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Stephen Randel

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What unfolds is a laugh out loud dark comedy of madcap adventure stretching from Austin to the West Texas border featuring a lunatic band of civilian border militia, a group of bingo-crazed elderly ladies (one packing a pistol nearly as long as her arm), a murderous and double-crossing cartel boss, a burned-out hippy, and a crotchety retired doctor and his pugnacious French bulldog. Read it to believe it.

The Chupacabra: A Borderline Crazy Tale of Coyotes, Cash & Cartels Details

Date : Published August 19th 2012 by Knuckleball Press

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Author : Stephen Randel

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From Reader Review The Chupacabra: A Borderline Crazy Tale of Coyotes, Cash & Cartels for online ebook

Danielle says

Stephen Randel's novel *The Chupacabra* is an adventurous comedy that illustrates Randel's impressive talent for storytelling as he weaves together an extensive cast of diverse characters that all intersect at the end. At first I was a little overwhelmed by the amount of characters I needed to get a grasp on to get immersed in this book, but it really didn't take long for the story to pull me under. The story is constantly changing between its ensemble cast member's perspectives, so it's important that the reader stay on their toes; however each character is so memorable that it's impossible not to gain interest quickly.

The backbone of the novel is El Barquero, a murderous weapons smuggler working for the Mexican cartels. Through El Barquero, Randel impressed me when I found myself rooting for the "bad guy" much more often than not. Although El Barquero is capable of killing people without much consideration, somehow the author still gives him enough humanity that I found myself wanting him to succeed in his final operation.

On the other side of the coin is Avery, one of the most hilarious literary character I've read in a long time. Avery is a chubby, nerdy, loner with more than just a screw loose. He is obsessed with conspiracy theories and his interaction with others, including the insane letters he writes to corporations, are reason alone to read this book. Avery takes himself so seriously and is so self absorbed, that he has no real understanding of the precarious situations in which he puts himself.

El Barquero and Avery are just two of the many colorful characters that drive this book and have made it one of my favorites of the year. The intensity of characters like El Barquero and the cartel boss are more easily digested by foils like Avery or General X Ray of STRAC-BOM, a 7 man civilian militia, who proves that there actually are characters even more clueless to dangerous situations than Avery. These characters help the scenes switch quickly between intense and comedic very efficiently.

While *The Chupacabra* is an entertaining novel, it also has enough depth to make the reader consider things beyond its pages, an indicator of any great and memorable book. Through characters like El Barquero, Avery, and General X-Ray, the reader might consider what drives someone to go to great lengths for what they believe in and how much of what they believe in is a result of their ego. I also learned by the end of the novel not to underestimate or overestimate certain characters; they all have their own strengths and weaknesses that help or harm them in very realistic ways come the climax of the novel.

I would really love to see this book turned into a movie with a blockbuster Hollywood ensemble cast led by Zach Galifianakis as Avery. I mean, the Mexican drug cartels have already become somewhat glamorized in *Breaking Bad*. Come on, Hollywood, when are you going to start listening to my blog? ;)

Bottom Line: If you want a laugh-out-loud adventure that will keep you on the edge of your seat, read this book right away! 4½/5 stars.

I was given a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

book-barn.blogspot.com

Lynelle Clark says

A really good read.

It was all that the author promised. Dark comedy expertly laced in a interesting plot which involved the drug cartel, murder and paranoid characters.

Adding a small dog with a superior complex and you find your self reading the book with a smile on your face. Chuckles and shaking the head for the stupidity of the characters a definite during the read.

The five old ladies colored it in with their quirky comments, insane driving and a general love for people.

While the murderer roamed the desert adding suspense to the realistic plot as it unfolds.

I really liked all the characters, each bringing his/her own unique characteristics into the story. From the obnoxious Avery who thinks the government is after him to Ziggy a old hippy, and every one else in between. Playing their parts beautifully to entertain you during the suspense story of drug shipments, murder and schemes. All the quirks and laughs adding to suspense filled story.

The cliffhanger end was a bit disappointing and I hope that the author would continue with the story so that we can learn more from the characters continued lives and if Avery would finally be stopped.

{Rolling the eyes.} Really do we get people like that?

Get the book and see for your self. {smile}

? Irena ? says

3.5

It took me a long time to finish this book and I don't have any real reason for it. It was just slow, so I won't rate it low because it really doesn't deserve a low rating just because I wasn't in the mood for it when I started reading.

There are a number of POVs and they all come together near the end of this crazy book. The characters best describe it. The author managed to tell a humorous (though dark) story even with serious themes: illegal aliens, remorseless assassins, drugs, cartels and a very high body count.

