiologist Ephraim (Eph) Goodweather, head of a rapid-response team for the CDC in New York, is called in to determine the presence of a biological threat. What he and his Canary team stumble upon is incomprehensible and very disturbing.

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