Avery Bartholomew Pendleton is a paranoid conspiracy nut. He constantly writes threatening or blackmailing letters to anyone who did something wrong (in his opinion). The problem with Avery is that is almost everyone. His letters are hilarious and show just how crazy he is. Avery is obsessed with finding a proof that chupacabras are invading the US. He is living with Bennet (a retired doctor who was married to his mother) and Bennet's son Kit, who has recently got back to Austin.

I loved the parts with civilian militia. General X-Ray and his men want to protect the border and prevent any illegal alien to cross over. The following passage best shows their awesomeness.

"After kick-starting the heavy dirt bike to life, he led the convoy of vehicles into the desert, only to return to base a few minutes later because Private Foxtrot had forgotten to lock the door to the HQ"

Who wouldn't like these guys as protectors?

The third group are Bennet's cousin Polly's friends. They are a bunch of great older ladies with their own

quirks. My favourite, Pearl, is a tiny fearless woman with a really big gun. She is always aggressive and Polly decided to help her. From changing the church to Pearl's to tai-chi lessons, this group of ladies is determined to make Pearl happier and less aggressive.

"The only sweating I want to do at my age," Pearl replied, "is with that good-looking administrator over at the retirement center. The one that looks like Denzel."

"Just do what Master Wu says," Jolene said. "Well, he might be Master Wu to you," said Pearl. "But he's just plain old Wu to me. You don't ask an old black woman to go calling someone Master."

Their constant banter is what makes them interesting and funny.

Those are the funny parts. The other side couldn't be darker. The main bad character is El Barquero, an assassin who decided it is time to retire and whoever is standing in his way gets killed. You get a glimpse of cartel life too.

Carol S. Harris says

Hilarious

I thought the book would be a documentary but it was funny. Couldn't help but laugh at some of the characters. It is worth reading.

Thereadersentry says

I must give this book a great score and I can give two reasons for it: Avery and Pearl! I know you have no idea of what I am talking about, but we will get there, I promise.

First beware that this is no fantasy book nor Sci-Fi, it is an honest to God comedy book set in contemporary Texas. From the title I really did not know what to expect. The Chupacabra? I mean, I know what a chupacabra is and therefore I was kind of expecting a horror novel, indulging in gruesome details of terrifying blood-sucking monsters. Fortunately it is nothing like that, it is more the kind of story that will bring tears to your eyes. Why? Again Avery and Pearl. The first is a lunatic nerd, who spends all his time surfing on Internet and elaborating on his crazy conspiracy theories. The latter is an old lady with anger issues and a big gun. Needless to say, both these characters are hilarious and constitute the driving force of the story. I also really enjoyed the inclusion of a group of fanatic paramilitary soldiers, which assembled in an hilarious border control patrolling unit.

The title of the book and the plot are only a pretext to present the reader with improbable comedic sketches, which are quite good for the most part. As I said before, I have no problems in giving this novel an high score, because it really surprised me in a positive way and I believe you guys would enjoy it. The only gripe I have with the book is the ending, which is a bit abrupt and feels rushed. Basically the novel does not end, it just suddenly stops. Not a deal breaker anyway, because the built up is good and this is all that matters.

Lea says

Just OK. I really wanted to like this one, but the characters were just too broad for me. I did enjoy the intertwined story lines, but would have probably preferred fewer with a more cohesive, more fully realized result.

Kimberly says

At 33 years of age, I can honestly say I have finally "met" my favorite literary character of all time. It's no exaggeration when I tell you I wouldn't be at all surprised if Avery Bartholomew Pendleton forever takes the cake (or sabotaged taco) in that department.

This is one of the most amazingly entertaining, laugh-out-loud funny, and adventurous books I've ever read. Full of quirky, outlandish characters that remain believable and likable, and a meaner than mean villain, this novel will keep you absorbed, keep you guessing as to what will happen next, and have you laughing so hard you'll be struggling to read through the tears. Mr. Randel knows his characters well, and has a strong command of the English language. I cannot recommend this book enough. Read it!

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for my review.

Kathy LaMee says

This is a CRAZY fun read! It's a wacky tale of a really strange man-boy who is just crazy enough to get caught up in a whole mess of drug cartels and crazy home-grown militia wannabes in the epic hunt for the invasive vampire dog- the Chupacabra. It is one of the most crack-pot books I've ever read. At the end, I just looked at it and thought, "Ya, this TOTALLY could happen!" I absolutely loved it! (Yes, I know, I'm using a ton of exclamation points; but well, I'm excited!)

When I first started the book, I was really worried that I'd picked up something that I wouldn't like. We start out with the story of El Barquero, a really evil and sinister man who is intent on moving his way up and out of the drug cartels. He shoots people down and slashes them up for the coyotes. He is the darkness in the story, and quite honestly, what gives it all a touch of real nastiness. But hey- these type of guys are out there for real I'm sure.

Enter the goofy odd character of Avery. He is one nugget shy of a Happy Meal. We are introduced to Avery by his step brother who has come home to Austin, TX, to assist his sick father. Avery stays camped out in his room and only goes out when he needs Mountain Dew – and then, only in his yellow track suit which he is convinced will keep him from being noticed. In the same town we get to know a group of crazy Bingo ladies, and their somewhat unconventional beliefs. I was on the edge of my seat wondering who was going to get into more trouble- Avery or Aunt Pearl. Last we meet a civilian militia who ride the border in a town further down to the southwest- STRAC-BOM (Southwest Texas Revolutionary Armed Confederate Border Operations Militia). Led by General X-ray, this group of men unknowingly go out armed with ancient rifles and sling shots to guard the border from potential illegals. They are so in over their head they have no idea how close they become to turning into coyote meat.

All of the odds and ends of misfits converge as Avery goes after his latest threat- the Chupacabra and brings mayhem back home with him. This book was so much fun to read- I really look forward to more of the creative musings of Stephen Randall!

I received a complimentary copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

Farzy Mae of BooksKeepMeSane says

REVIEW ORIGINALLY POSTED AT BOOKS KEEP ME SANE

The Chupacabra doesn't seem my cup of tea. At first I was really hesitant to read it. Before reading the book, I knew what a chupacabra is— a mythical creature that are said to inhabit Mexico and kill people but when they do not drink the blood of human, they prey on goats instead. Upon hearing the title I immediately thought it was of the paranormal genre, and then I found out the genre of the book is humor. I told myself I will give it a try.

I'm glad I did try reading the book because I absolutely love it.

Avery is a firm believer of the existence of the chupacabra. And because of this he got mixed up in the business of El Barquero and the drug cartel operating near the Mexican border. He is an intellectual character yet at the same time he's so bizarre and paranoid. Oh, and I find his obsession with Mountain Dew fascinating.

"My reality is so compellingly fascinating, I couldn't ever

imagine needing to escape from it."

The other characters like Polly, Kip, the STRACBOM and Ziggy are all very funny too. They add more color to the story.

If anybody would have seen my laguhing to myself as I was reading this book, they'd think I'm crazy! I am not the one who's crazy, this book is! It's an honest-to-goodness comedy book and needless to say, I love it.

"I thought humans were at the top of the food chain?"

"Try telling that to a shark chewing on your leg and see if

it lets go."

At first I didn't see the connection between all the characters. All of them just seem so random at that time but all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place as you read the book.

However, there was too much build up in the story at the beginning and too much unnecessary character background and it was a little slow-paced. It was a little later when a link to all the characters in the book was established.

But all in all, it's a definite read if you're looking for a good laugh and action-packed scenes at the same time.

Meganm922 says

I received a copy of this book in exchange for an honest review. This was one of those books that I just had to read and I'm glad I did. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was a crazy ride with some of the quirkiest characters I've ever met. It was well written and kept me interested in the story the entire time, even when I wasn't sure how a particular scene was relevant. The glimpses of the characters and the events surrounding them come together as the story progresses and adds to the chain of events. It was ridiculous and hilarious and absolutely superb. Each group of characters was detailed extremely well. Instead of describing the civilian border militia as incompetent, the author shows us various scenes that have a Catch-22 feeling and display the incompetence well. The author does a very good job of showing instead of telling in just about every scene. Each group of characters cross paths in some way and have an effect on the plot and chain of events. I loved that this book wasn't just about El Barquero and his adventures. The reader gets a glimpse of all the characters, major and minor, that will eventually have an impact on El Barquero along the way. This book is a bunch of different stories that make up a bigger story and I enjoyed every minute of it. It wasn't predictable to me at all. This is the author's debut novel and I cannot wait to see more of his work. The Chupacabra was well written and completely enjoyable and I would definitely recommend it to others.

Eric Prater says

Sheehan!

What the hell! This damn thing won't let me write Yeehaa! For a title, BS! I loved this book well written, hilarious, violent! Damon Good if I do say so.

Melki says

Thomas Wolfe once said, "You Can't Go Home Again." Well, maybe he didn't SAY it, but he used it as the title of a book I haven't yet read.

It seems like good advice to me.

You can't go home again.

'Cos when you do, all sorts of weird shit happens.

Meet Kip. He's headed home to Austin to spend time with his dad, who's been diagnosed with cancer, and may not have much time left on this planet.

Meet Aunt Polly and her gang of bingo-obsessed lady friends. They'll keep you laughing as they take Tai Chi lessons and attend a church that takes all the "fun out of fundamental."

Meet Avery. He's the conspiracy-theorist son of Kip's dad's second wife. His time is spent in his room, working on his "experiments" and writing letters to CEOs bemoaning the scarcity of Mountain Dew, AND to

various Senators to let them know of their genealogical ties to Vladimir Lenin. His biggest dream is to prove the existence of the goat-sucking chupacabra.

Meet the members of the Southwest Texas Revolutionary Armed Confederate Border Operations Militia (STRAC-BOM for short). Their goal is to stem the flow of drugs and arms across the border from Mexico. They will remain eternally vigilant. (As long as it doesn't interfere with the Cowboy's games.)

Meet El Barquero. On second thought...don't. It's likely that if you ever meet El Barquero, you will only meet him once. He is known as "The Ferryman" because of a delivery service he provides for a Mexican drug cartel. That is also his nickname because he may be the last person you see before crossing into the next world.

All of these characters will collide in an adventure that is as zany and madcap as it can be considering the fact that there are bullets flying and bodies piling up. At least the assassins are polite enough to ask if you'd like your head removed before or AFTER your death.

Please, please, please let there be a sequel!

Aurora says

Name of Book: The Chupacabra: A Borderline Crazy Tale of Coyotes, Cash & Cartels

Author: Stephen Randel

ISBN: 9780988222502

Publisher: Knuckleball Press

Part of a Series: The Chupacabra Misadventures

Type of book: 2000s, letters, conspiracies, action, suspense, comedy, Mexico, cartel, mafia, Texas, Chupacabras

Year it was published: 2012

Summary:

He is called El Barquero. He makes his trade along the border, smuggling guns and killing without remorse. As he faces his one last mission, his perfect plan is unwittingly foiled by Avery, a paranoid loner obsessed with global conspiracy theories who spends most of his time crafting absurd and threatening letters to anyone who offends him. That means pretty much everyone.

What unfolds is a laugh out loud dark comedy of madcap adventure stretching from Austin to the West Texas border featuring a lunatic band of civilian border militia, a group of bingo-crazed elderly ladies (one packing a pistol nearly as long as her arm), a murderous and double-crossing cartel boss, a burned-out hippy, and a crotchety retired doctor and his pugnacious French bulldog. Read it to believe it.

Characters:

The characters that were fascinating and had the most dimension to them were Avery, Miss Pearl, Ziggy the hippie and General X-Ray. Other characters such as Kip, Kip's father and so forth weren't as interesting as the ones I have mentioned. I also felt pity that I didn't spend a lot of time with the Mexican Godfather, err I mean Padre. Despite the numerous characters I didn't feel confused as to which one is which because the author gave them distinct voices and words. Their personalities really shone in the novel, and its the strongest aspect of the novel.

Theme:

Most unexpected moments do tie up.

Plot:

Its written in third person narrative from everyone's point of view. The author does warn ahead when points of view shift and he stays consistent when it comes to characters; that is with Avery and people tied up with him one gets comedy or slight romance, and with El Barquero and the agents one gets action and gore. Possibly the only exception is the STRAC-BOM, although I would think they fall more into comedy instead of suspense. There are many things going on in the book such as Aunt Polly and her friends trying to get Miss Pearl to calm down, (loved the church scene!) El Barquero dealing murders, Kip getting to know his friend once more, Maximilian the French Bulldog trying to eat trash, the agents trying to keep a lookout for STRAC-BOM and so forth, (not even done yet in saying important threads.) I do admit I had some trouble understanding El Barquero scenes and what exactly he was trying to do. Other than that though, the author has done a good job with sticking the mood to the characters and one knows what one gets when it comes to them.

Author Information:

He also wrote a sequel titled The Trail of Chupacabra. Nothing else is known of him.

Opinion:

I have to admit that I read this book second instead of first. The first one I have read was titled Trail of the Chupacabra, which was unexpectedly hilarious, fresh and enjoyable. I also do describe this one as fresh, hilarious and enjoyable, but not as much as the second book. I would have liked more Miss Pearl scenes I think and would have liked if the loose ends between Kip and a girl were tied up. Other than that the characters stay in character and a character sheet might have helped out with figuring out who's who in General X-Ray's STRAC-BOM as well as a necessity for false names. I did feel that points of view from the agents or Kip weren't necessary to the story. This book is a mixture of suspense and comedy which makes for a delightful read. There are action scenes along with comedy scenes. I have never even heard of Chupacabra, although apparently its best described as a demon coyote, or a goat-sucker, something Avery is obsessed with getting, along with Mountain Dew. I felt that the best parts were the letters from Avery to practically everyone.

I would like to thank Sage's Blog Tours for the opportunity in reading the book.

4 out of 5

(0: Stay away unless a masochist 1: Good for insomnia 2: Horrible but readable; 3: Readable and quickly forgettable, 4: Good, enjoyable 5: Buy it, keep it and never let it go.)

<http://sveta-randomblog.blogspot.com/...>

Liz Terek says

Border troubles are nothing new nowadays. Nightly newscasts are often filled with stories of drugs & murder along the US/Mexican border. With no regard for human life, intricate networks operate on both sides.

Mayhem abounds as humans & contraband is smuggled towards 'The American Dream'.

Stephen Randel's tale of border woes brings us an eclectic mix of characters. First up is El Barquero or 'The Ferryman'. Ruthless to his muscled core, he plays cartels against each other in a bloody quest for money.

Avery Pendleton, an eccentric, caffeinated, conspiracy theorist, spends his days writing letters to CEOs & searching for cryptozoological beings. Overzealous militiamen comprise another motley crew. Using aliases & too much Southern pride, they wage their own war on illegal aliens. Along the way, we have a supporting cast of misfits who all play their part in the grand scheme of things- whether or not they know it.

Thickening the plot, all the characters are intertwined in one way or another. Presented into the plot neatly, it comes full circle & makes perfect sense. Humor is peppered throughout the story especially with the older members of Avery's family & their friends. Honestly, only the church humor could have been left out. All the other humorous twists were good fun.

Playing off all Avery's theories was priceless. He's an easy one to picture mentally. As he fears an impending Chupacabra invasion, it's not lost on this reader that there's also a play on the hundreds of 'sightings' birthed in the South.

Obviously, there is a lot of violence. Beheadings & shootings are included, but it isn't overboard. It's hard not to pity those used as 'mules' to transport narcotics & weapons. These folks only want a better life but are almost always victimized.

I'll not be surprised if this becomes a full series. There are many directions it can go in. It's a very interesting read to say the very least. A lot of action & well done characters earn it a 5 of 5 star score. More info is available from the publisher, Knuckleball Press.

I received 1 eBook copy to write a review without further compensation. I wasn't under any obligation to write a positive review.

Bio:

Stephen Randel, CFA, was born in Houston, Texas. He is a graduate of Texas Christian University. Steve now lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with his wife and their two rescue dogs.

Sharrice says

Originally posted: <http://reesesreviews.blogspot.com/201...>

Synopsis:

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who offends him. That means pretty much everyone.

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Bio:

Stephen Randel, CFA, was born in Houston, Texas. He is a graduate of Texas Christian University. Steve now lives in Minneapolis, Minnesota with his wife and their two rescue dogs.

Review:

I received *The Chupacabra* in exchange for an honest review.

There are multiple character perspectives, and a very unique world bringing about the perspective of multiple characters together in an amazingly written novel in a way that makes sense. There is a wide variety of humor included in this novel.

The Chupacabra is honestly the most diverse reads I've ever had. The novel talks about the border control problems with gun and drug cartels, as well as murders along the United States, and Mexican border. There is evil working both sides of the border. The main antagonist; El Barerquo "The ferryman." He kills without hesitation. Is cunning, and is working the system to try and start an all out war between some of the biggest drug and arm smugglers in Mexico in his quest to gain money. There is a lot of violence especially where El Barerquo is involved. He is either the cause of or near the area when violence is taken place.

I honestly have to say Avery was one of the funniest characters to read about. He definitely has an insanely interesting and definitely a sugar crazed narcissist. Most of his personality was brought about in e-mails he wrote to every corporation he felt had wronged him in some way. He finds himself incredibly self important and is socially inept.

Avery and the church going bingo women are easily the most hilarious in the novel. Especially Mrs. Pearl, she honestly cracked me up every time she opened her mouth. Oh and the French Bull dog Maximilian, he was extremely entertaining to read as well.

There are many more perspectives and stories told in this novel, and each of their stories is brought into the grander story in some form or fashion. I thought it was impeccable writing, and I hope you all pick up your copy of *The Chupacabra* ASAP!!!! It's an amazing read, with amazing writing and I hope there is more to come from Stephen Randel.

Rating: 4.5 bats
